

Navigate Life With Purpose

I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill his purpose for me.

Psalm 57:2

There was no reason that I, a sixteen-year-old newly licensed driver, should be driving my 1957 Pontiac Catalina on highway 60 trying to reach a speed of 100 miles per hour. Saying “I just want to go fast” was not what Monty Cotter wanted to hear. Monty was a Texas Highway Patrol Officer and a member of Kingsmill Community Church where my family worshipped. He knew me and my parents well and fortunately for me, he decided to teach a lesson rather than give me a speeding ticket.

His first teaching lecture began when he asked me to exit my car. Standing there shaking in my boots, he asked me why I was driving so fast. I said, “I don’t know.” In response to my answer, he said, “If you don’t even know where you are going or why, don’t risk your life.” Each Sunday morning following the speeding thing, he would call me over and say, “What is your purpose?” Sadly, I usually repeated the same message, “I don’t know.”

One day in desperation, I answered his question with “My purpose is to teach.” I don’t remember his exact words, but I journaled my thoughts on his lecture and wrote the only words I remembered: “Monty told me to “Drive like you want to live into being the teacher you want to be.” It believe his advice worked in my life.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox was a journalist and a popular American poet in the late 19th and early 20th century. While few people recognize her name, some of her words are still very familiar. Perhaps these will ring a bell.

*"Laugh and the world laughs with you.
Weep, and you weep alone."
(from "Solitude")*

If you studied her work in school, you are likely to be one of a select minority. She can't be dismissed as a minor poet. She was too good for that. However many poetry scholars would probably count her as a bad major poet. To me, she writes to direct purpose in my life and perhaps soon in yours.

Here is an eye-opener that I truly hope influences you for a lifetime. Purpose is what determines where you go. Ella Wheeler Wilcox describes it in this excerpt from her poem written in 1916 about how a sailor can find any port using winds that blow against him or her. That's the easy part. Knowing where to go can be the most difficult.

Peace always,

Ted

'Tis The Set Of The Sail -- or -- One Ship Sails East

by [*Ella Wheeler Wilcox*](#)

**One ship sails East,
And another West,
By the self-same winds that blow,
'Tis the set of the sails
And not the gales,
That tells the way we go.**

**Like the winds of the sea
Are the waves of time,
As we journey along through life,
'Tis the set of the soul,
That determines the goal,
And not the calm or the strife.**