

The Books of 1 and 2 Peter, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 13: Grow in Grace; Final Words

2 Peter 3:14–18

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

Second Peter 3:14–18 is the conclusion of the letter and of all Peter's recorded teaching, and though brief, it carries real doctrinal weight. Be ready to teach three things in particular. First, the call to be found 'without spot or blemish, and at peace' at Christ's coming reinforces the letter's consistent theology: final salvation belongs to those who are diligently ready, living holy lives in expectation of the Lord, not to those who presume. Second, verses 15–16 are a remarkable witness to the inspiration and authority of the New Testament: Peter classes Paul's letters with 'the other Scriptures,' showing that the apostolic writings were recognized as Scripture in the apostolic age itself, and he warns that twisting them leads 'to their own destruction.' This grounds the authority of the New Testament and the danger of distorting it, including the abuse of difficult texts. Third, the closing charge to 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,' ending with glory ascribed to Jesus, both affirms the deity and lordship of Christ and frames the Christian life as continual growth rather than static maintenance, consistent with the warning that we can 'lose our stability' and be 'carried away.'

Pastorally, these are the last words of a dying apostle, and they have the weight of a final charge. Peter wants the church found ready, stable, and growing. His warm reference to Paul as 'beloved brother,' despite their earlier public disagreement, models gracious unity among believers who have differed. His warning against being 'carried away by the error of lawless people' ties spiritual stability directly to sound doctrine and watchfulness. And his final word, growth in grace and knowledge, leaves the church not with a finish line but with a trajectory.

Since this lesson concludes the entire thirteen-lesson study, devote real attention to the capstone question, helping students look back across both letters and name how Christ has formed them and what they will carry for life. Aim to leave students ready (found without spot and at peace), stable (anchored in sound doctrine against error), and growing (pressing on in the grace and knowledge of Christ), giving glory to the Lord and Savior who held Peter to the end and will hold them. The disciple we are forming does not coast toward the finish but grows toward it, found at peace and giving Jesus the glory now and to the day of eternity.

Question 1

Student Question:

Peter says, 'Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these things, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace' (v. 14). What does it mean to be found 'without spot

or blemish, and at peace,' and how does the expectation of Christ's return motivate this kind of diligent, holy living?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter draws the practical conclusion from the coming day of the Lord: 'since you are waiting for these things, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.' The threefold goal is striking. 'Without spot or blemish' is sacrificial language; it describes the unblemished offering, and here it describes a life kept clean for the Lord. It deliberately contrasts with the false teachers of chapter 2, who were called 'blots and blemishes.' The faithful are to be the opposite of the false.

Note the addition: 'and at peace.' Being found ready is not only personal purity but peace, peace with God and peace with one another. Peter wants the Lord to find us not anxious, not at war with our brothers, not estranged from God, but reconciled and at rest. Readiness has a relational dimension; a clean life and a peaceable spirit go together.

Stress that diligence is required: 'be diligent.' This readiness does not happen by drifting; it is pursued. The expectation of Christ's return is the great motive, but the response is active effort to keep our lives clean and our relationships at peace. Ask students what 'without spot or blemish, and at peace' would require of them if Christ came this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Final readiness as being found 'without spot or blemish, and at peace' (Ephesians 5:27; Philippians 2:15)
- Sacrificial purity language contrasting the faithful with the false teachers (the 'blots and blemishes' of 2 Peter 2:13)
- Peace with God and with one another as part of readiness
- Diligent effort, not drifting, as the path to being found ready

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to be found 'without spot or blemish, and at peace'?
- How does waiting for Christ's return motivate a clean and peaceable life?
- If Christ came this week, what would readiness require of you?

Question 2

Student Question:

Peter assumes that those 'waiting for these things' will live differently now. As you near the end of this study of 1 and 2 Peter, how has waiting for Christ's return actually shaped the way you live, and where do you still need it to?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question invites students to take stock near the end of the study. Peter assumes that those who are truly 'waiting for these things' live differently; expectation shapes conduct. The hope of Christ's return is meant to be not a doctrine filed away but a daily reorienting reality.

Help students reflect honestly on the gap. In what specific ways has the hope of Christ's coming, studied across these letters, actually changed how they spend their time, handle their money, treat people, face suffering? And where does it remain mostly theoretical, believed but not yet shaping the calendar and the heart?

