

Purpose Abandoned



THE POINT

God created us with purpose, but our sin keeps us from living out that purpose.

LIFE CONNECTION

The purpose for which God created us is far greater than any purpose we might devise for ourselves. Unfortunately, we fall short of God's desire and plan for us because we have sinned; we are drawn to live for our own selfish ends. Only when we turn back to God and seek Him can we begin to live with purpose.

THE PASSAGE

Psalm 8:1-6; 14:1-7

THE SETTING

Psalm 8 is one of seventy-three psalms attributed to King David. The instructions to the choir director to use a *Gittith* probably indicate that this psalm was to be sung by a group accompanied by an instrument similar to a lyre; the *Gittith* likely derived its name from the Philistine city of Gath. The psalm praises God for what He has done in creating the world and placing humanity over it as His stewards.

GETTING STARTED



5 MINUTES

DISCUSS: Draw attention to the question on **PSG, page 27** and ask **Question 1: What's the most interesting repurpose project you've seen?**

GUIDE: Refer the group to "**The Bible Meets Life**" (**PSG, page 27**) and the author's story of the piano bookcase.

SAY: In spite of the value of repurposing the piano into a bookcase, its greater value was to fulfill its original purpose. This holds true for people as well.

GUIDE: Introduce **The Point** on **PSG, page 27: God created us with purpose, but our sin keeps us from living out that purpose.**

OPTIONAL INTRODUCTION: Refer to "Life Connection" on page 28 for an alternate introduction to the study.

PRAY: Begin the session with prayer. Ask God to reveal to the group His wisdom in creating us with purpose. Ask Him to create a desire within the group to find and remain true to His purpose for their lives.

NOTES

STUDY THE BIBLE



10 MINUTES

Psalm 8:1-6

1 LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!
You have covered the heavens with your majesty.

2 From the mouths of infants and nursing babies,
you have established a stronghold on account of your adversaries
in order to silence the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you set in place,

4 what is a human being that you remember him,
a son of man that you look after him?

5 You made him little less than God
and crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands;
you put everything under his feet:

SUMMARIZE: Before reading the verses, refer to “The Setting” on page 28 to establish the context of the biblical passage.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read Psalm 8:1-6.

READ: Share the **Connection to The Point:** The psalmist marveled at God’s creation and was astonished at the status He gave humanity.

GUIDE: Refer the group to **PSG, pages 28–29**. Use the author’s comments to emphasize the magnificence of God and the status He has granted humanity.

His magnificence is not hidden. The earth shouts this in a million ways.

When we ponder the greatness and glory of God the miniscule things in His universe also point to Him (share examples).

How astonishing to see how God views humanity out of all His creation. We are granted special status to rule over creation as part of our praise to God.

SUMMARIZE: Refer to the **Bible Commentary** to explain these key words from vv. 1-6 concerning mankind’s special status. Highlight the following:

Little less than God (v. 5):

Ruler (v. 6):

DISCUSS: Question 2: How does God’s creation inspire you to worship Him?

ENGAGE: Invite the group to complete the Engage activity (**PSG, p. 30**).

TRANSITION: Even though humanity has a special status in creation, there are obstacles that can prevent us from making the most of that status.

Optional Activity

See Bonus Content on page 41.

Use this activity after reading and commenting on vv. 3-4.

Alternate Question

When have you recently felt inspired to praise God?

Psalm 8:1-6 Commentary

LORD, our Lord (v. 1). The first title for God, *LORD* (*Yahweh*), is His personal, covenant name which He revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3:14-15). *Lord* (*adon*), when used of God it acknowledges God as the highest authority.

Magnificent (v. 1). The Hebrew word (*addir*) can also be translated as “mighty,” “majestic,” “noble,” “stately,” and “excellent.” It comes from a root (*adar*) that means something superior to something else.

Name (v. 1). “The truth of God’s character is focused in His name. The divine name reveals God’s power, authority, and holiness.”

Throughout the earth . . . the heavens (v. 1). The majesty of God is proclaimed by all creation, which owes its existence to Him.

Your majesty (v. 1). The term (*hod*) means “splendor,” “glory,” and “strength.” God’s divine glory is displayed in the heavens which He has made.

From the mouths of infants and nursing babies (v. 2). Two of the smallest and most vulnerable in society are *infants*—those who have finished the weaning process, and *babies*—those who are still nursing. Their voices praise God as well and attest to His creative power. Here they are contrasted with God’s adversaries, the enemy and the avenger who represent human power and prideful arrogance.

Established a stronghold (v. 2). The Hebrew term for *establish* (*yasad*) means “to lay a foundation.” *Stronghold* (*oz*) literally means “strength.”

