

Purpose Restored

THE POINT

Through Jesus, we can be forgiven and restored to the purpose for which He created us.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 3:14-26

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Paint doesn't last. It fades. It cracks. It peels. Live in a house long enough, and you will find yourself needing to repaint any exterior wood. I've had to do that twice over the years.

When I paint, though, I'm only dealing with one color. Wash the wall, scrape away anything that's peeling, and slap on a new coat. Manageable. But dealing with hundreds of colors that have faded and been covered with years of grime is something altogether different. Art restoration is a monumental task best not left to people like me. Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper," the fresco painted on a wall at the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie, began to deteriorate shortly after da Vinci put his brushes away. Since its completion in 1498, the painting has undergone seven attempts at restoration, and the last one took twenty years.¹

We need restoration too. We've lost our way, wandered from God, and painted over the abundant life and purpose God created us for with the dull color of self and the grime of sin. No DIY effort will do. We need the Master Restorer.





5 MINUTES

GET INTO THE STUDY

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, play a video clip or slideshow of some famous pieces of art. Then ask **Question #1**.

NOTE: A video option can be found at BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra.

DISCUSS: **Question #1** on page 29 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG): **What are some of your favorite pieces of art or music?**

GUIDE: Direct the group to **The Bible Meets Life** on page 29 of the PSG. Introduce the importance of having our purpose restored by reading or summarizing the text or by encouraging group members to read it on their own.

RECAP: We need restoration too. We've lost our way, wandered from God, and painted over the abundant life and purpose God created us for with the dull color of self and the grime of sin. No DIY effort will do. We need the Master Restorer.

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): Use the **"Nature Walk"** option (page 45 of this Leader Guide) to help the group consider how spending time with God, confessing sin, and drawing close to Him brings restoration to our souls.

GUIDE: Call attention to **The Point** on page 29 of the PSG: **Through Jesus, we can be forgiven and restored to the purpose for which He created us.**

PRAY: Transition into the study by thanking God for the forgiveness we have in Christ. Ask Him to help us find the areas where we still need to be restored.

STUDY THE BIBLE



10 MINUTES

NOTES



BEGGARS

Learn about the nature and treatment of beggars in the first century.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

Besides physical issues, in what other ways do people need healing and restoration?

ACTS 3:14-18

¹⁴ You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the source of life, whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Jesus has given him this perfect health in front of all of you. ¹⁷ “And now, brothers and sisters, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your leaders also did. ¹⁸ In this way God fulfilled what he had predicted through all the prophets—that his Messiah would suffer.

READ: Ask someone to read aloud Acts 3:14-18 on page 30 of the PSG.

RECAP: Few people like interruptions. I don’t, but I’m trying more and more to see interruptions as opportunities. That’s what the apostles Peter and John did. In Acts 3, these two followers of Jesus were headed to the temple to pray. Prayer is certainly an important and needed practice for all of us, but Peter and John were interrupted. They encountered a lame beggar, but instead of giving him a few coins, they gave him something better. Peter said, “I don’t have silver or gold, but what I do have, I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!” (v. 6).

GUIDE: Use the commentary for the verses on the next page of the Leader Guide to explain the context for this passage.

DISCUSS: **Question #2** on page 31 of the PSG: **Where do you see evidence in our culture that people need restoration?**

RECAP: We don’t know how much faith or understanding this crippled man had, but when Peter said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk” (v. 6), it was enough for the man to take hold of Peter’s hand. Mustard seeds are incredibly small—1/8th of an inch in diameter—but Jesus said, “For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matt. 17:20). And nothing is impossible! A man stood with Peter and John who could attest to that. Beyond the physical healing, Jesus healed him spiritually. And He can do the same for you.

PRAY: Read verse 16 aloud once again. Invite the group to speak the first names of people they know who need restoration—whether it be spiritual, physical, emotional, or relational. Advise them that there is no need for an explanation. Write these names down and then offer a prayer to God on their behalf.

TRANSITION: Jesus restores when we place our faith in Him. In the next verses, we see that Jesus forgives and refreshes us when we repent of our sin.

ACTS 3:14-18 *Commentary*

Connection to the Point. Faith in Jesus is the way to restoration.

