

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

January 20, 2008

The fault-finder

by David King

"These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their own lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of gaining an advantage" (Jude 16, NASV).

Jude's little epistle is a stern warning against the false teachers who were plaguing the churches late in the New Testament era. His description of the characteristics of these men provides us with a means of detecting and avoiding the same trouble-makers today.

In this article, I'd like to focus on just one character trait of these apostates: their propensity for "finding fault." The single Greek word used here literally means, "complaining of one's lot" (W. E. Vine), that is, raging against the position in which they find themselves in life. Other translations render this word more freely, "dissatisfied with life" (Goodspeed), or "ever complaining about their lot" (Williams). Phillips translates the verse quite loosely, but in a manner that effectively captures the sense of this word: "These are the men who complain and **curse their fate** while trying all the time to mould life according to their own desires."

The fault-finder is not merely one who complains (note Jude's use of the synonym "grumblers"). Rather, this is one whose complaint turns into a deep frustration with life that poisons everything in his life. His relationships tend to be shallow and unfulfilling, because no one can get close to him — he is too quick to blame others for the little bumps and bruises that inevitably crop up among friends. He has trouble establishing a satisfying career, because the system is obviously rigged against him. So

he is always moving on, looking for that perfect job. In his politics, his religion, his pastimes, he is drawn to the eccentric, the fringe, the unorthodox, because in these unconventional expressions he finds an outlet for his rejection of the lot that fate has dealt him. As Jude described earlier, these are people who "reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries" (v. 8). If the world is out to get him, the fault-finder will return the favor.

But as Jude's description of these people reveals, this character trait is rarely found in isolation. The fault-finder tends to be manipulative and vain, callously using other people to advance his own personal agenda ("flattering people"). His decision-making is often dominated by his fleshly passions ("following after their own lusts"); after all, who else can he trust? The fault-finder who hones these skills to perfection can wreak havoc within a group; he can "cause divisions" among those who should be at peace (v. 19). That's what makes him such a dangerous person.

There is a legitimate place for criticism and censure, especially when the objective is to promote improvement. But the fault-finder improves nothing; he only tears down.

How can I avoid becoming a fault-finder? Jude shows us the way: "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (v. 20-21). It's hard to find fault with life when your heart is filled with the love of God.