

**Romans 16:17-23**  
Schismatics Pegged

*Viral church bugs ...*

I. Divisive Diseases

A. What they Do

1. Divide
2. Obstruct
3. Corrupt

B. Why they Do It

1. Serve Themselves
2. And?

C. How they Go about It

1. Smooth Talk
3. Deception

II. Preventative Practices

A. "Avoidance"

B. Obedience

C. Wisdom

*... and the antidote*

*Children, Listen ...*

1. Why does Paul tell his readers to "avoid" certain people?
2. If someone disagrees with things the Bible clearly says should they be allowed to teach in church?
3. Your Sunday School teacher brings you God's Word faithfully. Will you pray for them regularly?
4. Paul says the faithful Christian's "obedience is known to all." What does that make him do?
5. Will you pray for our church that we will always be faithful and true to God's Holy Word the Bible?

**Germ Watch**

The church has long been plagued with troublesome divisive individuals and even heretics within. In that sense there is nothing new under the sun. In one way it has become easier to avoid the infections they can cause in the body than it used to be. With the multiplication of denominations and the splinters of independence corrupted individuals can find safe havens in which they can share their errors with others who are like minded. Those who cannot countenance their positions can simply avoid them. On the other hand there is a new difficulty that has come with a very broad based understanding of what Christianity is, especially in American evangelicalism. Authors and speakers who would once have been clearly marked as heretics (and rightly so) have become very popular. We don't tend to burn heretics anymore, but we must continue to "avoid" troublemakers in the church like the plague. Protecting the church against divisive people and their tainted teaching is still a vital function of the local church. Without question that is the duty of church leaders, but it is also the responsibility of every member. When we take membership vows in our church one of the things we agree to do is "submit to the government and discipline of the Church, and we promise to study its purity and peace."