WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 158
God's Voice in our Spirit
by Ernest O'Neill

We're talking about the meaning of life and particularly about how we are meant to live life. We're trying to find out how we were meant to live life by the Person that made life. So, of course, you can guess that we've had to go back into the intellectual basis for believing that there is a Supreme Being. We did that in the early months of this year and I encourage you to send for the cassettes that will cover that kind of discussion.

But, we have reached the point in our own conversation together where we are now talking about why we were actually made. The answer given by the Person that has been seen beyond anyone else to be divine and more than a human being is Jesus of Nazareth who lived in the first century of our era. He explained that we were made by His Father, the Creator of the universe, to be His friends. That's why you were made.

You were made so that your Father, the Creator of the universe, could love you and so that you could love Him. That's it! That's it. You weren't made, first and foremost, to do a job here in this world, though that is part of the purpose. But, you were made, first and foremost, not to marry, not to have children -- though you do those things, too -- but you were made first and foremost to become a friend of your Creator, to become a child of your Creator.

You were made to have a love relationship forever. That's why we are here, and why he made us like Himself. We've talked about that, how He made us with the capability of three levels of experience. We are one person. We are one entity, but we operate on a physical level with our physical bodies. We operate

on a psychological level with our mind, emotions and our will. We operate on a spirit level with our spirits.

We have been talking about our spirit, particularly, because it is our spirit that communes with God. It's our spirit that is God-conscious. Your soul, or your psychological part of you, is your self-conscious part. It is conscious of what you're thinking, of what you're feeling. Your body is what is conscious of the world, of things and circumstances and people through the five senses. But, your spirit is the part of you that is conscious of God and that can commune with God.

That's the function of our spirit that we discussed first. Communion. The ability to commune with God. We don't commune with God through our thoughts or through our emotions, even though many of us think we do. We try to, but we never get closer to God that way. We are simply communing with ourselves when we indulge in thoughts and feelings. The spirit is where we commune with God.

You may say, "Well, how on earth do I start doing that?" Well, we've been talking about that. Our spirits are almost dead to God. It's so long since we thought about God or since we tried to commune with Him at all, and we've been so busy communing with the world through our body and with ourselves, through our mind and emotions, that our spirits for most of us are almost dead to God. They're certainly in a comatose state.

What we need to do in order for them to begin to become alive is, first of all, to operate in some way in the realm of our spirit. Now one way you can do it is by strong desire. Your spirit is the real you; it is who you really are. And one thing you can do if you are anxious to in some way get in touch with the Creator of the universe is to want Him with all your heart. Now, that's what this man Jesus said. If you want to find God, you must seek Him with

all of your heart, and those who seek Him with all their heart diligently will actually find Him.

So, one of the ways that you begin to come alive in your spirit is to want God with all of your being. Actually, you know that yourself. You know that if your dad dies or when your mom dies, or when you lost your job, or some terrible tragedy happened in your life, and you had nowhere to go, you almost cried out, you know, the old foxhole prayer, the old trench warfare prayer. "My God, help me."

When you were desperate for Him, somehow, in that moment, you seemed to think that He was more real to you. That's because strong desire is part of, or can be, part of the exercise of your spirit.

Another way in which you can respond to your spirit is in response to your conscience. Your conscience is part of your spirit. It's part of that life that God has breathed into you. It is part of His own life, His own uncreated life. It's your conscience.

Now, your conscience is not, strictly speaking, the set of standards you have, moral or ethical or religious. Your conscience is the part of you that urges you to live up to the best that you know. That's what your conscience is. It's the part of you that seems to lift you. Even though you find it easier to be selfish than unselfish, your conscience tells you that you should be unselfish. It's the part of you that makes you feel you shouldn't lose your temper, even though you find it easier to lose your temper. It's the part of you that urges you to live up to the best that you know.

One of the vital things that you and I have to do if we want to begin to come alive to God inside in our spirits is to begin to respect our conscience. Unless you feel that I'm telling you just

to be a goody-goody, or to be moral or not to do what your teacher said you shouldn't do, I'm not. I am just saying that your conscience has signals directly from God to you. Often, they are not to do with morality or immorality; they're not to do with ethics or non-ethics. Often, they're private things.

They are little things that you know you sense you should do. At a certain moment, you're in a bus and there's something inside of you says that you really should speak to that person. Actually, if you responded to that, your spirit becomes a little stronger. That is something that God has put into you. It's something He has said to you through your conscience.

Often, your conscience tells you you ought to do things that nobody else has particularly told you about. Many of us who were brought up in homes of alcoholics have certain desires or a sense of "I ought" in our conscience that they're not reasonable to expect in a person who was brought up in alcoholism. Yet, we sense it. We sense we ought not to drink this glass of wine, or not to do that. Obey that! Respect that! That's the part of you that is vitally you. That is part of God in you.

For goodness sake, respect it. Why you feel that you can hardly find yourself and know who you really are is because you don't respond to your conscience. Your conscience contains God's own personal signals to you. They are little things that you ought to do when you sense you ought to do them. Respect it!

Most of us, of course, have got into this position of R2D2, or automatons, or robots, because we have substituted everybody else's standards for our conscience. It's the "in thing" to have crack. Or, it's the "in thing" to have cocaine. Or, it's the "in thing" to fornicate. Or it's the "in thing" to steal from your employer. So, we do it. By that means we ignore our conscience and we sear it

and sear it and sear it with a hot iron until it hardly exists anymore. We think we're swingers, because we're ignoring our conscience. We're stupid.

We're ignoring the part of us that is really, really us. We are ignoring the most individual part of us. We are ignoring the most individualistic part of us that we have. It's God's own guidance system to us. It's a gyro-compass that you alone have. Nobody else has your conscience. No. Nobody. If you say to me, "Well, what about religious people and moral people? They tell me what I ought to do. Ought I not to obey them?" Well, frankly, your main responsibility is to listen to your conscience and to obey your conscience.

The more you obey it, the stronger it becomes. The stronger it becomes, of course, the stronger your spirit is. The spirit is the real you. It's you as you are before your God, before your Creator. He is always trying to make you what He has really created you to be. The Creator isn't in the business of giving you the unique individuality that you have and then trying to wipe it out and make you like everybody else. He isn't. That doesn't make sense.

He doesn't want you conformed to the, as the Bible says, image of this world. He wants you to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. He wants you to be transformed into His image. He wants you to be the picture of Him that you alone can be, and nobody else can be. That's why there is a strange piece in the Bible, there's a remarkable verse that says that the spiritual man is judged by no one. Actually, if you're spiritual, if you live in your spirit, you actually cannot be judged by anybody else, because nobody else can tell what God is saying to you.

That's why there is a great responsibility we have to respect other people. We have to respect what they do and not judge

them by our conscience. Let's talk a little more about that tomorrow.