

Romans 16:17-20

Crushing Evil



Vs. 17-18 – Dividers have a me-first/anti-Christ agenda (but they usually don't know it). But not knowing is no excuse!

“*Appetite*”/lust driven

- **power and control** over others – antagonism / criticism toward existing leadership
- **money**
- **sex**
- **material things/status/prestige**



CHARACTERISTICS

- ~**Nice/charming** – Friendliest people you'll ever meet
- ~**Generous** – (would give you the shirt off their backs but it comes with the steep price of subtly obligating you to their cause/their “beef”/their agenda)
- ~“**Godly**” – (seemingly biblical)
- ~**Persuasive but subtle** – (they will be very tricky - making *some of* what is wrong seem right and *some of* what is right seem wrong)
- ~**Inability to self-judge** – not able to question their own motives or actions, or objectively evaluate the results²

Be vigilant! [1 Pet. 5:8] K

You do not want to be taken in and destroyed! And equally - you do not want *others* to be deceived, drawn in, and destroyed (by whatever it is) either!

Be vigilant about peace. When someone comes to you with their issue/complaint, let them know **IMMEDIATELY** if their complaint does not rise to the level of a fellowship-breaking issue. It almost always falls into the category of **NOT!** Usually, people are over reacting. Also, **NEVER** make a judgment based upon one side of the story! Tell the complainer/accuser that if they persist in telling you about someone, you will have to go to that person for their side of the story!



Be **ADULT!** Be the wise one! Channel Jesus!

“...*deceive the minds of naïve people*”

Every Sunday I am intent on making you less naïve. My desire is to equip you to be able to distinguish between truth and error! I want to provide you with the tools to become un-deceive-able! The only way to do that is to teach biblical truth through which we can judge (and reject) other *erroneous* truth-claims. in time You should be able teach others

Among the general populace there is a disproportionate naivety with Christians. Christians have proven to be easy prey! The vast numbers of congregants in off-beat TV preacher’s churches proves this!

Kenneth Copeland comes to mind – crazy-eyes and the speech of a Bible-twisting megalomaniac! He owns his own personal jet and a collection of airplanes,

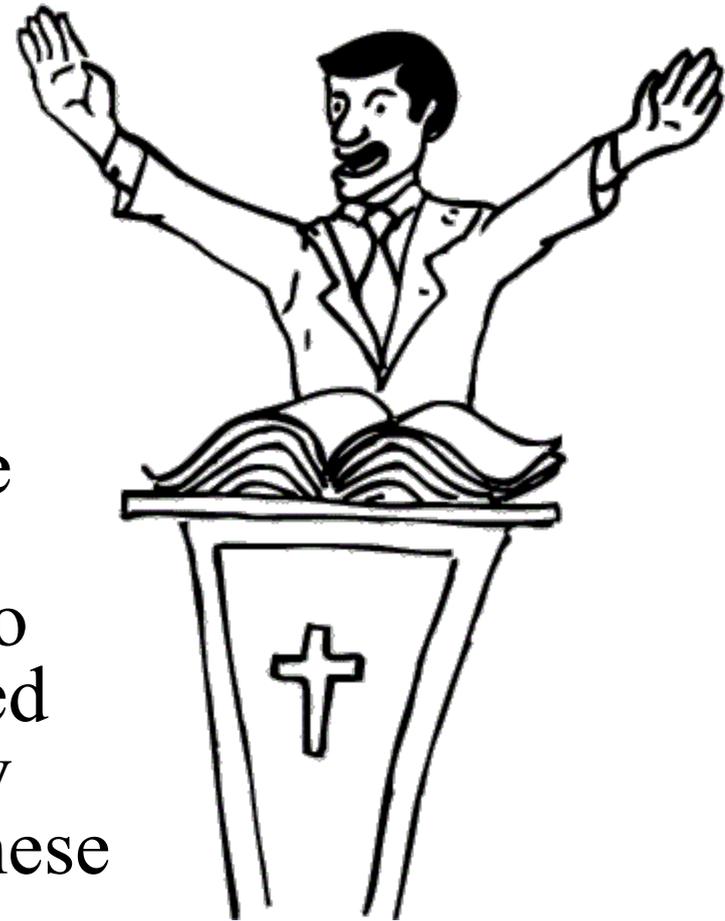
multi-million dollar homes, luxury cars, tailor made suits that each cost thousands!

