

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

LIFE CONNECTION

A sense of purpose eludes so many in society, but even when people tie their purpose to faith, religion, or God, they still fall short. Sin remains a barrier to fulfilling God's purpose, but we aren't in a position to correct the problem. Thankfully, God addressed the problem for us through Jesus. We regain our purpose when we respond with repentance and faith.

BACKGROUND

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 wasn't him or John who healed the lame man (v. 12). The power came from Jesus Christ (v. 16), whom God had glorified, and the Jews had handed over to be put to death (v. 13).

GETTING STARTED



5 MINUTES

DISCUSS: Give your group an opportunity to discuss **Question #1** on page 35 of the Daily Discipleship Guide (DDG): **What was your biggest DIY home improvement fail?**

RECAP (DDG, PAGE 36): Invite a volunteer to read **The Bible Meets Life** to introduce the session:

Thanks to YouTube, HGTV, and other home improvement resources, one could think there's no longer a need for professional plumbers, electricians, and drywall experts. Though these resources may have boosted the confidence of would-be home repairers, the result is often an increase in halfway or poorly completed projects. Most of us still need an expert to do the job right. When it comes to restoring our purpose in life, this principle is even more true. There's only one way and one person through which our purpose can be restored.

GUIDE: Direct attention to **The Point** on page 36 of the DDG. Invite the group to fill in the blank: **Through Jesus, we can be forgiven and restored to the PURPOSE for which He created us.**

PRAY: Transition into the study by asking God to open our hearts and minds as we talk about how we can be forgiven and restored so that we can live out the purpose for which He created us.

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.

GIVE BIBLICAL CONTEXT (DDG, PAGE 36): After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, news of what had happened spread quickly, and the number of people believing the message of Jesus grew. In Acts 3, Peter and John came upon a beggar who was lame from birth. Though the man asked Peter and John for money, they responded with something better, and the man was healed in the name of Jesus. The healing caused quite a spectacle among the people at the temple that day, and Peter seized the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with the crowd.

READ: Ask someone to read aloud Acts 3:14-18 on page 36 of the DDG.

GUIDE: Direct your group’s attention to statement 1 on page 36 of the DDG. Invite the group to fill in the blank: **Jesus RESTORES when we place our faith in Him.**

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): See the optional activity (on page 47 in this Leader Guide) to give your group an opportunity to reflect on their experiences with placing faith in Jesus.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for verse 16 on the next page of this Leader Guide to talk more about what is meant by “faith in his name.”

RECAP (DDG, PAGE 36): For Peter, the miracle was a means to an end. Though the crowd wanted an explanation of how and why the lame man was dancing and praising God, Peter pointed out the soul-deep sickness that infected every onlooker. But he didn’t stop there; just as the man was physically healed by faith, so also could every person be spiritually healed. Just as the man was physically restored, so also can we be restored when we place our faith in Jesus.

DISCUSS Question #2: Where do you see evidence in our culture that people need restoration?

TRANSITION: 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.

Denied (v. 14). When Jesus was on trial and Pontius Pilate stated he had found no guilt and offered to release Him, the crowd instead demanded Pilate release the revolutionary and murderer Barabbas. Despite multiple attempts by Pilate to have Jesus released, the crowd continued to demand that Pilate release Barabbas and crucify Jesus (Luke 23:13-25).

Holy and Righteous One (v. 14). Titles for Jesus, these terms are most likely synonyms, and both have messianic emphases. Jesus referred to Himself in His message to the church at Philadelphia as “the Holy One, the true one” (Revelation 3:7). 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 Isaiah 53:11; Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 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, be reconciled to God the Father, be adopted into God’s family, and receive eternal life.

God raised from the dead (v. 15). Peter reminded his hearers that death did not spell the end of Jesus, for God the Father raised Him from the dead.

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 Corinthians 15:5). 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 Corinthians 15:6).

Faith in his name (v. 16). 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). The man 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.

Perfect health (v. 16). The lame man had sat outside the temple proper as a broken man, prohibited from going further inside the temple to worship. Through faith in Jesus, both on the part of Peter and the lame man, Jesus healed the man so perfectly that he now had access to enter further into the temple. Jesus took his brokenness and made him whole.

“Brothers and sisters” (v. 17). In the New Testament, the phrase typically refers to Christians. 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.

“Ignorance” (v. 17). The Greek term refers to someone who through a lack of information engages in immoral conduct. This did not leave the Jews without guilt for their rejection of Jesus, but it did inspire hope in Peter that they would believe in Jesus, receive forgiveness for their sins, be reconciled to God, and receive eternal life. Jesus had prayed that God would forgive those who nailed Him to the cross because they did not know what they were doing (Luke 23:34).

“God fulfilled what he had predicted” (v. 18). Though God still held the Jews responsible for their rejection of Jesus, He used their rejection to fulfill the words of His prophets concerning the sufferings of the Messiah (Jesus).

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 pages 36-37 of the DDG.

GUIDE: Direct your group's attention to statement 2 on page 37 of the DDG. Invite the group to fill in the blank: **Jesus FORGIVES and refreshes us when we repent of our sin.**

RECAP (DDG, PAGE 37): Though our meaning and purpose as human beings have been lost, there's a definite and certain pathway back:

- **Repentance.** We must turn away from all else we've trusted in and put our faith in Jesus.
- **Forgiveness.** Jesus's forgiveness is available to all who turn to Him, and God delights in giving it.
- **Refreshment.** When we return humbly to God, acknowledging our sin and trusting in Him, we find the peace, satisfaction, and fulfillment that has eluded us despite our best efforts.