Move toward one area still needing change. Ask each student to name one place where waiting for Christ has not yet reshaped their life and what one step would begin to close the gap. The aim is that the doctrine of the end would land in the dailiness of life.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Expectation of Christ's return as a daily reorienting reality (Titus 2:11-13)
- Hope meant to shape conduct, not merely to be believed
- Honest assessment of where doctrine has and has not yet landed
- Closing the gap between belief and practice

Discussion Prompts

- How has waiting for Christ's return actually changed the way you live?
- Where does it remain more theoretical than practical for you?
- What one step would let that hope reshape your daily life?

Question 3

Student Question:

Peter says to 'count the patience of our Lord as salvation' (v. 15), echoing his earlier point that God delays so that more may be saved. How should we understand the time we are given, every day before Christ returns, as an opportunity for salvation, both for ourselves and for others?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter returns to a theme from earlier in the chapter: 'count the patience of our Lord as salvation.' The delay of Christ's coming is not dead time; it is saving time. Every day before the end is an opportunity, a gift of grace in which salvation is still available, for us and for others.

Help students reframe their view of 'ordinary' time. The days and years we so easily waste are precisely the patience of God, the open window in which people can still repent and believe. To 'count' this patience 'as salvation' is to treat each day as the precious opportunity it is, not to be squandered.

Apply it in two directions. For ourselves, the time we have is time to keep growing, repenting, and preparing to meet the Lord. For others, it is time to pray and witness while the door stands open. Ask students how they would spend this week differently if they truly counted its days as the patient mercy of God, opportunities for salvation that will not last forever.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The present age as saving time, the patience of God (2 Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4)
- Counting each day as a precious opportunity for salvation
- The window of grace for our own ongoing repentance and growth
- The window of grace for the salvation of others

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to 'count the patience of our Lord as salvation'?
- How does seeing time as saving opportunity change how you use it?
- How would you spend this week differently if you truly believed that?

Question 4

Student Question:

Peter speaks of 'our beloved brother Paul,' even though the two had once openly disagreed (Galatians 2:11–14). What does Peter's warm reference to Paul teach about handling disagreements among believers, and is there a brother or sister you need to regard, and speak of, with that kind of love?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter calls Paul 'our beloved brother,' a tender phrase made more striking by their history. Years earlier Paul had publicly rebuked Peter at Antioch for hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11–14). Yet here, near the end of his life, Peter speaks of Paul with warmth and honor. The earlier conflict did not harden into lasting division; love and unity won out.

Draw out the model for handling disagreement among believers. Peter and Paul had a real, sharp disagreement, and Peter was in the wrong, yet the relationship was not destroyed. Peter received correction, the breach healed, and brotherly love remained. This is how disagreements among Christians ought to go: addressed honestly, resolved humbly, and not allowed to fester into permanent estrangement.

Apply it personally. Ask each student whether there is a brother or sister they have allowed a disagreement to distance, someone they speak of coolly rather than as 'beloved.' Peter's example calls us to pursue reconciliation and to regard fellow believers, even those we have clashed with, with genuine love. The unity of the church is worth more than winning an old argument.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Handling disagreement among believers without lasting division (Ephesians 4:1–3)
- Peter's humility in receiving Paul's earlier correction (Galatians 2:11–14)
- Brotherly love prevailing over past conflict
- Pursuing reconciliation rather than nursing estrangement (Matthew 5:23–24)

Discussion Prompts

- What does Peter's warmth toward Paul teach about handling disagreement?
- Is there a believer you need to regard, and speak of, with more love?
- What would pursuing reconciliation look like for you this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

Peter places Paul's letters alongside 'the other Scriptures' and warns that ignorant and unstable people 'twist' them 'to their own destruction' (vv. 15–16). What does this teach about the inspiration and authority of the New Testament writings, and about the serious danger of distorting Scripture to suit ourselves?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is a doctrinally weighty verse on the authority of the New Testament. Peter refers to Paul's letters and says that the ignorant and unstable twist them 'as they do the other Scriptures.' In one phrase, Peter places Paul's writings in the category of Scripture, the God-breathed Word. This shows that the apostolic writings were recognized as Scripture within the apostolic age itself, not centuries later by church decree. The New Testament is Scripture, carrying the same authority as the Old.

Note Peter's honest admission that some things in Paul are 'hard to understand.' Scripture does not claim that every passage is equally easy; it contains depths that require careful, humble study. The difficulty of some texts is not a license to ignore or distort them but a call to handle them with care, interpreting the unclear in light of the clear and the whole counsel of God.