Adversaries (v. 2). The Hebrew term (*tsarar*) has the meaning of “to show hostility toward,” “to besiege,” and “oppress.” On the Day of the Lord, when He will forever silence the **enemy** (*oyeb*, also meaning “to be hostile toward”) and the **avenger** (*naqam*; those who take the judgment/vengeance of God into their own hands).

Work of your fingers (v. 3). This is known as an anthropomorphism, attributing human characteristics or behaviors to God to explain who He is and what He does. God created the universe.

Human being (v. 4). David contrasted God’s creation with human beings, emphasizing humanity’s seeming inconsequence when compared to the heavens, the moon, and the stars (vv. 3-4). Yet human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27) and have been given the responsibilities of caring for God’s creation.

Son of man (v. 4). In this passage, the phrase *son of man* is parallel to *human being*. It refers to all the descendants of Adam.

Little less than God (v. 5). (*elohim*) Bible translators are divided over how the term translated as God (*elohim*) should be rendered. Some translate it as “the angels” or “heavenly beings,” while others translate it as “God.” When used for God it carries the sense that He is unique among the *elohim*; none can compare with Him. The phrase *little less than God* emphasizes humanity’s exalted position above the rest of God’s creation. However, humanity remains below the status of God Himself. While made in God’s image (Gen. 1:26-27), humanity is in no way equal to God.

Crowned (v. 5). In placing humanity in their exalted position as His stewards over creation, God had bestowed upon them glory and honor befitting their status.

Ruler (v. 6). As His stewards, humans express the authority God has given them as they live out the purpose which God gave them—to exercise beneficial dominion over His creation (Gen. 1:26-28; 2:15,19; 9:1-2).

Under his feet (v. 6). This phrase expresses the same idea of the first part of verse 6 but using different words. God has placed His creation under humanity’s feet in the sense of giving them authority and dominion over creation as His stewards.

STUDY THE BIBLE



10 MINUTES

Psalm 14:1-3

1 The fool says in his heart, “There’s no God.”

They are corrupt; they do vile deeds. There is no one who does good.

2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the human race
to see if there is one who is wise, one who seeks God.

3 All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt.
There is no one who does good, not even one.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read Psalm 14:1-3.

READ: Share the **Connection to The Point**: Every human being is a sinner who has turned away from God.

GUIDE: Refer the group to **PSG, pages 31–32** and use the author’s comments to emphasize that sin affects everyone.

“The fool” mentioned by David in this psalm is not merely someone acting like a buffoon. The Jewish people would have understood a fool to be someone acting senseless in an ethical or moral sense. This isn’t a person who’s acting like a clown; he is draped in immorality.

This passage isn’t just about the really bad people. It includes the good people who sit on a church pew each week. We can put on a good front and look respectable, but sin is more than just an outward expression. The fool’s behavior is a reflection of what he has said “in his heart.” The heart is a reference to our mind, our will, and our emotions, and inside each of us is a push to want things our own way.

Because of sin, we’ve lost our way and we’ve lost our purpose. All of us.
“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

DISCUSS: Question 3: In a world that constantly seeks to turn us away from God, what practices can anchor us to Him?

SUMMARIZE: Refer to the **Bible Commentary** to explain these key words from vv. 1-3. Use their definitions to describe the depraved nature of sin. Highlight the following:

Corrupt (v. 1)

Vile (v. 1).

No one who does good (v. 1).

All have turned away (v. 3).

TRANSITION: Sin affects all of us and works to destroy God’s purpose for our lives, but there is an alternative. There is a way out.

Alternate Question

What are some examples of people expressing "there is no God" by how they live?

Psalm 14:1-3 Commentary

Context: Psalm 14 was also written by King David. It details how the godless reject God's law (vv. 1-3) and oppress God's people (vv. 4-7). This portrait of the ungodly is placed between Psalm 13 which is a plea to God for deliverance from one's enemies and Psalm 15 which is a description of the godly.

Fool (v. 1). The *fool* is the opposite of a wise person who fears the Lord (Prov. 1:7). The fool denies the existence of God; he rejects God, treating Him and His name with contempt (Ps. 74:18). The term for *fool* (*nabal*) means "senseless." It describes someone who has a closed mind in relation to God, godly living, and ethical behavior. He is characterized by immorality and this is expressed in the way he lives and how he treats others. Abigail's husband, Nabal, demonstrated such foolishness in how he treated David and his men who had protected Nabal's sheep while the animals were grazing in the wilderness (1 Sam. 25).

In his heart (v. 1). The Hebrew word for *heart* (*leb*) literally refers to the internal organ, but is also used in reference to the totality of a person's inner being as well as to his emotions, mind, and will. The hardness of the fool's heart is seen in the act of defiance which flows out of the center of his being, "**There's no God**" (see Prov. 19:3).

