SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Romans 16

The Names, the Warning, and the Glory — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-09 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Paul ends his greatest letter with a list of names, a warning, and a doxology, because the gospel he has explained is lived out by real people in real houses. God gives His church a courier, a family, a warning against smooth talkers, a promise that Satan will be crushed under its feet — and all the glory goes to Him.

00 The Text

ROMANS 16 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

2 that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

4 who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

5 also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

6 Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

7 Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

10 Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus.

11 Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

13 Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

17 Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the

teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

19 For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

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

21 Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

24 [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith;

27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “servant of the church” — Promise / blessing
- **v1** “Cenchrea” — Time / place / contrast
- **v2** “receive her in the Lord” — Command / instruction
- **v2** “a helper of many” — Promise / blessing
- **v4** “risked their own necks” — Promise / blessing
- **v5** “the church that is in their house” — Time / place / contrast
- **v5** “first convert to Christ from Asia” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “outstanding among the apostles” — Promise / blessing
- **v13** “a choice man in the Lord” — Promise / blessing
- **v16** “Greet one another with a holy kiss” — Command / instruction
- **v17** “keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances” — Sin / warning
- **v17** “turn away from them” — Command / instruction
- **v18** “their own appetites” — Sin / warning
- **v18** “smooth and flattering speech” — Sin / warning
- **v19** “wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil” — Command / instruction
- **v20** “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet” — God — His character & actions
- **v22** “who write this letter” — Time / place / contrast
- **v23** “host to me and to the whole church” — Promise / blessing
- **v23** “the city treasurer” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “Him who is able to establish you” — God — His character & actions
- **v25** “my gospel” — Promise / blessing
- **v25** “the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past” — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** “but now is manifested” — Time / place / contrast
- **v26** “obedience of faith” — Command / instruction
- **v26** “all the nations” — Time / place / contrast
- **v27** “the only wise God” — God — His character & actions
- **v6** “Greet” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v8** “in the Lord” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v6** “worked hard” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v20** “grace of our Lord Jesus” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 16:3–4

"Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;"

FIGURE · WHO'S WHO IN ROME (16:3–15)

Prisca & Aquila vv. 3–5
fellow workers · risked their necks · house church

Epaenetus v. 5
first convert, Asia

Mary v. 6
worked hard for you

Andronicus & Junias* v. 7
kinsmen · fellow prisoners · in Christ before me

Ampliatus v. 8
beloved in the Lord

Urbanus v. 9
fellow worker

Stachys v. 9
my beloved

Apelles v. 10
approved in Christ

Herodion v. 11
my kinsman

Tryphaena v. 12
worker in the Lord

Tryphosa v. 12
worker in the Lord

Persis v. 12
worked hard in the Lord

Rufus v. 13
a choice man

his mother v. 13
"and mine"

Household of Aristobulus v. 10
the house is greeted, not the man

Household of Narcissus v. 11
"those … who are in the Lord"

A GATHERED CIRCLE · V. 14
Asyncritus · Phlegon · Hermes
Patrobas · Hermas
+ "the brethren with them"

A GATHERED CIRCLE · V. 15
Philologus · Julia · Nereus
his sister · Olympas
+ "all the saints who are with them"

woman · man · couple / pair · household · * NASB95 "Junias"; KJV "Junia" — see 16:7

24 named + 2 unnamed women = 26 greeted · 2 households · 3 house circles · plus Phoebe

Every chip is a real person in the order Paul greets them; notice how many are women, how many "worked hard," and that the church met in houses and circles, not a building.

Setting. Paul is writing from Corinth (Gaius is his host, v. 23; Erastus is the city treasurer), probably during his three months in Greece before taking the Gentile churches' gift to Jerusalem (15:25). Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchrea — Corinth's eastern port — is carrying the letter to Rome (vv. 1–2). Paul has never been to Rome (1:13; 15:22), but he knows two dozen believers there by name.

