

THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL (I Thessalonians 5:22)

The true meaning of this verse and the many uses of this verse has caused a lot of heartache and raw emotions within and without the church. The truth is that the word transcribed *appearance* from the Greek word can also mean, by sight, any form, or every kind.

God did not pen this verse for us to have license to perceive what is evil for someone else or to make us a slave to the perception of what others may think is evil for us.

Matthew 12:1-2 Remember when Jesus and His disciples were breaking “the Law” on the Sabbath?

John 4:4-7 When Jesus went to Samaria to see the sinful woman His disciples were embarrassed.

Matthew 11:19 Jesus Himself knew that the religious crowd thought He was a bad person because He was always around wine, tax collectors, bad women and doing things He shouldn't on the Sabbath.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

I Thessalonians 5: 14-23 In these verses to the church Paul is exhorting them as to how to prepare to meet the Lord and how they can be spiritually preserved and sanctified at His coming. The exhortation is directed to each one personally. It is not a command to watch for issues and problems in others.

I Thessalonians 5:21-22 We are to personally “prove” (test, try, measure, weigh) all things , the good things and the “appearance” (sight, any form, every kind), of evil things. We are to look at all things that we hear, see, and experience in light of what God's word has to say about it and act accordingly.

I Thessalonians 5:16-20 Notice the sequence of commands that Paul gives before he tells us to prove things that are good and things that are evil. We must first, rejoice, then pray without ceasing, then give thanks for everything, then make sure not to quench the Spirit, and finally do not despise the preaching and teaching of God's word. The only way we can discern good from evil is to do all these things first.

Romans 14: 4, 10; I Corinthians 11:31-32 We can see that God would not have us spend time looking for the errors of others but He wants us to look into the mirror and take care of ourselves.

WHAT TO PROVE

Philippians 1:9-11 Here is a wonderful place to start testing ourselves in order that we might not ever give the “appearance of evil” to anyone. Making certain to be knowledgeable in God's word will help us to be sincere, help us not offend people, and as we are spiritually fruitful we will please God.

Hebrews 12:1-3 As we look at our Savior as the greatest example of humility and grace we can learn patience, learn to keep running the race, and learn not to be offended when others do or say bad things.

I John 3:14; 4:20-21 If we can pass the love test and be sure to pray for and love our brethren in Christ why would we look for any “appearances of evil” in them if we truly love them? We won't!!

Malachi 3:10; II Corinthians 8:1-5; Philippians 4:15-19 Have we been testing our tithing and sacrificial giving lately? As the Lord leads us the test of our giving will change as we mature in our faith and love for the Lord. We can have the “appearance of evil” in ourselves when we are not honest.

Romans 12:1-2 Paul says that giving ourselves to God in sacrificial service is the reasonable thing to do in light of what He has given us, He paid our sin debt, gave us eternal life, everything He asks of us is always for our good. This is God's service test that will help keep us from all “appearance of evil.”

I Corinthians 12:1, 4-7, 14-18 How great would it be if every member of our church knew what their spiritual gift was and made it their number one priority to utilize that gift to be a blessing for all the other members. This test is one that would prove to each one that they are growing spiritually in the Lord and would help us all not to be looking for “the appearance of evil” in other people.