Corrupt (v. 1). The fool is *corrupt* (*shachath*). The Hebrew term means "to destroy" or "bring to ruin." Through his godless behavior and lifestyle, the fool destroys himself and brings grievous harm to others.

Vile (v. 1). *Vile* (*ta ab*) can also be translated "abhorrent" or "detestable." The fool's actions are vile because they are offenses against God. The term also includes ethical sins against other people. King Ahab of Israel was described as having committed "detestable acts" by worshiping idols (1 Kings 21:26).

No one who does good (v. 1). This statement does not mean that no one has the capacity to do good, but rather that because of our fallen nature even our best deeds are tainted with sin. Isaiah noted, "All our righteous acts are like a polluted garment" (Isa. 64:6). Similarly, Paul wrote in Romans that no one seeks God and in our fallen state (prior to salvation) we are enslaved to sin (Rom. 3:9-20; 6:17). Only those works of believers done through the indwelling Holy Spirit are ultimately acceptable before God (Gal. 5:13-25).

Wise . . . seeks God (v. 2). The Hebrew term for *wise* (*sakal*) refers to one who has insight and understanding, particularly in relation to God and godly living. The wise person *seeks* God. The term (*darash*) means "to search for and inquire about." To *seek* someone is to look for him or her passionately. It can also be translated as "study." The wise person fears the Lord (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7) which leads to an understanding of and relationship with God and brings about a lifestyle characterized by godly living (Prov. 9:10).

All have turned away (v. 3). People by nature are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1-6), separated from God (Rom. 5:10), and do not seek Him (3:9-18). While all people have turned away from God, in Jesus Christ God has taken the initiative to seek sinners with the gospel of salvation (Matt. 18:12; Luke 19:10). Jesus has given His disciples the same role as His ambassadors who are to go into the world to proclaim the need for people to repent of their sins and accept the offer of salvation in Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Cor. 5:18-21).

STUDY THE BIBLE



15 MINUTES

Psalm 14:4-7

4 Will evildoers never understand?

They consume my people as they consume bread;
they do not call on the LORD.

5 Then they will be filled with dread,
for God is with those who are righteous.

6 You sinners frustrate the plans of the oppressed,
but the LORD is his refuge.

7 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come from Zion!
When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people,
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read Psalm 14:4-7

READ: Share the **Connection to The Point**: Dread awaits sinners, but God offers refuge for those who turn back to Him.

RECAP: Refer the group to **PSG, pages 33–34** and recap the author's comment about hope.

God sees. God is not oblivious to sin, nor is He oblivious to our pain and oppression. He sees the wickedness and He sees what is happening to those who call on Him.

God judges. God takes sin seriously. Sometimes it seems like people can sin without any consequences for their harmful actions. A day is coming when justice will come and when God's judgment comes, it will be far more thorough than anything our own justice system can hand out.

God delivers. God's judgment should cause dread in all of us! Thankfully, God has offered a way out. Christ took our sin upon Himself, removing the guilt, penalty, and consequence of our sin. When we come to Him in repentance and faith, looking to Him as our refuge, He sets us free. He delivers.

DISCUSS: Question 4: When has the Lord been a refuge for you during a difficult time?

SUMMARIZE: Refer to the **Bible Commentary** to explain these key words from vv. 4-7. Use their definitions to expand the group's understanding of God's salvation. Highlight the following:

Refuge (v. 6).

Deliverance (v. 7).

Restores the fortunes (v. 7).

DISCUSS: Question 5: How has God restored you since turning to Christ?

Alternate Question
Why are we reluctant
to turn to God after
we've sinned?

Psalm 14:4-7 Commentary

Evildoers (v. 4). This term is parallel with the “fool” in verse 1. The word emphasizes the moral quality of a person’s actions, which in this context are evil.

Understand (v. 4). The word for *understand* (*yada*) literally means “to know.” This term is used to describe how God watches over the way of the righteous (Ps. 1:6; 37:18) and knows the hearts and actions of the unrighteous (Isa. 44:18). In Psalm 14, it describes a lack of understanding about God. Evildoers will not seek after God; they have intentionally turned away from Him.

Consume my people (v. 4). The term *consume* (*akal*) literally means “to eat.” It figuratively means to *consume* in the sense of “to destroy.” Evildoers seek to consume God’s people with their evil deeds. Instead of seeking God to meet their needs, evildoers attempt to meet their needs by taking from others.