Structure:

- vv1–2 — **the courier commended:** Phoebe, "our sister," "a servant of the church," "a helper of many, and of myself as well." Receive her in the Lord; help her in whatever she needs.
- vv3–16 — **the roll call in Rome:** seventeen "Greet" commands. Prisca and Aquila and the church in their house; Epaenetus; Mary; Andronicus and Junias; Ampliatus, Urbanus, Stachys, Apelles; the household of Aristobulus; Herodion; the household of Narcissus; Tryphaena and Tryphosa; Persis; Rufus and his mother; two circles of five (vv. 14, 15). "Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you" (v. 16).
- vv17–20 — **the last warning:** keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching you learned, and turn away from them (v. 17). They serve their own appetites and deceive the unsuspecting with smooth and flattering speech (v. 18). Your obedience is known everywhere — be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil (v. 19). The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet; grace be with you (v. 20).
- vv21–24 — **greetings from Corinth:** Timothy, Lucius, Jason, Sosipater (v. 21); Tertius, who wrote the letter (v. 22); Gaius, Erastus, Quartus (v. 23). Verse 24 stands in brackets in the NASB95 (see Interpretation).
- vv25–27 — **the doxology:** to Him who is able to establish you according to Paul's gospel, the revelation of the mystery kept secret for long ages, now manifested and made known by the Scriptures of the prophets to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith — to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

The people, counted (vv3–15). Twenty-four people greeted by name, plus two unnamed women (Rufus's mother, Nereus's sister) — twenty-six people. Two households are greeted without their heads (Aristobulus, Narcissus). Five groups in all: the church in Prisca and Aquila's house, the two households, and the two circles "with them" (vv. 14–15). Women greeted: Prisca, Mary, Junia (if feminine), Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus's mother, Julia, Nereus's sister — with Phoebe, ten women in the chapter. "Kinsmen" (fellow Jews): Andronicus, Junias, Herodion (vv. 7, 11), and Lucius, Jason, Sosipater (v. 21). Eight send greetings from Corinth (vv. 21–23).

Repeated words, with counts (NASB95):

- "greet" — **22** times (vv. 3, 5 ×2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 ×2, 11 ×2, 12 ×2, 13, 14, 15, 16 ×2, 21, 22, 23 ×2): 17 commands in vv. 3–16, then 5 greetings sent.
- "in the Lord" — **7** (vv. 2, 8, 11, 12 ×2, 13, 22); "in Christ" — **4** (vv. 3, 7, 9, 10). Eleven times Paul locates a person by their union with Christ.
- "work" words ("workers," "worked hard," "worker") — **6** (vv. 3, 6, 9, 12 ×2, 21); "worked hard" ×2 (vv. 6, 12).
- "beloved" — **4** (vv. 5, 8, 9, 12); "fellow" — **4** (fellow workers v. 3, fellow prisoners v. 7, fellow worker vv. 9, 21); "kinsman/kinsmen" — **3** (vv. 7, 11, 21).
- "church/churches" — **5** (vv. 1, 4, 5, 16, 23); "grace" — **2** (vv. 20, 24); "obedience" — **2** (vv. 19, 26); "wise" — **2** (vv. 19, 27); "Amen" — **2** (vv. 24, 27).

Contrasts: "slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites" (v. 18) ⟷ "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" (v. 3). Smooth and flattering speech (v. 18) ⟷ "the preaching of Jesus Christ" (v. 25). Wise in good ⟷ innocent in evil (v. 19). The God of *peace* (v. 20) ⟷ *crush* Satan — peace comes by victory. Kept secret for long ages ⟷ "but now is manifested" (vv. 25–26). Clever talkers (v. 18) ⟷ "the only wise God" (v. 27).

Shape of the chapter: a commendation (1–2), a roll call (3–16), a warning with a promise (17–20), a signature page from Corinth (21–24), a doxology (25–27). The doxology repeats the letter's opening: gospel, prophets, Jesus Christ, obedience of faith, all the nations (1:1–5 ⟷ 16:25–27).

Chapter theme (my words): The gospel of Romans is lived by people with names — servants, couples, households, prisoners, scribes and hosts. Guard that family from smooth-talking dividers, stand on the crushed serpent, and give the glory to the only wise God through Jesus Christ.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 16:25–26

"Now to △ Him who is able to establish you according to ☆ my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of ◷ the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to ▤ obedience of faith;"

FIGURE · THE DOXOLOGY CLOSES THE DOOR THE LETTER OPENED

ROMANS 1:1–5 · THE DOOR		ROMANS 16:25–27 · THE CLOSE
"set apart for the gospel of God" 1:1	GOSPEL	"according to my gospel" 16:25
"promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures" · 1:2	PROPHETS	"by the Scriptures of the prophets" 16:26
"concerning His Son … Jesus Christ our Lord" · 1:3–4	JESUS CHRIST	"the preaching of Jesus Christ … through Jesus Christ" · 16:25, 27
"to bring about the obedience of faith" · 1:5	OBEDIENCE OF FAITH	"leading to obedience of faith" 16:26
"among all the Gentiles" 1:5	ALL THE NATIONS	"made known to all the nations" 16:26

"Gentiles" (1:5) and "nations" (16:26) are one Greek word, ethnē — the letter ends where it began.

