



## **MISPLACED PURPOSES (part 2)**

With Bishop Ronald K. Powell

A determined young man sought to fulfill his purpose in life by serving his country as a corporal in World War I. After the war, his strong sense of patriotism led him in the direction of politics. Surrounding himself with a handful of like-minded men, he eventually emerged as a dominant political force. His influence was literally felt around the world. Unfortunately, people can seek to find fulfillment in negative ways, as seen in the life of Adolf Hitler, who was that young man. His misplaced purpose in life was to rid the world of people not like him. Hitler's Nazi regime not only provoked World War II, but his forces killed approximately six million Jews, as well as five million other people whom he regarded as racially inferior or politically dangerous. Ultimately, Hitler committed suicide.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death."

**(Proverbs 14:12)**

### **1. Roads to Nowhere**

Those who waste their lives chasing worldly desires eventually come to realize their ultimate emptiness. Fulfillment is never found in earthly power, pleasure or personal gain.

“I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.”

**(Ecclesiastes 1:14)**

- Externally focused

concerned about outward appearances of success

- Materialistic

impressed with money and possessions

- Pleasure seeking

seeking happiness as highest goal in life—hedonism

- Task oriented

placing projects over people—workaholism

- Insecure

people-pleasing, codependent relationships

- Negative thinking

dissatisfied, disinterested, bored and bitter

- Escaping reality

numbing reality through alcohol, food, drugs, activities

- Sexually promiscuous

addicted to the “high” of sexual passion

- Status seeking

seeking fame, power or intellectualism as highest goal in life

“Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”

**(Proverbs 26:12)**

## **2. Thoughts of Meaninglessness**

- “Life has no meaning.”
- “Life’s not worth living.”
- “I have no sense of purpose.”
  
- “You can’t count on anything.”
- “I feel insignificant.”
- “Nothing is worthwhile.”
- “Nothing really matters.”
- “What’s the point of it all?”

“When I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.”

**(Ecclesiastes 2:11)**

## **III. CAUSES FOR NOT FINDING PURPOSE IN LIFE**

Can you imagine being the richest of the rich? Wouldn’t wealth provide for every purpose in life? King Solomon was abundantly blessed with power and every conceivable material possession. With his 700 wives and 300 concubines, he lavished upon himself every human pleasure. Yet, all these things could not bring satisfaction to his soul. Through Solomon, we see that money cannot buy meaning to life ... possessions will never buy purpose in life.

“God gives a man wealth, possessions and honor, so that he lacks nothing his heart desires, but God does not enable him to enjoy them, and a stranger enjoys them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.”

**(Ecclesiastes 6:2)**

## **3. Seeking Significance “In All the Wrong Places”**

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.”

**(Matthew 7:13)**

- Seeking to be happy
- seeking to be holy
- Seeking to be religious in a church
- seeking to grow in a relationship with Christ
- Seeking cultural Christianity
- seeking biblical Christianity
- Seeking external do's and dont's
- seeking internal obedience of the heart
- Seeking human approval
- seeking God's approval
- Seeking your own will
- seeking God's will
- Seeking to live for present gain
- seeking to live for eternal values

“So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.”

**(2 Corinthians 4:18)**

**Root Cause**

**WRONG BELIEF:**

“I’ll feel significant if my possessions, popularity and power increase.”

**RIGHT BELIEF:**

My significance is based on God’s fulfilling His purpose for me by conforming my character to Christ’s character.

“The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me.” (**Psalm 138:8**)

#### **4. SOLUTION**

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

**(Romans 8:28)**

#### **Closing**

Solomon may be considered the wisest of men, but he undoubtedly learned much through trial and error ... mostly error. His last recorded writing, Ecclesiastes, is Solomon’s autobiography. In it he documents his continual efforts to find satisfaction—efforts that brought no fulfillment, only futility. By

reading Ecclesiastes, you can learn what to eliminate in life. What can look like the proverbial “pot of gold” is merely a chasing after the wind ... in the end, that pot is empty.