Call on the LORD (v. 4). To *call on* (*qara*) is to call out to someone, in this case to God. Those who call out to God recognize their need for God in their lives and seek Him by calling on the Lord (34:6). The Lord promises to answer and save those who call out to Him (145:18-20). The fool does not call upon the Lord because he does not believe in his heart that he needs the Lord. In Romans, Paul wrote that all those who call out to God (in repentance and faith), confessing Jesus is Lord and believing God raised Him from the dead, will be saved (Rom. 10:9-13; see Joel 2:32). In Romans, Paul wrote that all those who call out to God (in repentance and faith), confessing Jesus is Lord and believing God raised Him from the dead, will be saved (Rom. 10:9-13; see Joel 2:32).

Filled with dread (v. 5). The defiance and complacency of evildoers and fools has its consequences. Rejecting God and refusing a relationship with Him ultimately leads to judgment. While evildoers may terrorize the people of God for a time, in the

end they will be filled with dread because **God is with those who are righteous**, meaning those who live in relationship with Him and seek to live according to His standards.

You sinners frustrate the plans of the oppressed (v. 6). The *oppressed* refers to the poor, the needy, and the afflicted, in this case God’s people who are suffering. The term is parallel to the “righteous” (v. 5). *Sinners* is parallel with the “fool” (v. 1) and “evildoers” (v. 4).

Refuge (v. 6). A *refuge* (*machaseh*) is a shelter, literally or figurative, which the weak and vulnerable enter for protection. Hope and trust are associated with this word. God is the righteous people’s place of protection and source of security against the attacks of the wicked. This does not mean that bad things will never happen to believers, but it does mean that they can cry out to and seek the Lord in times of trouble (Ps. 46).

Deliverance (v. 7). The word (*yeshuah*) means “salvation.” When used of God, the term refers to rescue by God from earthly oppressors and dangers (Isa. 33:2), but sometimes refers to salvation in the spiritual sense (49:6)—deliverance from guilt, sin, and punishment.

Zion (v. 7). “The city of David” (1 Kings 8:1) and “the city of our God” (Ps. 48:1-2), the place where God dwelt (9:11). *Zion* also was synonymous with the city of Jerusalem (Ps. 135:21; Isa. 40:9; Mic. 3:12) and the entire nation (Ps. 126:1; Jer. 50:4-5). In the context of Psalm 14, *Zion* is the place where God dwells and from which the deliverance of His people comes.

Restores the fortunes (v. 7). The term for *restores* (*shub*) has the basic meaning of “turn” in the sense of “return.” Figuratively it is used of repentance and the restoration of a relationship with God (Jer. 3:7; Isa. 10:21). God would restore His people’s fortunes for the better from the opposition they faced for believing in Him and living righteously. God’s people could rejoice and be glad, for God would deliver them.



5 MINUTES

LIVE IT OUT

REVIEW: Live It Out (PSG, page 35). Encourage the group to follow through this week with at least one of the applications.

God created us with purpose, but our sin keeps us from living out that purpose. How will you respond to the truth learned in this study?

- **Reflect.** Take time to reflect on the fact that God has created you for His glory. Are you living your life for His glory or your own? Make any changes necessary to give Him all the praise.
- **Confess.** What is a part of your life God is revealing that you may be living apart from His purposes for you? Confess that to Him, repent, and thank Him for His forgiveness.
- **Forgive.** A sign of maturity is sharing God's forgiveness with others. Is there someone who has hurt you? Ask God for the grace to forgive, even as He has forgiven you.

Wrap It Up

GUIDE: Emphasize **The Point:** God created us with purpose, but our sin keeps us from living out that purpose.

GUIDE: Remind the group that everyone suffers from the disease of sin. The only cure for it is salvation by grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

PRAY: Lord, we confess to You that we are sinners in need of Your grace and salvation. Our only hope of knowing and fulfilling our purpose in life resides in a changed heart and faithful service. We ask that You forgive and restore us. Place within each one of us a desire to follow You above anything and anyone else, including ourselves



SCAN ME



PODCAST

Get insights on each week's study.

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Engage

Evaluate yourself on each action from Psalms 8:

Am I regularly praising God's name?

I rarely do this. I sometimes do this. I regularly do this.

Am I regularly looking up and around at what God has made?

I rarely do this. I sometimes do this. I regularly do this.

Do I let God's creation give perspective to the purpose of my life?

I rarely do this. I sometimes do this. I regularly do this.

Do I deny the goodness of God in the quiet places in my heart?

I rarely do this. I sometimes do this. I regularly do this.

Bonus Content (Optional)

Optional Activity: Find the latest telescope images from NASA or a similar space exploration company and show them to your group or go to BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra for today's session. Point to the vastness and intricacies in the pictures. Afterwards, attempt to answer the psalmist's question, "What is a human being that you remember him?"

1. Brad Creed, "Names of God," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. ed. Chad Brand, rev. (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2015), 1143.