Context. The first Christians were Jewish, and they continued to meet together in the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 2:46). Acts 3 opens with Peter and John going to the temple to pray (3:1). They encountered a lame man begging at the temple gate. Peter healed the man in the name of Jesus Christ, which created awe and astonishment among the people present (vv. 2-10). A crowd gathered around them in Solomon's Colonnade. Also known as Solomon's Porch, the colonnade was a covered, columned area located along the eastern wall of the temple complex, across from the court of the Gentiles, the outermost court of Herod's Temple. Peter took this opportunity to preach to the crowd. He began his sermon by asking why they were amazed by what had occurred, noting that it had not been him or John who had healed the lame man (v. 12). The power came from Jesus Christ (v. 16), whom God had glorified and whom the Jews had handed over to be put to death (v. 13).

Holy and Righteous One (v. 14). Titles for Jesus, these terms are most likely synonyms, and both have messianic emphases. The demons recognized Jesus's messianic identity when they called Him "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34). Jesus referred to Himself in His message to the church at Philadelphia as "the Holy One, the true one" (Rev. 3:7). In the Old Testament, Aaron, the first high priest, is identified as "the LORD's holy one" (Ps. 106:16), and Elisha the prophet is described as "a holy man of God" (2 Kings 4:9). Jesus is a greater high priest than Aaron (Heb. 4:14-16) and a greater prophet than Elisha (Luke 24:19). References to Jesus as "the Righteous One" appear in Acts 7:52 and 22:14; and "Jesus Christ the righteous one" in 1 John 2:1. In the Old Testament, righteousness was a characteristic of the prophesied Messiah (see Isa. 53:11; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 9:9).

Source of life (v. 15). Jesus is the eternal Word of God, in whom there is life and through whom all things came into being (John 1:1-4). Jesus said of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (14:6). Repentance of one's sins and belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior is the only way to have one's sins forgiven (Rom. 5:9; Col. 2:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:24), be rec-

onciled to God the Father (Rom. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:18-19), adopted into God's family (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:3-7; Eph. 1:3-6), and receive eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 6:23; 1 John 5:11).

Witnesses (v. 15). After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples on numerous occasions, making them witnesses to His resurrection. Jesus appeared to Peter alone (1 Cor. 15:5). Then He appeared to the apostles (minus Thomas) in the upper room (John 20:19-23). He appeared to the apostles again (including Thomas, vv. 26-29). Jesus also appeared to over five hundred believers at one time (1 Cor. 15:6).

Faith in his name (v. 16). The healing of the lame man was through faith in the name of Jesus. "In the biblical sense a name . . . represents a person and is an extension of that person's being and personality. To invoke the name of Jesus is to call upon his authority and power."²

Obviously, Peter had faith in Jesus, but what about the lame man? The initial moment of faith for the man was when Peter commanded, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" (v. 6). The extent of the man's faith in Jesus is not stated, but it was enough for the miracle to occur. The lame man took Peter's hand and stood, walked, jumped, and began to praise the Lord (vv. 7-8). He continued to hold Peter and John, perhaps prompting Peter's words in verse 16 that it was Jesus, not His disciples, who had healed this man.

Brothers and sisters (v. 17). In the New Testament, the phrase typically refers to Christians (Rom. 1:13; 1 Cor. 1:26; Phil. 1:12; Col. 1:2). However, here Peter used the phrase to refer to his fellow Jews. He identified with them in preparation for sharing the truth of the gospel.

God fulfilled what he had predicted (v. 18). Though God still held the Jews responsible for their rejection of Jesus, He had used their rejection of Jesus to fulfill the words of His prophets concerning the sufferings of the Messiah (Jesus). Perhaps some of the best-known Old Testament prophecies regarding the Messiah's sufferings are the prophet Isaiah's Servant Songs (Isa. 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12).

STUDY THE BIBLE



10 MINUTES

NOTES

ACTS 3:19-21

¹⁹ Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, ²⁰ that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah. ²¹ Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about through his holy prophets from the beginning.

READ: Ask someone to read aloud Acts 3:19-21 on page 31 of the PSG.

RECAP: Peter had led with the bad news first. The bad news was wrapped up in the healing of the crippled man, but there it was: You killed the One who is the source of life! You may have acted in ignorance (v. 17), not fully realizing the implications of denying and rejecting Jesus (vv. 13-14), but it's still bad news. You had a hand in crucifying the Son of God.

