



Purpose Abandoned

THE POINT

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

THE PASSAGE

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

QUESTION 1:

What's the most interesting repurpose project you've seen?

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

A few years ago, I was given a grand piano. It didn't cost me anything except the lunch I bought for the men who helped me get it home. While I love to play, I had no intention of playing this piano. A local church wanted it gone because its soundboard was cracked and would no longer stay in tune.

Over the next several months, this grand piano resided in my garage as I slowly worked on it and gave it new life—as a bookcase. With nothing more than another free meal, more men helped me haul this piano bookcase to my office where it resides next to my lamp—that was once a clarinet.

I love my piano bookcase, but there is something far greater I'd rather have done with it. I wish I could've played it. That's the purpose for which it was built. It's the same with us. We've lost the purpose for which God created us, but instead of returning to Him to regain that purpose, we settle for something less in our lives. Something far less.

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:
- 7** all the sheep and oxen, as well as the animals in the wild,
8 the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea
that pass through the currents of the seas.

Do you remember the first time you saw a mountain rising from the horizon? Or do you recall the first time you stood on the beach and saw nothing but an expansive ocean before you? I don't know about you, but experiences like that capture my attention. That's because the greatness of creation reflects the greatness of the Creator. It makes me want to shout with David, "LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!" (v. 1).

His magnificence is not hidden. The planet we live on shouts this in

a million wondrous ways. When we look beyond the science and physics that make this world go around and take in the wonder of it all, we see the majestic God who is behind the laws of science and physics.

But God's creation and His greatness aren't limited to just our planet. "You have covered the heavens with your majesty" (v. 1). Consider the moon. Scientists have learned that if the moon were any larger, it would cause all sorts of problems. The earth tilts at a perfect 23.4 degrees, for example,

but a larger moon and its resulting stronger gravitational pull would cause the earth to tilt so far in one direction that one side of the planet would experience unbearable heat and the other side would only know a subzero climate. A larger moon also would slow the earth's rotation, making each day last much longer than 24 hours and creating a harsh climate for life.¹

The farther we look into space, the more we discover. The Milky Way galaxy has hundreds of billions of stars, and scientists now consider it to be one of the smallest systems in the whole universe. When we ponder the greatness of God, we might naturally be drawn to things that are majestic in size, but the miniscule things in His universe also point to Him. Just look at your hand and consider its complexity; how its parts are joined and function together.

In his psalm, David mentioned “infants and nursing babies” (v. 2). Though small and often dismissed by others as being of little value, they point to God's glory. We might think of them as the weakest in all humanity, but weakness in human eyes diminishes neither their strength nor their great worth in God's view. Even the tiniest infant, who is incapable of coherent speech

at this stage of life, is “a stronghold” (v. 2) that speaks mightily of God “to silence the enemy and the avenger” (v. 2).

After establishing the magnificence of God's glory, David contrasted that to the relative insignificance of humanity. “What is a human being that you remember him, a son of man that you look after him?” (v. 4). David may have felt small and insignificant as He observed the universe, but David knew he wasn't insignificant in God's eyes. “You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor” (v. 5). David wasn't now declaring the greatness of humanity, but he was pointing again to the greatness of God.

How astonishing, then, to see how our mighty creator God views humanity out of all His creation. Out of all the wonderful things God has made, it's humanity alone who has been granted a place a little less than the Lord. We are granted special status to rule over the rest of creation as part of our praise to God.

We were created with a purpose. Humanity was created to take care of God's creation, to bear His image, and in so doing, bring Him glory (Gen. 1–2). Adam and Eve were given this specially ordained status as

God's image bearers to rule over creation. We were created to give God praise and glory as we exercise our privilege to rule creation on His behalf.

QUESTION 2:

How does God's creation inspire you to worship Him?

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.

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.

No one likes to be considered foolish. It spans across cultures, but so much of our humor involves someone doing something silly and foolish. We laugh at jokes where someone is acting dim-witted and foolish. Many of us have said something wrong or planned to embark on some adventure or task only to have someone tell us, “Don’t be foolish.”

“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. We see this in a man David encountered named Nabal—whose name is the Hebrew word for fool! Nabal knew who David was and what he had done for him, yet he refused to return the favor and be kind and generous to David and his men; instead, it was all about him (1 Sam. 25:3-11).

This type of fool is also godless. As we saw earlier in Psalm 8, the magnificence of God is clearly seen in the whole of creation around us, but the fool is a person who refuses to see it. That truly is senseless! Without a belief in God or fear of Him, the fool becomes his own god, and what such

a person does can only be described as corrupt as he worships himself.

