# DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE



#### TEXT SUMMARY

In this week's text, <u>2 Peter 3:13-18</u>, Peter brings his second letter to its conclusion with four exhortations: toward diligence, toward a deeper understanding of God's purposes, toward carefulness of thought, and toward spiritual growth.

## INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

- Our text opens with a significant transitional device ("but"), and there are several more such devices ("therefore" and "and").
  - Find the transitional devices.
  - What phrases do those devices connect, and what connections do they indicate?
- 2. Find the four exhortations (v. 14, 15, 17, 18).
- 3. Even though his message is stern, Peter's tone is soft. Twice in our text, and four times in this chapter, Peter addresses his readers as "beloved." Find those two "beloved" addresses in our text, along with the two other such addresses in this chapter.
- 4. What is the referent for the pronoun "this" in v. 17 ("knowing this beforehand...")?

## **DISCUSSION** (INTERPRETATION):

Some have interpreted the Scriptures' teaching on the Second Coming to mean that we can shift into neutral and coast to the finish line: since Jesus is coming back, we need not do anything but wait. But Peter says that the certainty of His Return should result not in indolence but in diligence (v. 14).

- 1. Why diligence instead of indolence?
- 2. Diligent about what?

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#### SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

- 1. While Peter acknowledges that even he finds some of Paul's writings difficult to understand, he warns that it is the "ignorant and unstable" who "twist" the Scripture, "to their own destruction" (v. 16).
  - What resources has God's Spirit provided to help His people avoid a faulty and destructive reading of His Word?
  - How have those resources played a role in your spiritual formation, especially in steering you away from error?
- 2. Peter refers to the writings of Paul as "Scripture," a word that is used elsewhere only to describe the Old Testament Scriptures. (The only exception is in 1 Tim 5:16, where Paul lays out a saying of Jesus alongside a quotation from the Old Testament, referring to both as "Scripture.") Apparently, in the minds of Paul and Peter, two giant leaders in the early church, the writings that would eventually make up the New Testament could be regarded as "Scripture," the very Word of God, centuries before the entire canon of the New Testament was recognized.

Why does it matter **when** the writings of the New Testament were recognized as holy writ? Wouldn't the church's claim of the divine inspiration of Scripture be just as strong if it had emerged in the centuries following the days of the New Testament?

3. In light of the certainty of our Lord's Return, what does diligence look like in the life of the believer? In what ways are you tempted toward spiritual indolence rather than diligence?

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