Sound the warning Peter sounds: people twist these Scriptures 'to their own destruction.' Distorting the Word is not a harmless intellectual game; it is spiritually deadly, both for those who twist and those who follow. We approach Scripture to submit to it, not to bend it to our preferences. Ask students what it means to handle the Word with the reverence due the very voice of God, especially where it is hard or inconvenient.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Paul's letters recognized as Scripture within the apostolic age (1 Timothy 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)

- The full authority of the New Testament alongside the Old (2 Timothy 3:16)
- Some Scripture genuinely hard, requiring humble, careful interpretation
- Twisting Scripture as spiritually destructive, not a harmless game

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean that Peter calls Paul's letters 'Scripture'?
- How should we handle passages that are 'hard to understand'?
- Why is distorting Scripture so serious in Peter's eyes?

Question 6

Student Question:

Peter warns that twisting Scripture leads 'to their own destruction.' Where are you most tempted to bend or explain away a passage that is clear but inconvenient, and what would it look like to submit to the text instead of reshaping it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns the warning about twisting Scripture inward. We rarely twist the Bible out of pure malice; more often we do it to escape a command that is clear but costs us something. The danger Peter names is not only in the false teachers 'out there' but in the human heart that prefers a more convenient text.

Help students identify their own pressure points. Where is there a passage they know is clear, on money, forgiveness, sexual purity, the tongue, submission to God's Word, the plan of salvation, but which they are tempted to soften, reinterpret, or quietly set aside because obeying it is hard? Naming the specific text and the specific evasion brings the temptation into the light.

Move toward submission to the text. The faithful response to a clear but inconvenient passage is not to reshape it but to submit to it, letting Scripture correct us rather than us correcting Scripture. Ask each student where God is calling them to stop explaining away a command and simply obey it. The Word is our master, not our servant.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The temptation to twist clear texts to escape their cost
- Self-interest as a common motive for distorting Scripture
- Interpreting to submit to the Word, not to evade it (James 1:22-25)
- Letting Scripture correct us rather than reshaping it to suit us

Discussion Prompts

- Where are you tempted to bend or explain away a clear but costly passage?

- What would submitting to that text instead of reshaping it look like?
- How do you keep Scripture as your master rather than your servant?

Question 7

Student Question:

Peter warns, 'Take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability' (v. 17). What does this teach about the relationship between sound doctrine and spiritual stability, and how does being 'carried away' by error threaten a believer's standing?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Peter ties doctrine to stability: 'Take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.' Sound doctrine is not dry intellectualism; it is the ballast that keeps a believer steady in rough seas. Error is not harmless; it 'carries away' and topples those who embrace it.

Explain the image of being 'carried away' and losing one's 'stability.' Peter pictures a believer who had a firm footing being swept off it by the current of false teaching. Note again the assumption that runs through both letters: a believer can lose his stability, can be carried away, can fall. Stability is not automatic; it is maintained by holding to sound doctrine and resisting error.

Apply it to the church's need for discernment and grounding. A Christian poorly taught and undiscerning is easy prey for every persuasive error; a Christian grounded in the Word and forewarned is far harder to topple. Ask students how being firmly grounded in sound teaching protects their footing, and where shaky doctrine might be leaving them vulnerable to being swept along.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Sound doctrine as the ballast of spiritual stability (Ephesians 4:14)
- Error as a force that carries believers away and topples them
- The assumption that a believer can lose stability and fall (against automatic security)
- Grounding in the Word as protection against being swept along

Discussion Prompts

- How is sound doctrine connected to spiritual stability?
- What does it mean to be 'carried away' and lose your footing?
- How does being grounded in the Word protect you from error?

Question 8

Student Question:

Peter assumes a believer can 'lose' his stability and be 'carried away.' What are the influences most likely to carry you away or unsettle your footing right now, and what keeps you anchored and stable in Christ?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question makes the warning personal and present. Peter assumes real danger; the faithful must 'take care.' Each student faces particular currents that could carry them away, and naming them is the first step to resisting them.

Help students identify their specific destabilizing influences. For one it may be a relationship pulling them from Christ, for another a steady diet of voices that mock or erode the faith, a season of doubt, a besetting sin, the slow pressure of a culture that assumes the gospel is false. The currents differ, but everyone is in some current.

Move toward the anchors that hold. Ask each student what keeps them stable, the Word, prayer, the assembly of the saints, accountability, the Lord's Supper, sound teaching, and how they might strengthen those anchors against the currents they named. Stability is not the absence of currents but the presence of strong anchors.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The reality of present forces that can destabilize faith
- Naming specific destabilizing influences as the first defense
- The means of grace as anchors: Word, prayer, assembly, accountability (Hebrews 10:24–25)
- Stability as anchored faith, not the absence of pressure

Discussion Prompts

- What influences are most likely to carry you away or unsettle you right now?
- What anchors keep you stable in Christ?
- How could you strengthen those anchors against the currents you face?

