

Servants & Deceivers
Romans 16:1-19

“We are to know about evil, but we are not to know everything about it. We must not want to. Instead, we must fill our minds and hearts with what is good—with the doctrines of this letter, for example—and be on our guard against those who would lead us from the simplicity of what we have been taught to the deception of special revelations, new insights, novel doctrines, or movements that bow before a human teacher rather than glorify God.” Boice

- I. We have all been called to serve Jesus Christ by serving one another. Our faith was never intended to be a self-serving subjective faith, but a one another centered faith based on a true expression of agape love toward those whom God holds precious in his sight, the church. The men and women Paul exemplified showed common characteristics of being doers of the Word (**James 1:22**). They were in the Lord, they were a great help for many people, they risked their lives for the sake of the gospel, they were grateful, they were hospitable, they worked very hard for the Lord, they were very welcoming, and they were tested and approved in Christ.

Rom. 16:1-16

1 Thess. 5:11

Gal. 5:13

Romans 12:10 *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

- II. We have all been called to protect the body of Christ from those who have not been tested and approved in Christ. We must avoid being naïve toward the wolves who will come in to gain followers for themselves by testing everything and holding on to God's good truth (**1 Thess. 5:21**).

Rom. 16:17-19

1 Thess. 5:21-22 *Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.*

- A. The Lord has given us wisdom and the ability to distinguish truth from error. He's given us the capability to recognize those whose motive is to gain followers for themselves by causing division through naïve immature believers. They do not know the Scriptures well enough to keep themselves from being influenced by smooth talk and flattery, consequently they play right into the schemes of the evil one.

Rom. 16:17-18

Phil. 1:15-17

3 Jn. 9-11

Acts 20:28-30

Matt. 7:15-17

2 Cor. 11:13-15

2 Peter 2:1-3

Phil. 1:9-11 *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.*

- B. Good and its source God, and evil and its source Satan, appose one another. Jesus wants us to be wise toward what is good so that we know how to discern what is evil. When we fail to gain wisdom toward his goodness, we become ill-informed naïve followers of Christ who lose our ability to distinguish between good and evil. The result is a church that is easily led astray by those who will purposely come in to divide us and throw us off balance toward truth. If we are not careful, the fear of man will prove to be a snare with dire consequences.

Rom. 16:19

Prov. 29:25 *Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.*