I don’t like to think of myself as such a fool, but the sad reality is that I am also corrupt—and so are you. “All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt” (14:3). That truth offends people. Certainly, those apart from God don’t like to be labeled as sinners. Without God, they have no standard for right behavior, and they determine their behavior and lifestyle isn’t bad. They are those “who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness, who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter” (Isa. 5:20). Every day our news includes stories of people doing this very thing.

This passage isn’t just about the really bad people. It includes the good people who sit on a church pew each week. Culture is full of religious people who wave at their neighbors, take in stray cats, and are generally nice people who go to church. But they, too, are vile and corrupt. *“Don’t say that! I’m a good person. I’m not like them!”* Yes, you are. “All of us have become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a polluted garment” (Is. 64:6).

We can put on a good front and look respectable, but sin is more than just an outward expression. The fool's behavior reflects what he has said "in his heart" (Ps. 14:1). 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. In those moments, we are thinking or doing what we want to do without any regard for God; we are serving as our own gods. We ignore that "the LORD looks down from heaven on the human race" (v. 2).

This doesn't mean we can't be kind or do nice things. Some of the wealthiest people in our country are self-professed atheists and agnostics,

but they still engage in philanthropy that benefits thousands. But whatever good we do can't cover over the fact that we are sinners bent on doing things our way. We may not be acting as depraved as we could, but we're still corrupted by the stain of sin. And no good on our part can erase that stain.

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).

QUESTION 3:

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

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.**

We can point our fingers in disgust at all those fools and “evildoers” (v. 4), but I feel sadness for them. We’ve already seen that, as fools, they are senseless. Choosing to be their own gods, they’ve lost all sense, and they are unable to see or understand just how sinful they are. “Will evildoers never understand?” (v. 4). As long as they choose to “not call on the LORD” (v. 4), they will act selfishly. That can be true of all of us. We all worship something, and if we don’t call on God as God, we’ll call on ourselves. In our self-centeredness, we make ourselves god.

Unfortunately, our self-centeredness affects other people. Because evildoers are only focused on themselves, their wants, and their wishes, “they consume my people as they consume bread” (v. 4). I’m a fast eater; one of my sons is a slow eater. While he enjoys each bite, I have to work hard at not inhaling my food. He savors; I consume. That captures a sense of what the psalmist is saying. These sinners consume those around them; they take advantage of them for their own purposes without thinking of the other person.

An arrogant heart of sin consumes other people, committing these acts in harm against others as if God doesn’t see or care. Their sin is

both the selfish injustice committed against others and their flagrant disregard of God.

“In arrogance the wicked relentlessly pursue their victims; let them be caught in the schemes they have devised. For the wicked one boasts about his own cravings; the one who is greedy curses and despises the LORD” (Ps. 10:2-3).

Up to this point, Psalm 14 can feel disheartening, but there is hope!

- **God sees.** God is not oblivious to sin, nor is He oblivious to our pain and oppression. David told us earlier that “the LORD looks down from heaven on the human race” (v. 2). He sees the wickedness, but that also means 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. We’ve all witnessed this where it seems like people can get away with anything if they know the right people in power or have enough resources to buy off the system. While we may want them to be held accountable for their actions now, a day is coming when justice will come swift and sure.

And when God’s judgment comes, it will be far more thorough and punitive than anything our own justice system can hand out.

In fact, when that day of judgment comes, the unrighteous “will be filled with dread” (v. 5). Why? Because God is “with those who are righteous” (v. 5). The righteousness of God and those who, through Christ, have “become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21) shine upon and clearly expose unrighteousness.

- **God delivers.** God’s judgment should cause dread in all of us! After all, this psalm has made quite plain that all of us are sinners. “There is no one who does good, not even one” (Ps. 14:3). 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.

QUESTION 4:

When has the Lord been a refuge for you during a difficult time?

I hope you see the hope in this. God sees sin—including our own sin. While judgment is coming against sin, Christ took that judgment upon Himself. He loves us that much! With sin removed through His death on the cross, Christ then delivers us into a new life full of hope, righteousness, and purpose. Even if we still encounter sin and oppression in this current world, we have a sure hope that such unrighteousness will not prevail or continue. We can rejoice in the sure hope and promise that “the LORD restores the fortunes of his people” (v. 7).

QUESTION 5:

How has God restored you since turning to Christ?

LIVE IT OUT

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.



1. Louie Giglio and Matt Redman, *Indescribable* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2011), 18-19 (eBook).