

Purpose Restored



THE POINT

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

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 are not 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.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 3:14-26

THE SETTING

The first Christians were Jewish, and they continued to meet together in the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 2:46). In Acts 3, Peter and John were 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 astonishment among the people present (vv. 2-10). A crowd gathered and Peter took this opportunity to preach. 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).

GETTING STARTED



5 MINUTES

DISCUSS: Draw attention to the question on **PSG, page 37** and ask **Question 1: What's something you own that's been refurbished or restored?**

GUIDE: Refer the group to "**The Bible Meets Life**" (**PSG, page 37**) and the author's comments on paint and art restoration.

SAY: Spiritual restoration plays a key role in reclaiming God's purpose for our lives.

GUIDE: Introduce **The Point** on **PSG, page 37: Through Jesus, we can be forgiven and restored to the purpose for which He created us.**

OPTIONAL INTRODUCTION: Refer to "Life Connection" on page 38 for an alternate introduction to the study.

PRAY: Begin the session with prayer. Ask God to use this session to show our need for restoration. Encourage us to turn away from sin and turn to Jesus.

NOTES

STUDY THE BIBLE



10 MINUTES



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 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

SUMMARIZE: Before reading the verses, refer to “The Setting” on page 38 to establish the context of the biblical passage.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read Acts 3:14-18

READ: Share the **Connection to The Point:** Faith in Jesus is the way to restoration.

GUIDE: Refer the group to **PSG, page 39**. Use the author’s comments to contrast the disbelief of the crowd with the faith of the lame man.

Peter wanted the crowd to understand that they didn’t just reject some itinerant rabbi; Peter was referring to Jesus as God’s Messiah—the very source of life in their midst—but they rejected Him and killed Him.

Because Jesus is alive, He is still at work. He works on our behalf as we place our “faith in his name.”

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 rise up and walk” (v. 6), it was enough for him to take hold of Peter’s hand.

SUMMARIZE: Refer to the **Bible Commentary** to explain these key words from vv. 14-18 to reinforce the importance of faith. Highlight the following:

Witnesses (v. 15).

Faith in his name (v. 16).

Faith which is by him (v. 16).

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

TRANSITION: Faith in Jesus will lead to restoration but only after we have dealt rightly with our sin.

Acts 3:14-18 Commentary

Denied (v. 14). When Jesus was on trial and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate had stated he had found no guilt in Jesus 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).

The Holy One and the Just (v. 14). Titles for Jesus, these terms are most likely synonyms and both have messianic emphases. The demons 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 “he that is holy, he that is true” (Rev. 3:7). References to Jesus as “the Just One” appear in Acts 7:52 and 22:14; and “Jesus Christ the righteous” in 1 John 2:1. In the Old Testament, righteousness was a characteristic of the prophesied Messiah (see Isa. 53:11; Jer. 23:5).

The Prince 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 man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (14:6).

Whom God hath raised from the dead (v. 15). Peter quickly reminded his hearers that death did not spell the end of Jesus, for God the Father raised Him from the dead (Acts 2:32; 4:10; 13:30; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 1:20).

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.”¹

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 rise 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 faith which is by him (v. 16). Peter wanted no credit for the healing. Jesus healed the lame man by faith, and even the man’s faith was not something that Peter could credit to himself. Faith had come through Jesus.

Perfect soundness (v. 16). The lame man had sat outside the temple proper as a broken man, prohibited from going further inside the temple to worship. However, through faith in Jesus, he now had access to enter further into the temple to worship. Jesus took his brokenness and made him whole.

Ignorance (v. 17). The Jews did not recognize who Jesus was, and that was the source of their *ignorance (agnoia)*. 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.

God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets (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



15 MINUTES

Acts 3:19-21

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read Acts 3:19-21.

READ: Share the **Connection to The Point:** Jesus forgives and refreshes us when we repent of our sin.

RECAP: Refer the group to **PSG, page 41** and recap the three things God does when we repent and turn back.

Your sins are blotted out. “Blotted out” carries the meaning of “erased.” Ink didn’t soak into first-century parchments as ink does on our modern-day paper. A wet sponge could erase whatever was on a parchment. Christ’s death on the cross fully erases and makes us clean.

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 as the Messiah. We can experience the forgiveness and refreshment of His presence in our lives. When we repent and turn to God, we have a sure and certain hope that when Christ returns, “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

DISCUSS: Question 3: What are some obstacles that keep us from repentance?

SUMMARIZE: Refer to the **Bible Commentary** to highlight these key words from vv. 19-21. Use them to show that Jesus alone forgives and refreshes.

Repent ye therefore, and be converted (v. 19).

Send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you (v. 20).

DISCUSS: Question 4: When have you seen repentance lead to restoration?

ENGAGE: Invite the group to complete the Engage activity (**PSG, p. 42**).