Read across each row: the five themes of Paul's first five verses return in his last three, so the whole letter sits between two statements of the same gospel.

Why end Romans with a list of names? Guzik, quoting Morris: Romans "was a letter to real people and, as far as we can see, ordinary people; it was not written to professional theologians." Thirteen of the twenty-four names also turn up in inscriptions connected with the emperor's household in Rome (Guzik) — slaves and freedmen among them. Spurgeon reads the list as a roll of honor graded by service, not rank. The list is also the proof of chapters 14–15: Jew and Gentile, slave and free, men and women, greeting one another as family.

Phoebe — servant or deacon? *Diakonos* (v. 1) is both the ordinary word "servant" and the word for the office of deacon. Guzik: "a female deacon in the church, either by formal recognition or through her general service." Sproul: the term itself carries no built-in description of church office, yet "The Greek indicates one who holds a more specific office of important assistance to the Apostolic ministry." Henry: "a servant by office, a stated servant," serving in charity and hospitality rather than preaching. The teachers agree she was recognized and trusted; they differ on how formal that was. Her other title, *prostatis* (v. 2), is a patron — someone who stood before others to protect and provide — and Paul asks Rome to stand beside her as she stood beside him.

Andronicus and Junias (v. 7). Three questions. *Man or woman?* The Greek accusative *Iounian* is feminine (Junia) with one accent and masculine (Junias) with another; the Textus Receptus, Tischendorf, Westcott-Hort, Nestle (1904), the Byzantine text and the SBLGNT print the feminine accent, though a number of twentieth-century critical editions printed the masculine. NASB95 reads "Junias," KJV "Junia." Sproul: "Junia could be a man or a woman, depending on how you render the Greek there." *Among the apostles, or known to them?* "Outstanding among the apostles" can mean counted among the wider circle of sent missionaries, or well known to the apostles. Guzik allows the first but adds, "If there ever were women recognized as apostles … this is the strongest Scriptural evidence. It isn't very strong." Sproul holds that no woman held the office of Apostle. *What is certain:* they were Jews, fellow prisoners with Paul, and in Christ before him.

The house churches. "The church that is in their house" (v. 5; 1 Cor 16:19). Sproul: "there were no other places to meet." Guzik: "Each house church probably had its own 'pastor.'" Henry: "a church in a house is no such absurd thing as some make it to be." Rome's church was a network of homes and circles — at least five in this chapter.

Households with an empty chair. The households of Aristobulus and Narcissus are greeted; the men are not. Spurgeon: "Where are you, Aristobulus?" — a believing household with an unbelieving head. Henry: "some good servants … even in the family of a wicked man." Grace reached the servants' quarters first.

Rufus — choice, or chosen? *Eklektos* (v. 13) means both. NASB95 "a choice man," KJV "chosen." Spurgeon: the verse cannot be about his election, "since all the rest were chosen too." Henry holds both: "a choice Christian, whose gifts and graces evinced that he was eternally chosen." Mark 15:21 names Simon of Cyrene as "the father of Alexander and Rufus"; Sproul reads that as Mark honoring members known to the church; Guzik: possible, but "Rufus was a common name."

The holy kiss (v. 16). Sproul: "it is a custom, not a principle" — the command is the warmth of family greeting, holy and sincere (Henry: chaste, not Judas's). For us it may be a handshake or an embrace; it must not be cold.

The dividers (vv. 17–18). Not those who teach doctrine — Sproul: "Paul does not say to avoid doctrine." They are those who cause dissensions and stumbling blocks "contrary to the teaching which you learned." They serve their own *koilia*, belly — appetite rules them — and they work by *chrēstologia* and *eulogia*, plausible kindness and flattering blessing, on the *akakoi*, the guileless. Two commands: watch them (*skopein*), and turn away (*ekklinete*). Spurgeon: false doctrine tolerated "knowingly and wittingly" spreads like plague in a bale of goods.

Wise in good, innocent in evil (v. 19). *Akeraios*, "unmixed." Sproul: "Do not be pros in wickedness; be amateurs in your sin." Guzik: "It is of far more use to know the good than it is to know the evil." The cure for counterfeit is knowing the genuine.

