WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 110
Deliverance From our Evil Nature
by Ernest O'Neill

We've been talking for some months now about the meaning of life and particularly about the meaning of one of the unusual experiences all of us have in our present life: the Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome. That is that dreadful discovery that most of us make that underneath this kindly, apparently good and generous exterior that we try to present to our friends and our relatives, there lies an alter ego or an old self that seems determined to do the very opposite of what we would like to do.

There is one part of us that wants to be loving, wants to be kind, wants to be generous, but there is another part within us that wants to slash out at other people, to be selfish, to be angry, to lose its temper, to get its own way, to insist on its own rights whoever it has to tramp over the top of to get those things.

What we have been talking about is the origin of that dual personality. We've tied it back to the early days when we were created. We've shared, you remember, how this man that lived in the first century told us that the maker of the world was not only a personal intellect, but was actually His Father. And He had made you to love Him. That's why He made you.

He made you to love Him, to live in friendship with Him. Indeed more than that, He made you so that you would deep down in your heart depend upon Him for the things that you need. You would just naturally conclude, "Well, now the Creator who put me here on earth knows I'm here. He has numbered the very hairs of my head and He certainly knows how all the economy works and He knows what kind of job He wants me to do here.

So, if I do that job properly, He certainly loves me and He will provide whatever money I need and whatever food and clothing I need, perhaps at times through my salary and at times apart from my salary." Moreover, you would naturally know that if He loved you the way your father loves you, then, of course, you were important to Him. This would satisfy your deepest longing for a sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

Your desire for happiness would be satisfied by a real sense that He was your friend -- that you were walking through the universe with the owner of the universe beside you. Now, of course, we as a race have not lived that way. We have in fact determined we will not depend on this Creator for these things; we will get the substitutes for these things that His love would provide for us from the world itself.

So we looked at the world and we decided, listen we can use this world to get the attributes that His love would give us or the benefits His love would provide. We can get them for ourselves from the world. We can use the resources of the world as long as we grab enough of them for ourselves; we can ensure our own security. As long as we grab enough gold, or enough money, or enough wheat or enough corn we can ensure we'll have enough food to eat for the rest of our lives.

As long as we grab enough clothes we can ensure that we're well clothed. As long as we make enough money from other people then we can have good homes. We similarly look the same way at our own need for self-esteem and self-worth. We determined if we can get more of these clothes or more of this money than everybody else, then everybody else will think we're important or we're better than them. That will give us a sense of self worth and self esteem.

Of course, what has happened through the years is that there has not been enough to go around to satisfy us all. We have at times all wanted these things at the same time. There has, therefore, risen up within us an ugly monster that gets irritated, and angry and impatient when it can't get enough of the money or enough of the food or the clothing, or enough attention to satisfy itself. There have developed within us two directions inside our personality.

There is the memory of the one direction that we were meant to follow: that direction from the inside of our personalities to the outside. We were meant to trust the Creator of the universe for our security. We were meant to trust the love of the Creator of the universe for our sense of self-worth and self-esteem. We were meant to trust the Creator of the universe for our own happiness.

But instead of that, instead of living from the inside trust that we have in Him, and expressing that out to other people in a fully integrated personality that was content and at home, and satisfied with itself and its own life, we have, in fact, begun to live from the outside in. We try to get from the outside of us -- from the things around us, from the circumstances, of our experiences, from the relationships with people -- we tried to get the security that we need and the sense of self-esteem and worth and value that we need and the sense of happiness that we need.

So there has developed an outside-in direction in our personality that has produced a monster of a Mr. Hyde who seems to want to do the very opposite of what we would like to think we want to do ourselves. That's why we end up in that position that was described in a certain line in that old book called the Bible. It's in Romans 7:15. It runs, "I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate."

Many of us know that experience in ourselves. We want in some sense to live the way we were meant to, to trust the Creator for our security and to trust Him for our sense of self-esteem and self-worth, but there is developed inside us a whole direction in our personality which prevents us doing that. A whole part of us that has become habituated and accustomed to depending on what other people think of us in our self-esteem and our self-worth.

We're dependent on what our bosses think of us, to what our peers think of us, to what our colleagues or our fellow students think of us. And when they don't seem to think well of us, then we are cast down. We are disappointed and then we get envious of the people that are receiving their appreciation and approval. We get jealous of them and we find rising up within us a monster of jealousy and envy that we cannot possibly control. That is the Mr. Hyde within us.

That is living on dependence on what the world thinks of us and what the world can provide for us rather than the Dr. Jekyll, who has a memory that he should be depending on the Creator of the universe, and should be trusting in the Creator of the universe for his security, and for his self-worth and for his happiness.

So, the existence of this monstrosity within us, this dual personality in which two characters apparently contradict and fight each other within us, comes from two ways to live this life. The way we were meant to live in gentle, kindly, spontaneous trust of our Father who made us, is the way that produces the Dr. Jekyll who is kindly, who can live with other people, who can live in harmony with others, free from envy of them and free from jealousy of them, free from anger that they are getting more than we are.....freedom from irritability that they are not doing what we want them to do, freedom from resentment that they're not

treating us the way they should treat us. We should be filled instead, with a sense of contentment in knowing that the Father of the universe thinks the world of us and therefore, it doesn't matter what anybody thinks. We are content that the Father of the universe, even in the worst moments in the economy, will continue to provide enough food, and shelter and clothing for our needs.

And yet, there is that other Mr. Hyde within us that gets irritable because other people are not letting us get what we want. They're not giving us the attention that they should give us. They're not giving us the things -- the clothes, the food, the shelter, the care -- that we feel we ought to have. So there develops within us an unbearable strain, a Jekyll and Hyde Syndrome that prevents us doing what we really want to do in the best parts of our personality.

How do you get free from that Jekyll and Hyde personality? There is a way. That's what we're going to talk about during the next two weeks. So please do join us at this time tomorrow.