



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 O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

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, "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all 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. "Who hast set thy glory above the heavens" (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 “babes and sucklings” (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 “strength” (v. 2) that speaks mightily of God to “still 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 man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest 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. “For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour” (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 hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

2 The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not 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. “They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy” (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 “that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put 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. “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (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 looked down from heaven upon the children of men" (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 come 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 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the LORD.

5 There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous.

6 Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD is his refuge.

7 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

We can point our fingers in disgust at all those fools and “workers of iniquity” (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. “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge?” (v. 4). As long as they choose to “call not upon 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 “eat up my people as they eat 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.

“The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. For the wicked boasteth of his heart’s desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth” (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 looked down from heaven upon the children of men” (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 experience "great fear" (v. 5). Why? Because God is "in the generation of the righteous" (v. 5). The righteousness of God and those who, through Christ, have been "made the righteousness of God in him" (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 none that doeth good, no, not 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 bringeth back the captivity 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).