Question 9

Student Question:

Peter's closing command is, 'Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity' (v. 18). What does it mean to grow in both the grace and the knowledge of Christ, why does Peter make ongoing growth his final charge, and what does it teach us that he ends with glory given to Jesus, whom he calls 'Lord and Savior' and 'God' throughout these letters?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the doctrinal and pastoral summit of the lesson and of the whole letter: Peter's final charge, 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.' Note that he commands growth in two things held together. Growth 'in grace' is growth in our experience of, and our living out of, God's undeserved favor, becoming more shaped by grace, more gracious, more dependent on Christ. Growth 'in knowledge' is growth in our true, personal knowledge of Christ Himself, deepening intimacy and understanding. Neither alone is enough: knowledge without grace puffs up, and a vague 'grace' without the knowledge of Christ drifts. The two grow together.

Stress why Peter makes growth his final word. The whole of 2 Peter has warned against two dangers, falling away (chapter 2) and being carried off by error (chapter 3), and the great safeguard against both is continual growth. A growing Christian is a stable Christian; the surest protection against drifting back or being swept away is to keep moving forward in grace and knowledge. The Christian life is not a plateau to be maintained but a trajectory to be pursued, all the way to the day of eternity. To stop growing is to begin sliding.

Mark how Peter ends: 'To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.' The letter closes with worship, glory ascribed directly to Jesus Christ. Across these two letters Peter has called Jesus 'our God and Savior' (1:1), 'Lord and Savior,' and now gives Him the glory that belongs to God alone. This is a clear affirmation of the deity and lordship of Christ. The right end of all doctrine and all Christian growth is not our own improvement but the glory of the Lord and Savior who bought us, holds us, and is bringing us home.

Bring the whole study to rest here. Peter, about to die, leaves the church not with a finish line but with a direction: keep growing in grace and knowledge, give Jesus the glory, and you will be found ready, stable, and His. Invite students to make this their lifelong charge, and to give the glory, now and to the day of eternity, to the One these letters have lifted before their eyes from the first verse to the last.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Growth in both grace and knowledge as the lifelong shape of the Christian life (Colossians 1:9–10; Ephesians 4:15)
- Continual growth as the great safeguard against falling away and being carried off by error
- The Christian life as a trajectory to pursue, not a plateau to maintain
- The deity and lordship of Christ, given the glory due God alone (2 Peter 1:1; John 5:23)
- The glory of Christ, now and to the day of eternity, as the goal of all growth

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to grow in both the grace and the knowledge of Christ?
- Why does Peter make ongoing growth his very last charge?
- What does it teach us that he ends by giving glory to Jesus as Lord and God?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole of 1 and 2 Peter, which ends here. From a living hope and the call to holiness, through suffering, submission, and the sure word of God, to growth, watchfulness, and the day of the Lord, name one specific way Jesus has been forming you through this entire study. What single truth from these two letters do you most want to carry forward for the rest of your life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Use this final capstone to look back across the whole of 1 and 2 Peter, since the study ends here. Trace the journey from the first letter to the last verse: a living hope born of the resurrection, the call to holiness purchased by precious blood, the identity of a chosen people and royal priesthood, submission and the example of the suffering Christ, godly homes, suffering for righteousness, baptism into the risen Lord, living for God's will, sharing Christ's sufferings, humble shepherding, the diligent confirming of our calling, the exposing of false teachers, the certainty of the day of the Lord, and finally the charge to grow in grace. Two letters, one great aim: a faithful people, ready, stable, and growing, with their eyes lifted to Christ.

Press for lifelong formation. Ask each student to name one way Jesus has formed them across this entire study, and the single truth from both letters they most want to carry for the rest of their life. The goal of thirteen lessons was never information but transformation, members of the body actually becoming more like Christ.

Close in worship, as Peter does. Send students out with his final words ringing: be found without spot and at peace, stay stable against error, grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, and give Him the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Remind them that the same Lord who restored Peter the failure and kept him faithful to the end will hold them, and bring them home, and is worthy of all glory forever. Amen.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The unifying message of 1 and 2 Peter: a faithful people lifted to glory in Christ
- Transformation, not mere information, as the goal of the study
- Worship and the glory of Christ as the fitting end of all discipleship

Discussion Prompts

- Across both letters, how has Jesus been forming you?
- What single truth from 1 and 2 Peter do you most want to carry for life?
- How will you keep growing in grace and knowledge after this study ends?