

## **Subtleness of Satan – Resource Recommendations**

The purpose of a Bible study is to grow spiritually. We are told in 2 Peter 3:17-18 to “be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” ... Using material that contains errors, is weak or is flawed in its presentation can be dangerous. God has warned us in Romans 16:17 “I urge you, brothers, 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.”

As we purchase or write Bible study material, we must be discerning of the content or we may inadvertently weaken our faith rather than strengthen it. Following are some points to be considered.

### **Negatives to watch for:**

1. I pursue God and/or find him, rather than vice versa
2. Personal experience or opinion is the criterion for truth rather than Scripture alone
3. Living a perfect life is possible this side of glory
4. I can make myself worthy to God
5. I can find God aside from his written Word (e.g. intuition, experience, meditation)
6. I can find God through 10-step or other self-help plans popularly used to overcome bad habits
7. Man-made standards that burden the conscience
8. Scripture is reduced to a formula to secure earthly success, health or happiness
9. The focus is on me and how I feel rather than on God and what he has done for me
10. God is limited to what I can understand or reason

### **Positives to look for:**

1. Proper distinction between law and gospel, and inclusion of both
2. Justification is by grace—God alone declares us righteous and changes our status from condemned to acquitted; justification is complete and universal (available to everyone); justification is a free gift, given to us through faith
3. Sanctification (holy living) is possible only as a consequence of our justification
4. We are all sinful by nature and unable to reach out to God apart from the Holy Spirit
5. Grace is always the unmerited favor and forgiving love of God
6. Incarnation, redemption, forgiveness and reconciliation are central to the message
7. Faith and the fruits of faith are created and maintained by the Holy Spirit through the means of grace (the Bible, baptism, and holy communion)
8. The relationship I have with God, through the merits of his Son, is the foundation for all other relationships

Through our study of God’s Word, God changes our attitudes, ethics, relationships and even our character. With joy we read Romans 12:2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Whenever and wherever the Word of the Lord is expressed and accurately reflected, we trust that the Holy Spirit will bless us.