Crushing Satan (v. 20). Genesis 3:15 in Paul's mouth (Henry: "plainly alluding to the first promise"). God does the crushing; the church does the standing (Guzik). "Soon" — Sproul offers AD 70 as one possibility and leaves it open; Henry and Guzik look to the speedy, certain end of a conquered enemy (Rev 20:1–3). Spurgeon: Satan is tethered — "Dread not the foe, but bless God for the chain."

Verse 24 — the textual issue, honestly. The NASB95 sets v. 24 in brackets: "[The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]" It repeats v. 20's blessing with "all" added. It is wanting in the oldest manuscripts and is omitted by the critical editors (Ellicott; Expositor's Greek Testament); the Byzantine text and the Textus Receptus include it, and so the KJV. The manuscripts also move the doxology (vv. 25–27): many later copies put it after 14:23 (Vincent; Expositor's Greek Testament). No doctrine is at stake — the same blessing stands in v. 20 in every text. Spurgeon preached a whole sermon on the KJV's v. 24 ("The Pastor's Parting Blessing"); Henry hears in the repeated blessing a Paul "loth to part."

The doxology (vv. 25–27). It reopens the letter's front door: gospel (1:1 / 16:25), prophets (1:2 / 16:26), Jesus Christ (1:3–4 / 16:25, 27), obedience of faith (1:5 / 16:26), all the nations (1:5 / 16:26). God is "able to establish you" (*stērixai* — the same verb as 1:11). The "mystery" (Guzik: "the whole plan of redemption through Jesus Christ") was kept in silence for ages and is now manifested. Sproul ties being established to justification by faith alone: "Without imputation there is no justification, and without justification by faith alone there is no gospel." Henry: "The obedience of faith is that obedience which is paid to the word of faith." The last word is God's wisdom — and the last word after that is *Amen*, from *emeth*, truth (Sproul).

Word study (Greek):

- **servant — *diakonos* (G1249):** servant, minister; also the church office of deacon.
- **helper — *prostatis* (G4368):** patron, protector; only here in the New Testament.
- **fellow workers — *synergos* (G4904):** co-laborer (vv. 3, 9, 21).
- **first convert — *aparchē* (G536):** firstfruits; "of Asia" in the critical text, "of Achaia" in the TR/KJV.
- **Junias / Junia — *Iounian* (G2458):** accent decides masculine or feminine.
- **kinsmen — *syngenēs* (G4773):** relatives; here fellow Jews.
- **fellow prisoners — *synaichmalōtos* (G4869):** fellow captives.
- **outstanding — *episēmos* (G1978):** marked, notable.
- **approved — *dokimos* (G1384):** tested and proven.
- **choice / chosen — *eklektos* (G1588):** elect; choice, excellent.
- **kiss — *philēma* (G5370):** the family greeting.
- **dissensions — *dichostasia* (G1370):** standing apart, divisions.
- **hindrances — *skandalon* (G4625):** stumbling blocks, traps.
- **appetites — *koilia* (G2836):** belly.
- **smooth speech — *chrēstologia* (G5542)** and **flattering speech — *eulogia* (G2129):** plausible talk and fine words.
- **unsuspecting — *akakos* (G172):** guileless, "un-evil."
- **innocent — *akeraios* (G185):** unmixed, pure.
- **crush — *syntribō* (G4937):** shatter; **soon — *tachos* (G5034):** quickly.
- **host — *xenos* (G3581):** stranger; host of strangers.
- **treasurer — *oikonomos* (G3623):** steward, civic manager.
- **establish — *stērizō* (G4741):** make firm.
- **mystery — *mystērion* (G3466); kept secret — *sigaō* (G4601):** kept in silence.
- **obedience — *hypakoē* (G5218)** of **faith — *pistis* (G4102):** only here and 1:5.
- **only — *monos* (G3441); wise — *sophos* (G4680).**

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **The theology has faces** — twenty-six greeted, eight sending, one courier.
2. **Phoebe carried Romans** — the letter reached Rome in a servant's hands.
3. **A helper is helped** — *prostatis* and *parastēte*: stand beside the one who stood before many.
4. **Honor is measured by service** (Spurgeon) — note how many "worked hard."
5. **The church met in houses** — at least five circles in Rome.
6. **One accent, one debate** — Junia or Junias; the teachers weigh it differently.
7. **The households were mixed** — Aristobulus's house greeted, the man not.
8. **The dividers sound kind** — smooth words aimed at the guileless; be amateurs in evil.
9. **Genesis 3:15 comes to Rome** — God crushes; the church stands.
10. **The letter ends where it began** — 1:1–5 and 16:25–27 are bookends.

