



## [2 Peter 3:14-18](#)

(14) Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (15) And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; (16) As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (17) Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. (18) But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

*King James Version*

Peter cautions that some of the things the apostle Paul writes are hard to understand, as though some people do not truly understand Paul's lyrics and thus end up with wrong impressions of his compositions. Knowing a couple of lines from a piece of music is not the same as grasping the totality. Yet, nominal Christianity gives an embarrassing performance before [God](#) because it latches onto some memorable lines from Paul and believes it knows the whole song.

The terms Peter uses provide clues about what is on his mind. When we perceive where he is coming from, we can know what lyrics from brother Paul we should listen to extra carefully to ensure that we are not mishearing.

In verse 14, Peter commands *diligence*, meaning we must exert ourselves and be zealous. He emphasizes robust and focused effort instead of offhandedly grabbing a line or two from Paul and believing our understanding is complete.

Peter urges us to “be diligent to be found by God in [peace](#), without spot and blameless.” Since he is telling *us* to be diligent, it means that the spotlessness and blamelessness he has in mind are not what God imputes to us. Christ's righteousness was imputed to us when we accepted His blood, and then, in a legal sense, we became without spot and blameless.

But accepting Christ's blood did not require the diligence Peter talks about here. After we come under His blood, though, we must submit to God in living up to that imputed spotlessness and blamelessness. Doing so requires significant effort; thus, Peter uses “diligent.”

In verse 16, he warns that misusing Paul's words leads to *destruction*, a term frequently used concerning God's judgment on the disobedient. [Jesus](#) says that “wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to *destruction*” ([Matthew 7:13](#)). In other words, the easy way does not end well. The future “man of sin” is called “the son of perdition [*destruction*]” ([II Thessalonians 2:3](#)), at least in part because he is destined for the Lake of Fire—his *sins* lead him to destruction. Earlier in the chapter, Peter warns of the fire that characterizes the coming day of judgment (evaluation against a standard) and *destruction* of ungodly men ([II Peter 3:7](#)). To summarize, then, the unstable and untaught will interpret Paul's teaching in such a way that will lead them into God's judgment—to destruction or perdition.

In verse 17, Peter adds another warning, this time against *apostasy*, or as he puts it, “fall[ing] from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked.” He describes a change from a good spiritual state to a bad one.

The New King James Version uses the phrase “the wicked,” giving the impression that Peter is talking about deeply depraved people. However, the people the apostle describes do not have to be characterized as extreme at all. Several translations interpret the phrase as being “carried away with the error of *the lawless*.” The Greek word translated as “wicked” or “lawless,” *athesmos* (*Strong's* #113), indicates a person who is against what has been instituted as law, custom, ordinance, precept, or rule. The wicked do not have to be mass murderers but simply those who disregard the established standards. In this context, the established standards are the laws of God.

To summarize, Peter warns us to check ourselves regarding Paul's material so we are not led away by [false teachers](#) (the theme of Peter's previous chapter) or our own incorrect impression of what Paul says. If we fail to hear it correctly, we will fall into the error of those who disregard God's law, those who are ignorant of the whole counsel of God (“untaught”), and who thus are not steadfast (“unstable”). These individuals avoid the narrow way because they find it constraining, even though it leads to eternal life.

— David C. Grabbe

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