TRANSITION: Restoration is not only seen in our repentance but also in our changed behavior.

Optional Activity

See Bonus Content on page 47. Use this activity after discussing v. 20.

Digging Deeper

Refer the group to **Digging Deeper, "Repent and Turn Back" (PSG, p. 41)**.

Alternate Question

How would you explain the connection between repentance and restoration?

Acts 3:19-21 *Commentary*

Repent ye therefore, and be converted (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 *converted* and means to turn back. 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).

Blotted out (v. 19). Putting their faith in Jesus would enable the people’s sins to be *blotted out* (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 propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2).

Times of refreshing (v. 19). Those who repent and put their faith in Christ also experience *times 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 .

Shall come from the presence of the Lord (v. 19). *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 *times of refreshing*.

Send Jesus Christ (v. 20). 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.

Which before was preached unto you (v. 20). The coming of God’s Messiah was foretold to the Jews in the writings of Moses and the Old Testament prophets. These prophecies were fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ.

Whom the heaven must receive (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 times of restitution of all things (v. 21). 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). He may also have been 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).

God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets (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

Acts 3:22-26

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read Acts 3:22-26.

READ: Share the **Connection to The Point:** God raised Jesus to turn us from our evil ways.

GUIDE: Refer the group to **PSG, pages 43–44** and use the author's comments to reinforce the truth that only Jesus can save.

The Jews thought they had an inside track into coming to God. They were descendants of Abraham. They had Moses and the law. They had the prophets. They had the covenants, the special relationships God established with His people.

Moses, the highly esteemed leader of the Jewish people, spoke of Another. "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." The prophets also pointed to Him.

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.

SUMMARIZE: Refer to the **Bible Commentary** to explain these key words from vv. 22-26 to focus on Jesus as the only way to be saved.

A prophet . . . like unto me (v. 22);

Shall be destroyed from among the people (v. 23);

And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed (v. 25).

DISCUSS: Question 5: How has your life been restored and refreshed because of Jesus?

Alternate Question
What other paths do people attempt apart from Christ to find salvation?

Acts 3:22-26 *Commentary*

For Moses truly said (v. 22). Peter indicated in verse 21 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). He urged them to listen to the prophet of the Lord that God would raise up from among them (v. 15). 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 unto 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 both Moses’s and Jesus’s ministries. 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.

Shall the Lord your God 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 (Mark 1:15; Rom. 5:6; Gal. 4:4; Eph. 1:3-14). It did not happen randomly.

Every soul, which will not hear that prophet (v. 23). The term for *hear* (*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 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).

Shall be destroyed from among 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 *destroyed from among the people* (vv. 29-30). This is a sober warning concerning rejecting God’s offer of salvation through Jesus Christ: those who refuse God’s offer of atonement through Jesus Christ will face God’s judgment.

Children of the prophets and of the covenant (v. 25). The Jews who listened to Peter were *children 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. The Jews were the inheritors of the covenants God made with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 15:1-14; 17:1-14), Moses (Ex. 3; 19–20), and David (2 Sam. 7). However, they had to embrace Jesus as their Messiah to receive the benefits of these covenants in Christ.

And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed (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.



5 MINUTES

Magazine Excerpt

Refer the group to the article "One, Two, Three, Gospel Waltz" (PSG, pp. 46–49) from *Home Life* by Holly Mackle to show the value the practice of repentance in personal relationships.

LIVE IT OUT

GUIDE: Live It Out (PSG, page 45). Encourage the group to follow through this week with at least one of the applications.

Jesus wants to restore you to the purpose for which you were created. What will you do with that truth?

- **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

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

GUIDE: Remind the group that we should not be ashamed or embarrassed by the truth that only Jesus can forgive and save. And without His restoration, there's no hope for reclaiming the purpose God has for our lives.

PRAY: Lord, thank You for dying on the cross for us. We know You did it to forgive us and save us. Show us our sin and give us the courage to trust You as we repent from it. Restore our relationship with You and enable us to serve You according to Your purposes.



SCAN ME



TIPS & TRAINING

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Engage

Look at the list below. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal those areas where you need restoration. Mark the one(s) the Holy Spirit revealed.

Financial responsibility

Sexual purity

My role in my family

Relationships

Being a witness

Biblical study

Prayer

Serving

Building up the body of Christ

Other:

Choose one or two that you marked and complete this sentence:

Jesus, I confess my sin and will demonstrate my repentance through the following actions:

Bonus Content (Optional)

Optional Activity: Ask group members to describe things that refresh them and why (such as a vacation or a cold class of lemonade). Point out that these examples can differ from person to person, but the refreshment that comes from the Lord takes only one form: forgiveness. Ask the group to discuss how forgiveness is refreshing.

1. John B. Polhill, *Acts*, v. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 128.