**Edward Church *“What Is Your Purpose in Life?”* -pt4 April 10, 2018**

**Characteristics**

At one point it appeared as if **both** men were **headed** for the **same destiny**... on the **same** course of **corruption**. **Hitler** wanted to **kill** the **Jews**, and **Paul** (Saul) wanted to **kill** the **Jews** who had become **Christians**—to **kill** the early **church**—to **squelch** its **impact**, dragging them off to **prison**. **Both** believed they were**serving** God.

* But Paul would one day **find** the better **path**, **follow** it... and be forever **changed**.

 *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death."* **Proverbs 14:12**

**What Are Roads to Nowhere?**

As a young man, Paul **thought** he was **fulfilling** his **purpose** in life when…

 …*"he began to destroy the church"* **Acts 8:3**

A **zealous** Pharisee in the **early** days of the church, he went **house** to house to find **followers** of Jesus Christ / and **imprison** them. He **stood** by and **watched** while **Stephen**, the first Christian martyr, was **stoned** for his **faith**—**consenting** to his **death**.

But his **fight** against Christians **ended** when he **saw** the risen Christ, / his real **purpose** in life **began**. *"Still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples"* **Acts 9:1**, Paul was traveling to **Damascus** and was on the **outskirts** of the city **when** a *"light from heaven flashed around him"* **Acts 9:3.**

Jesus **showed** that he wasn’t just **persecuting** the **church**, but was **really** persecuting **Jesus**. **Later**, Jesus said of Paul...

*"This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles/ their kings/ before the people of Israel."* **Acts 9:15**

Paul was **beaten** for his beliefs, **imprisoned** for his purpose, in **chains** for his choice—**clearly** he **chose** Christ.

**The Roads to** Emptiness

**You are chasing after the wind and on a road to emptiness if you are...**

|  |  |
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| • Externally-focused… | concerned **about your own** outward appearances **of success**—**egotism** |
| • Materialistic… | impressed **with** money **and** possessions—**materialism** |
| • Pleasure-seeking… | **seeking** happiness **as your highest** goal **in life—hedonism** |
| • Task-oriented… | **placing** projects **over** people—**workaholism** |
| • Insecure… | pleasing **people** to gain **acceptance**—**idolatry** |
| • Negative… | **dissatisfied**, disinterested, **bored**, and bitter—**pessimism** |
| • Escaping reality… | **numbing** reality **through** **alcohol, food, drugs, activities—escapism** |
| • Status-seeking | **seeking** fame, **power** or intellectualism **as your highest goal in life—elitism** |
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*"Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him."* **Proverbs 26:12**

*“There’s a way of life that looks harmless enough; look again—it leads straight to hell”* **Proverbs 14:12**

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