Peter now followed with good news. Their past actions weren't the end of the story if they acted upon the next words Peter spoke: "Therefore repent and turn back" (v. 19). Change your mind about Jesus and the life you have been living apart from Him. This is more than altering and tweaking your opinion of Jesus; it's a complete change in direction. Picture the soldiers on parade who are given the command, "About face." They turn around in the opposite direction. That was the call issued to the crowd that day, and it's the invitation we're given.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for the verses on the next page of the Leader Guide to explain what Peter meant by calling on the people to "Repent and turn back" (v. 19).

SUMMARIZE: Highlight the main points from page 32 of the PSG: Peter points to three things God does when we repent and turn back.

- **Your sins are wiped out.** "Wiped out" (v. 19) carries the meaning of "erased."
- **Seasons of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord.** Jesus doesn't just remove the bad; He replaces it with something good!
- **He will send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah.** We can experience the forgiveness and refreshment of His presence in our lives, but that is only an inkling of what's to come when Jesus returns.

DISCUSS: Question #3 on page 32 of the PSG: **When have you seen repentance lead to restoration?**

TRANSITION: In the next verses, we see that only Jesus can bring us back to God.

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

What aspects of restoration are we still looking forward to?

ACTS 3:19-21 *Commentary*

Connection to the Point. Jesus forgives and refreshes us when we repent of our sin.

Repent and turn back (v. 19). The term *repent* translates the usual Greek word for repentance (*metanoeo*), which means “a change of mind or practice.” It involves remorse and sorrow for one’s sins, but it also involves a change in one’s thinking that results in a change in one’s actions. This is captured by the term *epistrepho*, which is translated *turn back* or “convert.” The individual needs to turn away from his or her sins and turn toward God.

Sins (v. 19). The term (*hamartia*) means “missing the mark,” in this context a departure from God’s standards. Paul wrote that all people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

Wiped out (v. 19). Putting their faith in Jesus would enable the people’s sins to be *wiped out*. Repentance leads to the canceling of sin. The term (*exaleipho*) can also be translated “to erase.” In ancient times, due to parchment being expensive, scribes sometimes used acid-free ink to write on it. Since this ink did not soak into the parchment, if necessary, the writing could be erased with a wet sponge. God wipes away our sins and their penalty because Jesus has paid the price for them. Paul described forgiveness as Jesus canceling the record of the debt against a person (Col. 2:14). John called this forgiveness “the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 2:2).

Seasons of refreshing (v. 20). Those who repent and put their faith in Christ also experience *seasons of refreshing*. The idea pictures a cool breeze that provides refreshment. In this present world, filled with evil and darkness, one of the great blessings of forgiveness of sin are these times of respite or refreshment from the battle (Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3-6; 1 Pet. 5:8-9). That does not mean that life is always peaceful and easy, but it does mean that while we have difficulties in life, we also have times of refreshing.

The presence of the Lord (v. 20). *Lord* is a term usually associated with Jesus in the New Testament, but here it refers to God the Father. God is the source of these *seasons of refreshing*.

Send Jesus (v. 20). Jesus promised that He would return (Matt. 24:42; 25:31; 26:64; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:40; John 14:1-3). Paul spoke of the coming of Christ also (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1,8). The Father sent Jesus to do the work of redemption as Suffering Servant at His first coming, and in the future, He will send Jesus back to earth at His second coming as Conquering King.

Appointed for you as the Messiah (v. 20). Peter emphasized that Jesus is God’s chosen Messiah, whom He had sent to live, suffer, and die for the sins of Peter’s audience, and God had resurrected Jesus from the dead. This same Jesus would return at the end of the age and inaugurate His kingdom, which they longed to experience. Rejection of Jesus would result in exclusion from this coming messianic age that God desired for them to experience.

Heaven must receive him (v. 21). After His resurrection, Christ ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). The Messiah will sit at the right hand of God until all His enemies are made Christ’s footstool (Heb. 10:12-13; see Ps. 110:1).