Everything about him SCREAMS fraud, yet naïve “Christians” send him their retirement funds in the belief (taught by K.C.) that they will be reimbursed by Jesus 10x over – like its some kind of get rich quick scheme! **Peter Popov**, faith healer from the 80s, who was discredited irrefutably as a fraud – (He’s back). **Oral Roberts**, a demented TV preacher who saw that 900’ Jesus ordering him, upon pain of death, to build a \$20 million hospital on the “Oral Roberts University” campus. The hospital then proceeded to fail dismally. It had top doctors and surgeons, but needed *patients* and did not have nearly enough of them to fill such a gargantuan facility! **Jimmy Swaggert** – the guy who railed against prostitution and pornography from the pulpit, but who was arrested with a prostitute in his car with the back seat strewn with pornography. BTW – he’s back too. This summer, while on vacation, I was channel surfing looking for a church service on TV and ran into 3 different church services that had a much older Jimmy Swaggert either in the pulpit, singing on stage, or at least sitting on stage with a family member in the pulpit! Then there is the discredited **Benny Hinn**, and crazy-man **Robert Tilton**,.. among dozens of others!



Someone sends them money! There has to be 100s of thousands, even *millions* of people sending \$\$ to make these guys so rich! AMAZING naivety on a vast scale, on public display!

How can this happen - involving MILLIONS of people? It happens because most Christians have little knowledge of the scriptures, or a completely imbalanced one, and so become, in my opinion, imbalanced mentally. Lacking discretion, they regularly send in their money to these frauds – like milk cows give milk like clockwork!



You know what I am most grateful for at Thanksgiving?

First and foremost I'm so very grateful for my salvation through Jesus! 2^{ndly}, I am supremely grateful for the scriptures! In it is contained the wisdom of God.

Being well-versed and having a balanced knowledge from our own personal readings and study

keeps us from the *foolishness of following fools!* I hate being made to be the fool, and

I take it very personally when someone in

our congregation is naïve and foolish enough to fall prey to the railings and false claims of so-called faith-healers, of false teachers and false doctrines, and of offbeat “Christian” culture!



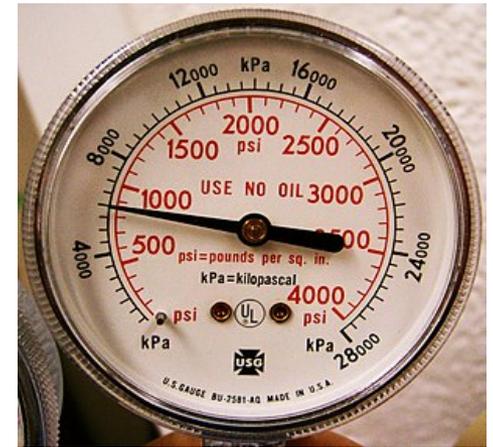
Now something a lot more positive.

Vs 19-*“Everyone has heard about your obedience,..”*

[15:14] – *“You yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge, and competent to instruct one another”*

- Paul thought highly of the church in Rome. They were holding it together under pressure from destructive internal forces. There were enough mature believers, both Jew and gentile, that refused to budge from the truth.

They held fast to the bedrock truth that salvation comes through Christ alone and not an unholy hybrid of faith in Christ and Mosaic Law. He also admired that they held their ground with the dignity, grace, and the love of true Christ followers!



I'm thankful to God for the gospel and for the people that team up with me to teach and lovingly defend it with dignity, honor, and grace!

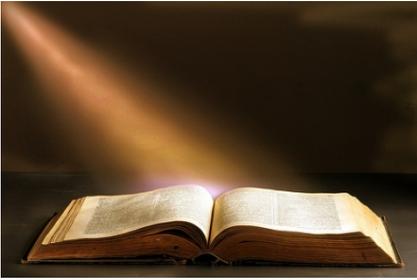
~Eph. 1:15, 16 – *“Why, I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints...I have not stopped giving thanks for you”*



~Col. 1:3,4 – *“We always thank God,..when we pray for you because we have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the love you have for all the saints...”*

~1 Thess. 1:2,3 – *“We always thank God for all of you,.. We continually remember before our God and Father you work produced by faint, you labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus...”*

~1 Thess. 3:9 – “How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you.”



~2 Thess. 1:3 – “We ought always to thank God for you,.. and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing”

~2 Tim. 1:3 – “I thank God, whom I serve,.. with a clear conscience... as I constantly remember you (Timothy) in my prayers.”

~Philemon 1:4,5 – “I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints”

We thank God for His beautiful earth and all its amazing life-sustaining qualities. But do we thank Him for each other? I think it is interesting that our Thanksgiving hymns have a lot to say about gratitude for the harvest, for Jesus and His salvation - but not so much about fellow believer/followers. Paul, was most thankful to God for the “saints”, his fellow followers! You never hear Paul refer to the fields and the flowers, etc... What he is obviously most thankful for is the love that was on display between people in the church. It meant that the heart of God was beating strongly in the “body” of Christ and there is nothing more awe-inspiring than that!



Vs. 19b ~”*wisdom*” – good at discerning the good

~ “*innocence*” – Not unaware of evil but inexperienced with it!
He didn’t want them to see and experience what HE had!



Vs. 20 – the original promise of God [**Gen. 3:15b**]

God promises to make it right in the end.

Don’t let Satan get the best of you in the here and now!

[2 Tim. 6:11,12]