What is the Meaning of Life?
Program 68
Our Search For Security, Significance, and Happiness
by Ernest O'Neill

What is the meaning of our present life? Do you know? Do you know what you are here for, or what the purpose in your life is? That's what we have been discussing on this program for several months now. We resolved that the only person that could answer that question satisfactorily would be some person who could stand back from the world and look at it from a distance.

In other words, someone who had not only been on the earth, but someone who had been off of the earth. Of course, we are not just speaking about our space shots or our spacemen, but we were speaking of someone who would be able to tell us what was beyond the sky and the furthest star. Someone who could therefore tell us why the earth was put in this point in space and what it was put here for, and therefore what we were put here for.

Though we've searched the history books and studied the Buddha's and the Confucius', and the Zoroaster's of this world, we have found that none of them ever claimed to have gotten off the world and looked at it from a distance. There is only one man who has done that.

There is only one man who has broken the death barrier in such a convincing way that even critical historians accept that he undoubtedly did rise from the dead. That is the man we know as Jesus of Nazareth. So, we have come to the conclusion that he certainly wasn't a lunatic because he didn't have the imbalance of lunatics.

He certainly wasn't a liar because we regard him as the greatest ethical teacher the world has ever seen. (No such person could

lie about the central and focal point of his whole teaching, that is, his own identity.) He certainly wasn't a legend, because there was not time for a legend to develop after he died. Accounts of his life were already circulating a few years after his life ended.

So, we've come to the conclusion that this man Jesus of Nazareth was in fact who he said he was. He was the Son of the Maker of our universe. He alone is the one who can tell us what life is about. What he said of course is, "What is born of the flesh is flesh." You may say, "Well, big deal. That's no wonderful news." But it is, if you combine it with the statement that he made that we wouldn't believe that.

We would not believe it. That's what he said, "They will not believe." Of course, that is too true, isn't it, of us? We know that we're born of the flesh. We know that it will end in 70 or at the most 100 years, yet, we can't somehow believe that. We have deep down in us a feeling that we were made for more than that. We have a feeling of eternity inside of us. We have a feeling that we were made for a kind of life that is utterly different from the life that we have on this earth.

Strangely enough, the life that we dream of is something like heaven, even if we don't believe in it. We feel, for instance, all of us, that we were made to have a security and a stability that this life seems not to offer us.

What we all do on this moving platform, this "Fiddler on the Roof" kind of situation we find ourselves in, is we try vainly, and with futility, to trade up our houses and our cars, trade up our education for good jobs, surround ourselves with a cast iron life insurance scheme that will somehow ensure that we are secure, that we are safe from all the uncertainties of this present world.

Yet, we know fine well that even the greatest millionaires have not been able to protect themselves against the death by cancer or by some other disease or even the disasters that fall upon the greatest and most efficient magnates that the world has seen. There is a futility in our attempts. Yet, we still keep trying to do it.

We grab, grab, grab all we can to try to establish our own security. You know how at night we lie in bed thinking of schemes to improve our position, improve our security, improve our stability. Many of us have not been able to enjoy our education, because we have utterly subordinated it to the need for vocational training. Vocational training so often has meant for us not enjoying what we are able to do, but in fact, trying to ensure security, financial security, and physical security for ourselves and our families.

It's the same for the other characteristics we feel we were made for. We feel we were made for utter happiness, complete happiness all the time. We're always trying to be happy, happy, happy. Happiness for us is a combination of peace and serenity, together with exhilaration and excitement. That explains why many of us involve ourselves in a great deal of the sexual pursuits we have.

It's why many of us involve ourselves in the alcohol and the drugs -- because we're looking for tremendous excitement and exhilaration. Yet, if we have too much of it, we blow ourselves apart. So we want to combine it with peace and serenity, but somehow we never seem to be able to get the mix right. However much we try to raise this created life to a level of uncreated eternity, we don't seem able to bring it about.

It's the same of course with the feeling we have that we were made to be somebody. We all feel that, don't we? We all feel we are unique! We all feel, "I'm unique. I'm unique. There's nobody

quite like me. There's nobody quite like me. I'm unique." The strange and interesting thing is, you ARE unique, you know. There is no one like you!

There is no one absolutely like you! Even if you're identical twins, your twin is not exactly like you. You have a subtle combination of physical appearance, of mental ability, of emotional trends that the other twin doesn't have. There is nobody like you in the whole universe. Here's an amazing fact to add to that. There never has been anybody like you. There never has been!

There's never been anybody exactly like you. Then add to it this other fact. There never will be anybody like you. There never will be anybody like you. You are actually unique. But you and I, of course, say, "Well yeah, I know that. But the rest don't. The rest don't." Of course, we're always trying to get the rest to note how remarkably unique we are.

That's tough going in a world with four billion people in it, because they're all trying to get all the other four billion to notice how unique they are. What results is a great deal of striving for position, striving for importance, a great deal of self-importance, a great deal of drawing attention to ourselves in conversation by trying to be the funniest guy in the conversation, trying to be the unique, superior, know-all. Yet, we know deep down we aren't.

Yet, we do know we're unique. So, in trying to make ourselves unique in everybody else's eyes, and trying to gain significance in everybody else's eyes, in trying to gain security and stability in this unstable world, in trying to experience continual happiness in what is a very sad world, we have often become egotistical monsters -- voracious, gluttonous parasites that tend to live off everyone else while trying to get ourselves the heaven that we think we were made for.

What Jesus said, of course, is that the trouble is we were made for that kind of heaven. That's right. Our Father did make us for that. Our Maker did make us for that. But He made us to receive that from HIM and not from the world itself. Jesus began to explain that to us in detail. He said that we're always looking to the wrong source for the happiness that we feel we were made for.

We're trying to get it from our dear wife. We're trying to get enough excitement in our experiences with her. We're trying to get enough peace and security in her care for us to make us utterly happy. Jesus said, really, you'll never get it from just a created human being like yourself. You never will get it! You'll always end up in futility.

In fact, you were made for that kind of life, but it will come only from one person. And that person is the Person who put you here. Let's talk a little more about this tomorrow.