Until the time of the restoration of all things (v. 21). This verse can be interpreted in a few ways based on the meaning of the term translated *restoration* (*apokatastasis*). It can also mean “fulfillment.” In regards to *restoration*, Peter may have been referring to the time at the end of this age when God will both glorify all believers in Christ and recreate the heavens and the earth (Rom. 8:18-25; 2 Pet. 3:6-7; Rev. 20:11–21:4). If the intended meaning was *fulfillment*, then Peter was probably referring to the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies concerning the end of the age when God will establish His rule on earth (Isa. 11:6; 9; 65:17; 66:22).

STUDY THE BIBLE



15 MINUTES

NOTES

ACTS 3:22-26

²² Moses said: The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to everything he tells you. ²³ And everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be completely cut off from the people. ²⁴ “In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also foretold these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring. ²⁶ God raised up his servant and sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways.”

READ: Ask someone to read aloud Acts 3:22-26 on page 32 of the PSG.

DO: Direct the group to **Engage** with “**Repentance, Refreshment, and Strength**” on page 33 of the PSG (page 45 of this Leader Guide) to give the group an opportunity to reflect on God’s work in their lives.

RECAP: One of the most offensive statements a Christian can make is that Jesus is the only way to God. We are viewed as arrogant and narrow-minded because we take Jesus at His word when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). But that isn’t just the sentiment of people on the outside looking at the church; up to 70 percent of people who claim to be Christians say there are more ways to God.³

GUIDE: Use the commentary for the verses on the next page of the Leader Guide to explain Peter’s reference to Moses’s prophecy in his sermon.

DISCUSS: **Question #4** on page 34 of the PSG: **What other paths do people attempt apart from Christ to find salvation?**

RECAP: Listen to the Messiah and do what He says. Repent and turn to God. He’s the only one worth listening to. There’s great news because He wants us to come to Him. He wants to save us. He wants to bless us. But it’s through Him—and only through Him.

DISCUSS: **Question #5** on page 34 of the PSG: **How has your life been blessed because of Jesus?**

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): Use the “**Health Items**” option (page 45 of this Leader Guide) to help group members give testimonies of God’s goodness.

GUIDE: Refer back to **The Point** for this session: **Through Jesus, we can be forgiven and restored to the purpose for which He created us.**

ALTERNATE QUESTION:
How would you compare and contrast Jesus with the Old Testament prophets?

ACTS 3:22-26 *Commentary*

Connection to the Point. God raised Jesus to turn us from our evil ways.

Moses said (v. 22). Peter indicated in the previous verse that God’s holy prophets spoke of the return of the Messiah. He first quoted Moses from Deuteronomy 18:15-19. As the Israelites prepared to cross over the Jordan River and enter the promised land, Moses warned them not to listen to those who practiced divination and other occultic methods (Deut. 18:10-14). Instead, he urged them to listen to the prophet of the Lord that God would raise up from among them (v. 15). On the one hand, Moses was referring to the many prophets God would send throughout Israel’s history, who would proclaim God’s will to His people. However, by the time of Christ, some Jews recognized this passage as referring to the Messiah. The Qumran community (a Jewish sect located in the Judean wilderness that existed from 130 BC–AD 70) looked for a prophet like Moses as part of their expectation of the Messiah. Stephen’s speech emphasized the Mosaic-prophetic aspect of the Messiah, Jesus (Acts 7:37).

A prophet like me (v. 22). Jesus was a prophet like Moses in that, as Moses was the mediator of the old covenant, Jesus inaugurated and is the Mediator of the new covenant in His blood (Luke 22:20). Moses delivered the Israelites from slavery to Egypt; Jesus delivers all those who will repent and believe in Him from slavery to sin, death, and Satan. Supernatural events were part of the ministries of both Moses and Jesus. But Jesus is greater than Moses, for He is prophet, priest, and king. Whereas Moses led the Israelites to the promised land, Jesus gives His people eternal life (John 10:28). Moses was a man, whereas Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, who is to be obeyed and worshiped.

Everyone who does not listen (v. 23). The term for *listen* (*akouo*) occurs in both verses 22 and 23. While it can mean “to hear” or “to listen to,” in this context it means “to hear and obey.” Listening involves more than merely hearing Jesus’s words. Listening involves taking His words to heart and receiving Him as one’s Savior and Lord rather than rejecting Him. It also involves heeding Jesus’s words and doing what He says (Matt. 7:24-27; John 14:15).

