

Bad Apples

7-4-21

Romans 16:17 (ESV)

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.

This verse should not be taught in isolation, but in context of Romans Chapters 1-15, especially Chapters 1-8. We have been taught the foundations of the Christian faith plus being instructed to welcome the weak and not quarrel over opinions. We also have been instructed to let our love be genuine and instruct one another in love. We are equipped to live out the truth in our Christian faith. Now at the very closing of the book, Paul finds it necessary to warn us, “Watch out for Bad Apples!” Being accepting and loving, we must acknowledge there are Bad Apples. Our instruction is clear, “Avoid them!” This requires wisdom. **The book of Proverbs identifies three types of people: Wise, Fools, and Evil.**

- 1. Wise are those who hear the truth adjust to the truth. Thus, rejoice with us over hearing God’s truth.**
- 2. Fools are those who hear the truth and adjust the truth. Thus, we need to stop talking with them because we have already proved talking doesn’t work. We set clear boundaries for them and only resume conversation when they fully keep the boundaries. Key: “fully” keep the boundaries not partially keep the boundaries.**
- 3. Evil are those who want to do us harm. Thus, we need to call the police or get a lawyer.**

Paul show us how to deal with the evil person.

1 Timothy 1:20 (ESV)

Hymenaeus and Alexander (have shipwrecked people's faith), whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

For the love of other believers especially the weak believers, the Bad Apples must be identified and avoided.

2 Corinthians 11:13–15 (ESV)

¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

Bad Apples have become tools of Satan whose desire is to destroy the effectiveness of believers. Satan's attacks are seldom frontal. Satan and his servants disguise themselves as angels of light. Do not be fooled, there are only two opposing sides; One is Christ, and One is Satan and nothing in between.

Romans 16:18 (ESV)

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 naive.

The Ultimate goal of these Bad Apples who are wittingly or unwittingly servants of Satan is to satisfy their own selfish appetites. This includes their own personal goals, fleshly desires, material well-being, and prestige. These people are smooth talkers which means they use *fair speech* and *plausibility*. They use flattery which is elegance of language and reverent adoration to deceive the naïve.

We are warned that good instruction is not helpful in dealing with these Bad Apples. As a practical measure, it is necessary to “keep away from them,” giving no opportunity for in roads into the congregation. **Warning: Bad Apples covet opportunities for “friendly discussions.”** Satan is ready to twist all godly instruction for his benefit confusing the naïve.

Standing on God’s Word, we obey God’s instruction, and this includes avoiding Satan’s deceitful servants. Bad Apples don’t get better. They just spread their rottenness. Jesus would not engage Satan’s influence when identified.

Matthew 16:23 (ESV)

Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

By standing on God’s instruction, we will not be deceived and will recognize Bad Apples. As we stand for God’s truth in the midst of Satan’s lies, God will move to crush Satan while the power of God’s grace will sustain us.

Romans 16:20 (ESV)

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

This verse is referring to our present victory in our present circumstances. God's victory comes when we stand uncompromising on God's truth. God's truth has been clearly revealed in Romans Chapters 1-15, especially Chapters 1-8.

We have the Victory and we focus on the Victor, Jesus!

Acts 4:12 (ESV)

There is salvation in no one else, but Jesus for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.