DISCUSS Question #3: How would you explain the connection between repentance and restoration?

GUIDE: Use the commentary on the next page of this Leader Guide to focus more closely on repentance and restoration and supplement your discussion of the previous question.

DISCUSS Question #4: 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 are some obstacles that keep us from repentance?

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). 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 (Romans 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 can also be translated “to erase.” In ancient times, because parchment was 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 paid the price for them. Paul described forgiveness as Jesus canceling the record of the debt against a person (Colossians 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 is these times of respite or refreshment from the battle. 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. 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 sent to live, suffer, and die for the sins of Peter’s audience, and God 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 (Hebrews 10:12-13; see also Psalm 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.” It can also mean “fulfillment.” In regard 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 earth. 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 (Isaiah 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 37 of the DDG.

GUIDE: Direct your group’s attention to statement 3 on page 37 of the DDG. Invite the group to fill in the blank: **Only JESUS can bring us back to God.**

GUIDE: Use the commentary for verse 23 on the next page of this Leader Guide to talk more about what happens to those who don’t listen.

RECAP (DDG, PAGE 37): Though the pathway is clear, it’s not negotiable. There isn’t a shortcut or a way around; there aren’t exceptions. No matter what our background, nationality, educational level, or previous religious experience, there’s only one pathway back to God and a restored purpose in life. In an act of humility, we must submit ourselves to Jesus Christ, because only in Christ are we saved.

DO: Direct the group to the **Engage** activity on page 37 of the DDG (page 47 of this Leader Guide) to give them an opportunity to consider an area where they have had to repent recently, an area where they have received forgiveness and felt refreshed, and an area where they have experienced a restored purpose in their lives.

DISCUSS **Question #5: What other paths do people attempt apart from Christ to find salvation?**

ALTERNATE QUESTION:

How has your life been blessed because of Jesus?

ACTS 3:22-26 *Commentary*

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

“Moses said” (v. 22). 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 (Deuteronomy 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 Lord your God will raise up” (v. 22). This passage emphasizes the authority of God in sending His Messiah. God carefully planned Jesus’s coming as Messiah, and He directed the process. It did not happen randomly.

“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 repent and believe in Him. 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. Moses led the Israelites to the promised land; Jesus gives His people eternal life (John 10:28). Moses was a man; Jesus is the incarnate Son of God.

“Everyone who does not listen” (v. 23). The term for “listen” 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 Savior and Lord rather than rejecting Him. It also involves heeding Jesus’s words and doing what He says (Matthew 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 (Leviticus 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.

“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 Samuel 3:1,19-20). While there is no recorded prophecy of Samuel directly referencing the Messiah, 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).

“Sons of the prophets” (v. 25). The Jews who listened to Peter were sons of the prophets, in the sense that as Jews they were heirs of the promises God made to Abraham and recipients of the blessings of the Messiah, the son of King David. They had great privilege by hearing the prophecies of the coming Messiah. However, with that privilege came the responsibility to repent and believe in God’s Messiah, Jesus.

“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 (Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 22:18). The ultimate blessing is available through Jesus Christ for all who repent of their sins and put their faith in God’s Messiah, Jesus Christ, thereby receiving the blessings of salvation.

LIVE IT OUT



5 MINUTES

NOTES

ASK: What actions will you take in response to today's study?

GUIDE: Direct your group to review the three bulleted statements under **Live It Out** on page 38 of the DDG. Call on volunteers to share (1) which of these statements is something they want to pursue further, or (2) ways this study will transform how they consider the forgiveness and restoration provided through Jesus this week.

- **Trust Jesus.** If you've never trusted Jesus for your salvation and purpose in life, do so now. Talk to a leader or pastor about your decision and next steps. There's also information inside the front cover of this book.
- **Remember.** Write in your journal ways you see God at work in your life. How have you grown? How has your faith deepened? How has life gotten better?
- **Share.** Tell at least one person this week about the changes God has brought about in your life. Invite this person to learn more about Jesus with you.

WRAP IT UP

GUIDE: Invite each person to gather with two or three Christ-followers of the same gender this week for a deeper discussion, using **Talk It Out** (pages 38 of the DDG) to guide their discussion. Encourage your group to spend time each day in God's Word with the **Daily Study** section (pages 39-44 of the DDG).

RECAP: Read or restate from page 36 of the DDG.

When it comes to restoring our purpose in life, there's only one way and one person through which our purpose can be restored. Just as the lame man was physically restored, so also can we be restored when we place our faith in Jesus.

PRAY: Close your group time with prayer, thanking God that when we respond with repentance and faith, we can receive forgiveness and restoration as we also regain our purpose.



SCAN ME



TIPS & TRAINING

Discover helpful teaching tips and leadership insights from Sunday School experts. Lifeway.com/SundaySchool

ENGAGE

This passage lays out several of the blessings that follow a genuine faith in Jesus. List an area where you've had to repent recently, an area where you've received forgiveness and felt refreshed, and an area where you've experienced a restored purpose in your life. Take a moment to thank Jesus for these things.

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BONUS CONTENT

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, prepare to play “Make Room” by Community Music or a similar song with a message of surrender. For ease of use, visit BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra and click on today's session for a link.

- Encourage the group to listen closely to the lyrics as the song plays and consider what it means to them to surrender and place their faith in God.
- After the song is finished, invite volunteers to share how they came to faith in Christ.
- Close the activity by encouraging anyone present who might be thinking of trusting Jesus to speak with you, another leader, or a trusted Christian friend.