

Jude 1:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

Analysis

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, After extensive warnings about false teachers (vv. 4-19), Jude now instructs believers how to persevere. "But ye, beloved" (Greek *hymeis de, agapētoi, ὑμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί*) creates strong contrast—unlike those false teachers, you beloved believers must respond differently. The affectionate address continues pastoral care underlying Jude's urgent warnings.

"Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Greek *eautous epoikodomountes* *οἰκodomountes tē hagiōtatē hymōn pistei, ἐαυτοὺς ἐποικοδομοῦντες τῇ ἁγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πίστει*) uses construction metaphor—believers must actively build themselves up. The present participle indicates continuous, ongoing action—not one-time event but lifelong process. "Your most holy faith" (superlative form) refers to the objective body of Christian doctrine, "the faith once delivered" (v. 3). They build on this foundation by studying, understanding, and applying apostolic truth. This is the antidote to false teaching—knowing sound doctrine thoroughly.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost" (Greek *en pneumati hagiō proseuchomenoi, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ προσευχόμενοι*) describes prayer empowered and directed by the Spirit. Unlike false teachers who lack the Spirit (v. 19), genuine believers pray through the Spirit's enabling. This doesn't necessarily mean praying in tongues (though that may be included) but prayer characterized by Spirit's guidance, conforming to God's will, offered in faith, and aligned with Scripture (Romans

8:26-27, Ephesians 6:18). Spirit-empowered prayer is essential for spiritual growth and perseverance.

Historical Context

The building metaphor was common in Paul's writings (1 Corinthians 3:9-15, Ephesians 2:20-22). Christians are both God's building (corporately) and responsible for their own spiritual construction (individually). The foundation is Christ and apostolic teaching; the building process involves progressive sanctification through Word and Spirit. Churches must construct on this foundation using quality materials (sound doctrine, holy living) rather than wood, hay, stubble (false teaching, worldly compromise).

First-century Christianity faced constant pressure to compromise with surrounding culture—Jewish legalism, Greek philosophy, pagan religion, Roman imperialism. Maintaining distinctive Christian identity and doctrine required intentional effort. Jude's readers couldn't passively resist error; they must actively build themselves up in truth. This required disciplined Scripture study, prayer, fellowship, and worship—spiritual disciplines sustaining faith against opposition.

Prayer "in the Holy Spirit" distinguished Christian prayer from pagan formulas or Jewish ritualism. Christians don't manipulate deity through correct formulas but commune with Father through Spirit's enabling based on Christ's mediation. This intimate, Spirit-enabled prayer relationship provides strength unavailable through human effort alone. It's both privilege (access to God) and power (divine enablement for living).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What specific practices constitute 'building up yourselves on your most holy faith' in daily Christian life?
2. How does Spirit-empowered prayer differ from merely human religious activity?
3. Why must sound doctrine and vital prayer life function together rather than separately?

Interlinear Text

ὁμεῖς δέ, ἀγαπητοί, τῇ ἁγίῳ ὑμῶν πίστει
ye But beloved G3588 most holy on your faith
G5210 G1161 G27 G40 G5216 G4102

ἐποικοδομοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ
building up yourselves in Ghost most holy
G2026 G1438 G1722 G4151 G40

προσευχόμενοι
praying
G4336

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 6:18 (Holy): Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

1 Corinthians 14:15 (Spirit): What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Colossians 2:7 (Faith): Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (Parallel theme): Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

1 Corinthians 14:26 (Parallel theme): How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.

Romans 8:15 (Spirit): For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

Galatians 4:6 (Spirit): And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

Ephesians 4:29 (Parallel theme): Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

Ephesians 4:16 (Love): From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Acts 26:18 (Faith): To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.