MercEmail **A Weekly Devotional by Steve Higginbotham**

Trick or Treat?
October 31, 2012

As a boy, "Trick or Treat" night ranked second on my list of favorite holidays behind Christmas. I loved dressing up and wearing those plastic masks that would make your face sweat, give you no peripheral vision, and would always have to be taped to hold the elastic band to the mask where I had ripped it through the plastic hole (Remember?). The only down side about Trick or Treat was when someone would drop an apple in your bag. An apple! Are you kidding me? Who wants an apple?

Well, one year when I returned home and spread my candy out of the floor to "categorize" it (did you do this?), I discovered that someone had given me an apple, and before I could take a bite, my mom said, "Don't bite into that apple. I want to cut it up in wedges just to be safe." As it turned out, when my mom sliced up the apple, she found a wood screw had been inserted in hopes of injuring the person who took a bite.

But now, here's why I tell you this story. I didn't go Trick or Treating outside of my neighborhood. I didn't go to strangers' houses. I just went where I was known. But who would have thought that someone I knew and trusted would try to harm me or any other child in the neighborhood? In a similar vein, who would think that people whom we know and trust might mislead us when it comes to our spiritual well-being?

The point that I am making is not to "distrust" everyone, but rather to "verify" everything by what the Bible teaches. That's the only way we can be sure that we are safe (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Remember, we can be harmed by the malicious spiritual advice of others, but we can also be just as harmed by the misguided, but well-intended advice of friends.