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## Earnestly Contending For The Faith

By Mark Legendre

In Jude 3, we read that we as Christians are to "earnestly contend for the faith ...". Now this doesn't mean that we go out of our way to get in arguments about the word of God, but it does mean that we have the courage to defend what we believe. In Phillipians 1:17 Paul speaks of being "set for the defense of the gospel". There is a reason why we must do this; SOULS ARE AT STAKE! We can never afford to compromise with God's truth in any way because in doing so we not only help others, but we also endanger our own souls as well.

In John 8:32 Jesus says "...ye shall know the truth , and the truth shall set you free." If it takes God's truth to set people free from their sins, then we cannot afford to change it in any way for it will no longer be that truth that sets people free.

Let us pray to God for the courage and boldness to speak His word to others without fear! In Acts 4, the apostles prayed to God for boldness to preach the gospel when they had been warned not to preach it in Jerusalem any more. God granted them that boldness and they proclaimed His word and souls continued to be saved. In Romans 1:16 Paul said that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation ...". IT IS GOD'S TRUTH AND IT SAVES!

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## The Most Precious Thing

by Mark Legendre

This story of a young wife who matches words of love with a deed of love echoes the stratagem of the wives of Weinsberg. Variations of the tale are found in the folklore of eastern europe.

*It happened long ago that a young man and a young woman fell in love with each other and decided to marry. They had almost no money, but they did not hesitate over that. Their trust in each other gave them faith that their future together must be a bright one, as long as they had each other. They happily chose a date on which they would join hearts and souls.*

*Before the wedding, the girl came to her fiance with a request. "I cannot imagine our ever wanting to be apart," she said. "But it may be that, in time, we will tire of each other, or that you will be angry with me, and want to send me back to my parents' house. Promise me that if this should happen, you will allow me to carry back with me the thing that has grown most precious to me."*

*Her fiance laughed, and could see no sense in what she asked, but the girl was not satisfied until he had written down his promise and signed his name to it. Then the two were married and began their life together.*

*They set their minds to improving their worldly position. They were both willing to work hard at it, and soon their patient industry found reward. Their first successes made them even more determined to put poverty behind them, and they worked harder than ever before. Time passed, and their purses swelled. They became comfortable, then well-to-do, and finally rich. They moved to a bigger house, found a new set of friends, and surrounded themselves with all the trappings of fortune.*

*But in their single minded pursuit of wealth, they began to think more of their things than each other. More and more, they quarred about what to buy, or how much to spend, or how they should go about increasing their riches.*

*One afternoon, as they were preparing a feast for several important friends, they argued about some trifling matter - the flavor of the gravy, or perhaps the order of seating at the table. They began shouting and accusing each other.*

*"You care nothing for me!" cried the husband. "You think only of yourself, and the jewels and fine clothes you wear. Take those that are most precious to you, as I promised, and go back to your parents' house. There is no point in our going on together."*

*His wife went suddenly pale, and stared at him with a distracted look in her eyes, as if she had just seen something for the first time.*

*"Very well", she said quietly. "I am willing to go. But we must stay together one more night, and sit side by side at our table, for the sake of appearance in front of our friends."*

*The evening arrived. The feast began. It was as bountiful as their ample means allowed. When, one by one, the guest had succumbed to its influence, and her husband too, had fallen asleep, the good woman had him carried to her parents' cottage and laid on the bed there.*

*When he awoke the next morning, he could not understand where he was. He raised himself up on his elbow to look about him, and at once his wife came to the bedside.*

*"My dear husband," she said softly, "your promise was that if you ever*

*sent me away I might carry with me the thing that was most precious to me. You are that most precious thing. I care for you more than anything else, and nothing but death shall part us."*

*At once the man saw how selfish they had both acted. He clasped his wife in his arms, and they kissed each other tenderly. That same day they returned home and began to devote themselves once again to each other.*

*This story illustrates the kind of love husbands and wives should have for each other today. In 1st Corinthians 13:4-8 Paul describes the nature of true love. It is the kind of love that he says "endureth all things and never faileth." We would do well to develop that kind of love in our marriages today so that our marriages will last a lifetime. In Ephesians 5:25 Paul also says that Husbands should love their wives "...even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it ...". Paul also says that wives should love their husbands (Tit. 2:4). Since it is true that the marriage relationship is just for this lifetime (Lk. 20:34-35), then let us work to make our marriages all that they can be right now!*