

OWN THE PURSUIT

Devotionals for 21 Day Fast

DAY 19: Thursday, February 3rd — BE WISE AND INNOCENT

I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

—Romans 16:17-18

Be Wise about Good, and Innocent about Evil

Paul wants Christians to live together in mutual love and respect for one another; the strong with the weak and the learned with the naive. But there are those who, through selfish ambition, cause division.

Paul's admonition has primarily to do with doctrine: the truth about what God has said and done, what God has asked us to do and how to live.

In Romans 6:17 Paul refers to, "the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance." In 2 Timothy 1:13-14 Paul calls it, "the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus" and tells us to guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Yet there are false teachers who try to pervert the truth with teachings that are contrary to God's word and the teachings of Jesus. These are also referred to as "false prophets" who "introduce destructive heresies" and "exploit people with fabricated stories" (2 Peter 2:1-3). These divisive people can corrupt vulnerable Christian by presenting lies as truth, just as the snake did with Eve in the garden.

In the turmoil of politics and the pandemic that has marked the past few years in America, the Church has seemingly become as divided as the culture. Politicians and pastors condemn their brothers and sisters in Christ over issues that have nothing to do with sound teaching.

Research shows a growing ignorance of the fundamental truths in Scripture that exist to help us understand God's will, wisely interpret issues, and strengthen our faith. These truths also show us who God is, how He wants us to live for Him, and how we should treat each other. It seems, as Christians, we are at times either unaware of these truths or unwilling to follow them.

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:29-32)

Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:14-15)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- ▶ How can you "watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles?"
▶ What do you look for?
▶ What is the difference between smooth talk and just being kind?
▶ What is "the word of truth" referred to in 2 Timothy?

Source: https://wheatonbible.org/daily-devotional/be-wise-about-good-and-innocent-about-evil/

-- RESTORE --
BE IN THE ROOM
WHERE THINGS HAPPEN

LIFE APPLICATION

Harvest or Reward
Does Not Happen
Automatically

Devotional Text
Romans 16: 17-18
2Timothy 1: 13-14; 2:14-15
2Peter 1:1-3
Ephesians 4:29-32

" God must do
everything for us.
Our part is to yield
and trust. We must
confess, forsake,
repudiate the
self-life, and
then reckon it
crucified. "



A. W. Tozer