Cross-references: Gen 3:15; Matt 10:16; Mark 15:21; Luke 7:45; Acts 18:2, 18–26; 19:22; 20:4; 1 Cor 1:14; 16:19–21; 2 Cor 13:12; Eph 3:5–6; Col 4:18; 1 Thess 5:26; 2 Tim 4:19–20; Rom 1:1–5, 11; 11:25, 33; 15:24–33; Rev 20:1–3.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · ROMANS 16:19

"For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil."

Command to obey — "Receive her in the Lord … help her." Phoebe needed a welcome in a strange city, and Paul put his own name on the line for her. This week I want to be the man who receives the newcomer — the guy just out, the man fresh from treatment, the visitor nobody knows — and asks, "What do you need?" Then actually helps.

Command to obey — "Greet." Seventeen times. Paul knew people by name and said what they meant to him: "my beloved," "my fellow worker," "who risked their own necks for my life." I'll write my own Romans 16 — five names — and send at least two of them a message telling them plainly what God has done through them in my life.

Sin to confess — listening to smooth talk. "By their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting" (v. 18). I know that voice. It sounds kind; it serves its own appetite. Sometimes it is a person; sometimes it is the voice in my own head explaining why one more time won't hurt. I confess where I have given it a hearing, and I will do the two things Paul says: keep my eye on it, and turn away from it.

Sin to confess — knowing too much about evil. Paul wants me "innocent in what is evil." I don't need to be an expert in the thing that nearly destroyed me. Sproul's line is mine now: be an amateur in sin. I'll fill my mind with the genuine — the Word, worship, good men — instead of studying the counterfeit.

Promise to trust — "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Not my fist — His. Not someday maybe — soon, and certain. The serpent was bruised on the head at the cross (Gen 3:15); I stand on a conquered enemy. When temptation comes, I will remember he is on a chain, and I will plant my feet.

Example to follow — the households. Aristobulus's household is greeted, but Aristobulus is not. Somewhere in Rome there were servants praying for a master who did not know Christ. I have family like that. I will pray for them by name, and I will live so that the gospel in my house is visible — "Brother, let not your sister go to heaven alone."

Example to follow — the ones who "worked hard." Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis. Their names are in Scripture because they labored, not because they were famous. The work nobody sees at our meetings — setting up chairs, driving a brother to court, sitting up with a man at 2 a.m. — is written down in heaven.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Phoebe was "a helper of many." Who has been a Phoebe to you — and whom are you standing beside this month? (16:1–2; Gal 6:10) *Paul asks the Romans to help the helper; service received becomes service owed.*
2. Paul knew two dozen people by name in a city he had never visited. Whose name would you put in your own Romans 16, and have you told them what they mean to you? (16:3–16) *Greeting someone by name is a spiritual act — seventeen times in fourteen verses.*

3. Aristobulus's household is greeted, but Aristobulus is not. Who in your family is still outside, and how are you praying for them? (16:10–11; 1 Pet 3:1) *"Pray unceasingly that your life-companions may be converted to God."*
4. Paul warns against "smooth and flattering speech" that deceives the unsuspecting. What smooth voice — a person, a feed, a habit's excuse — have you been giving a hearing it has not earned? (16:17–18) *Keep your eye on it, then turn away from it: both verbs are commands.*
5. Where do you need to be "innocent in what is evil" — an amateur rather than a pro — instead of an expert in it? (16:19; Matt 10:16) *The defense against counterfeit is to know the genuine: wise in what is good.*
6. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." What fight are you trying to win with your own hands that God has promised to finish under your feet? (16:20; Gen 3:15) *God does the crushing; you do the standing — on a conquered enemy.*

Worship. Romans began with "the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets" and ends with that same gospel "made known to all the nations." Sixteen chapters of the deepest truth ever written, and it closes not with an argument but with praise: "to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen." I don't have to be clever. He is wise. I just have to say Amen — *it is true* — and mean it.

Prayer. God of peace, thank You for putting names in Your Word — servants and prisoners, mothers and scribes, men who worked hard and were never famous. Write my name among the faithful. Make me a helper of many. Give me eyes to see the smooth talkers and the courage to turn away. Keep me wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil. Crush Satan under my feet soon, as You promised. Establish me in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and let my life lead to the obedience of faith. To You, the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

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