Completely cut off from the people (v. 23). Those who reject Jesus’s message are faced with the dire consequence of eternal separation from God in hell. This phrase comes from Leviticus 23:29. In its original context, it dealt with those who refused to observe the Day of Atonement, during which people were to gather together for worship, refrain from working, and practice self-denial (Lev. 23:23-32). God declared that those who refused to follow these instructions would be “cut off from his people” and destroyed (vv. 29-30). This is a sober warning concerning rejecting God’s offer of salvation through Jesus Christ. Like the Israelites who spurned God’s offer of atonement for their sins on the Day of Atonement, so too those who refuse God’s offer of atonement through Jesus Christ will face God’s judgment.

Samuel (v. 24). From the time of Samuel’s call as a young boy to serve God under the leadership of the priest Eli, people recognized Samuel’s prophetic gift, and Samuel became the leading prophet of his day (1 Sam. 3:1,19-20). However, while there is no recorded prophecy of Samuel’s directly referencing the Messiah, Samuel spoke of the type of kingship which would bless the people of Israel (12:13-15; ultimately by the reign of David’s descendant the Messiah) and mediated the establishment of the kingship of David. Samuel foretold David’s kingship (15:28; 28:17), and at the Lord’s command he anointed David to be king over Israel (16:1-13). Peter recognized David as foretelling of the Messiah in his psalms (Acts 1:15-17; 2:25-36) and Paul made a further connection between David and the Messiah (13:32-37). The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would be a branch that came from the “stump” of David’s father, Jesse (Isa. 11:1-9).

All the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring (v. 25). This is a reference to the words God spoke regarding the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). The ultimate blessing is available through Jesus Christ for all those who repent of their sins and put their faith in God’s Messiah, Jesus Christ, thereby receiving the blessings of salvation. Furthermore, *all the families of the earth* have been blessed through the influence of Christians. For example, hospitals, schools, and care for the poor were all largely initiated by God’s people.

LIVE IT OUT



5 MINUTES

NOTES

GUIDE: Direct the group to page 35 of the PSG: Jesus wants to restore you to the purpose for which you were created. What will you do with that truth? Choose one of the following applications:

- **Repent.** Restoration begins by coming to Christ in repentance and faith. If you've never made a commitment of your life to Christ, you can do so now. Talk to someone in your Bible study group about your desire to follow Christ. The inside front cover of this book can tell you more.
- **Refresh.** Even as a Christian, life can be challenging. Thankfully, you're not alone. Spend some focused and unhurried time with Jesus by praying and reading His Word. Let His Spirit wash over you to keep you strong.
- **Restore.** Let others see Jesus in you as you live out a renewed and restored purpose. You can't restore others to their purpose in Christ, but you can be a testimony to them of how Christ restores. Be ready to tell your story to all who are willing to hear.

WRAP IT UP

TRANSITION: Read or restate **The Point** for this session: **Through Jesus, we can be forgiven and restored to the purpose for which He created us.**

PRAY: Thank God for His forgiveness and His restoration. Ask Him to help us extend this message of hope to others.



SCAN ME



TIPS & TRAINING

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ENGAGE

Repentance, Refreshment, and Strength. In the space below, write down one thing you've had to repent from recently, one place where you've felt refreshed recently, and one area of your faith that has felt strong. Afterwards, take a moment to thank Jesus for His work in your life.

Repentance:

Refreshment:

Strength:

My Prayer:

NOTES

BONUS CONTENT

NATURE WALK ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, before the group meets, ask the group to take a 15-minute walk in nature. Give these instructions: "During the walk, deliberately ask the Lord for refreshment in His presence. Notice the things He has made; notice what He does in your heart." At group time, invite the group to share what they experienced. Note that even relatively "small," deliberate times of connecting with the Lord will refresh and restore us.

HEALTH ITEMS ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, to illustrate the idea of perfect health, bring some common items used today when people get sick (such as tissues, cough drops, non-prescription medication, and so forth) to your gathering. As you pass these items around, encourage group members to share how they have experienced God's provision or healing during difficult times.

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/27/arts/after-a-20-year-cleanup-a-brighter-clearer-last-supper-emerges.html>.
 2. John B. Polhill, Acts, v. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 128.
 3. <https://probe.org/probe-survey-report-4-witnessing-to-your-faith-and-the-response/>.