WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 177
We Need to Operate the Right Way
by Ernest O'Neill

We've been talking about the vicious circle that many of us get into in operating our own personalities. We are doing this in connection with an overall subject that we've been discussing for several months now, and that is, "What is the meaning of life?" That is, why are you and I here?

We've come to the point in our discussion, after all kinds of intellectual substantiation, of seeing that the Creator of the universe is actually a Being more intelligent than us, and as personable as we are, which is very reasonable to expect.

We have seen further the reason He had for making us, according to what His Son Jesus has explained to us. And we examined in detail the historicity of this man's life in the first century of our era.

We began to discuss some of the documentary evidence that lies behind that history and we've concluded that he was in fact the Son of the Maker of the universe. The explanation that He gives, of the reason why His Father made us, is because He wants you to be His friend. That's it!

He wants you to be in friendship with Him. He loves you and He actually knows you better than your own father knows you. He has actually counted the hairs of your head and has designed you with infinite care. He desires that you love Him, because He does already love you. That's the purpose of life here on the earth.

He wants us to use the free wills which He has given us to become like Him. In order for us to become like Him, we do have to choose ourselves certain things of our own free will. So, He has put you here on earth with certain abilities that nobody else has in exactly the same combination.

Some people may have what the world considers to be better abilities than you, but none have exactly the same combination of abilities and personality that you have. So you are unique in the universe.

The Creator of the universe has put you here to do a certain job in bringing part of the world into order under His will that no one else can do. As you do that, and trust and obey Him in that, you become more and more like Him every day through your own choice. So that is why we are here.

We've been discussing how that operates through our personalities. We've seen how our personalities exist at three different levels. It is outlined by him in the Bible.

The Bible shows us that we operate on a physical level which is, of course, our bodies with their five senses. Then there is the psychological level with the mind, emotion and the will. We call that level the soul. And lastly, we operate in our spirit level, which is the real you. It is you as you really are.

Your spirit is you as you are when you're alone, unstimulated and unconstrained by external compulsions of any kind. What you are when you're alone - that you are - and nothing more. Your spirit is the very essence of you.

Now that spirit of yours is the part that is meant to contact the Creator and, in turn, govern the rest of your personality. If you take a page and divide it into three horizontal levels, the top level

would be the spirit; the middle level would be the soul; the bottom would be the body.

The upper section contains your spirit. It is your spirit there that is able to commune with God. When you are quiet and on your own, you are able to sense His existence and His presence. He actually pervades the whole universe, but we are so busy with all that we do and so noisy that we cannot sense His presence.

Really, His presence fills the whole world. You feel it at times when you are sitting by a quiet pond in the country or a lake or a river. There are moments like that when you sense His presence. Further, there are moments when a loved one dies and suddenly life stops and you sense there is a Presence in the world. Of course, it is Him. It is through your spirit that you are actually able to commune with Him.

Further, through the intuition of your spirit you can actually know what He wants you to do. Then your conscience actually gets you to live up to the best that you know, and what you know is what comes through your intuition.

So, your conscience then constrains your will, as part of your psychological being, or your soul, to do what your spirit has told you to do. Your will then directs your mind and your mind thinks the right thoughts and designs the correct plans. Your emotions, in turn, are elevated by that because your emotions are simply governed by your thoughts.

If you think of a certain person, you become angry; if you think of another person you become kind. Your feelings are governed by your thoughts. That, in turn, dictates what the body does, and your will enforces it and acts upon the world. As a result, the world is filled with more of the presence of God and His will and His nature.

Of course, what you and I find is that when we determine no longer to be governed by our bodies -- no longer to be driven like little puppets, by what the boss thinks of us -- when we determine we're going to be our real selves -- we find we don't know who we really are and who we should be.

You've probably experienced that at times. You've come to a place in your life where there did seem to be less confusion and disorder than usual and some things were settled, and you sat alone in a quiet room and thought, "What am I to do? Who am I really?"

It is at that moment that you come to the dreadful discovery that there seems to be nothing inside. You knock at the door of your heart and you find that there is nobody home. You find that you have lost yourself and you can't find yourself again.

That has happened actually by a sequence of decisions, or lack of them, that you have made. There is that moment in the movie, "A Man for All Seasons" when Sir Thomas More says, "There comes a time in each man's life when he holds his life in his hands like water. If, at that moment, the man opens his fingers even a little it will all flow out and be lost forever."

That's how we have lost ourselves. It is by a sequence of compromises and man-pleasing actions. It is by choices made in fear of consequences and possible discomfort. We have, over the years, lost ourselves and we don't know how to find ourselves again. We can't even remember what we were like.

You remember that Wordsworth says the same in one of his poems. He says, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy. Shades of the prison house begin to close around the growing boy. At

length a man perceives it die away and fade into the light of common day."

Many of us have experienced that. We've gradually lost contact with ourselves. Really, what has happened is that our spirits have died. Our spirits haven't died completely, because the conscience part of the spirit still remains alive a little, but even it becomes perverted very quickly.

The conscience is always trying to get us to live up to the best that God has told us personally to do. Yet we pervert our conscience. We make it live up to the best laws and standards that we've learned. So we learn standards in the financial realm and we abide by those standards. We learn standards from our society and our families that tell us to be wise and clever and witty.

We try to live up to those standards and, as a result, we pervert our conscience. But our conscience, really, is a pure part of our spirit, and will try to constrain our wills to live up to the best that God has told us to do. But we, of course, try to pervert that and prevent that happening.

Now, how on earth, or in heaven, does one ever get one's spirit to come alive again? That is what we need, isn't it? We need, in a sense, to be born again and to be recreated. How does that come about? Let's talk about that tomorrow.