

(17) I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them! For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naïve.

(19) For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

(21) Timothy, my fellow-worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen. I, Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and your brother Quartus, greet you.

(25) Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my Gospel and preaching of Jesus Christ --- according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring out the obedience of faith --- to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Think on these things:

- 1) Who are we to watch out for and keep away from --- in church?

- 2) Skim these verses for teachings on people who are divisive: 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:14-16, 23-26; 3:1-5; 4:2-5; Titus 3:9-11. Which verse says divisive people,

- a. Will seek preachers who teach what they want to hear instead of God's truth? _____
- b. Should be warned about quarrelling, while we should know our Bible? _____
- c. Are conceited, with an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels? _____
- d. Will multiply in "the last days" with no genuine Christian power & faith? _____
- e. Should be opposed gently in hope they will come to their senses? _____
- f. Should be warned once, twice, and then totally avoided as "self-condemned"? _____
- g. What does James 4:1-2 tell us is the cause of divisiveness? _____

- 3) V.18 parallels 1 Timothy 3:6-9. How are these wolves in sheep's clothing described? _____

- 4) There's lots of bad in this world of ours. How familiar should we be with evil activity (v.19)? What do you consider to be some bad things in human living? What phrasing did Jesus use for this idea in Matthew 10:16? Do you think being "innocent" about evil is the same as "naïve"? Explain. What should Christians be specialists in (v.19, Ephesians 2:10)?

- 5) Let's focus on the "Gospel." Paul wants the Romans to be established, or firmly grounded, in their understanding of the Gospel. The concern here is that some people preach "another" Gospel (Galatians 1:6-9)! Write the "gist" --- key truth --- of these verses to understand the Biblical Gospel (God's "good news").

John 3:16 _____

1 Timothy 1:15 _____

Romans 3:23; 6:23 _____

Romans 5:8 _____

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 _____

Acts 16:30-31 _____

Ephesians 2:8-9 _____

Romans 3:22 _____

Romans 10:9-10 _____

John 14:6 _____

Romans 1:16 _____

- 6) How does verse 20 make you feel? _____

People and situations I want to pray for this week: