WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 178
How Do We Get Our Spirits to Come Alive?
by Ernest O'Neill

We're talking on this program about how many of us have started to look for ourselves and can't find ourselves. Unless you think that I am crazy, what we're talking about is the dreadful discovery that many of us make that we are virtual puppets of our environment and our circumstances.

That is, our personalities are utterly dictated to by the way people treat us. People smile at us when we go to work and our eyes notice that and send a signal from our bodies to our emotions, and our emotions are elated. Our emotions send a signal to our minds to smile back.

So, we smile when we're smiled at, and we frown when we are frowned at. Now our will is almost non-existent in the whole enterprise. The deepest part of us -- that is our spirit, the real "us", what you really are deep down -- is left out all together. We find after years and years of doing this kind of thing and living this kind of life that we exist on only two levels of our personalities.

We have been talking about how we actually have three levels of our personality. If you take a page and divide it into three horizontal sections, label the top section "BODY", the middle section "SOUL" -- which is the Greek word "psuche" or psyche -- which is the psychological part of us -- and the bottom section "SPIRIT", which is the real you.

Then you find that most of us exist only on the body-soul level. That is exactly what we described in the illustration. The eyes

look and they see the boss smile, so the eyes send that signal down to the emotions in the soul -- the psychological part of us.

The emotions are elated and send a signal to the mind to smile back. So, the mouth smiles back. It is just a body-soul experience. The spirit, the real you, is never involved. And what we have been saying is that many of us live on that shallow, superficial level of body-soul, throughout our lives.

So much so that our wills are utterly put to sleep, but, in fact, our spirits become completely dead. Thus when we start looking for ourselves we can't find anyone. When we look for the real "you" or the real "me" we can't find it; we seem to have lost it.

That's what Wordsworth said in that well-known sonnet that he wrote. He said that "The world is too much with us." He continues, "Late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers. Little we see in nature that is ours. We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!"

Many of us discover, to our dismay, that we have given our hearts away, a "sordid boon". We seem to have given ourselves away, and lost ourselves. We don't seem able to find ourselves. Those of us who have responsibilities at work or in business, or those of us who have responsibilities in family life or to maintain a home find that so often. We have given everything to maintaining the home, we've given everything to running the business. We have lost what we are ourselves.

Now what we have been saying is that you are yourself quite unique. There's nobody like you in the whole universe and the Creator has put you here to do something for Him that no one else can do, and to be someone that nobody else can be. And it is vital that you be that person and you do that thing. We of

course have not bothered with that. Since long ago it has been unfashionable to believe that there was a Creator.

It's been unfashionable to believe that He would have anything to do with a person like you or me. It has been fashionable to go on vacation or to guidance counselors, to go to computer printouts, to go to the employment agencies and to do what everybody else said that we should do.

So we have often found ourselves in a life that is utterly unconnected with what we ourselves are. Many of us look at our bank accounts and our insurance policies with some mixed feelings. Certainly some perhaps reassurance, but some melancholy too because we wonder now what we would have done if we had really been the person we were made to be.

Some of us have got to the point in our lives where we have tried several times to find out who we are and we can't do it any longer. We don't seem to get that part of us to come alive that used to be alive. We attribute it to middle age or to old age or to growing up or to good sense and worldly wisdom.

Yet we do have a sense somehow that we have lost something, that "there hath passed away a glory from the earth", as one of the poets said. We wonder how on earth would we ever get it back. How would we ever find out who we are? We think at times that we have died. It almost seems as if the real "me" has died inside. We will use that phrase at times, "I feel as if something has died inside of me."

It is as if we really see that what we need is to be recreated inside -- almost if they didn't use that phrase so often in religious circles -- we would almost think it was right -- we almost need to be born again. We need to be born over again. I wish I could

start all over again. I wish I could find out who I was meant to be and be it.

Now the way to that is easier than you may think. It's what comes after that that requires some commitment. But the way to that is easier than you think because the truth is that the Creator of the universe wants you to know who you are. He wants you to know what He has planned for you to do. He wants you to know what He intended you to be.

He has actually said that if you seek Him with all your heart you will find Him. That is true. He said it just that way. He said, "If you seek Me with all your heart ..." -- not on a part time basis -- "Oh this would be a nice thing I'd like to do" --but if you really are desperately determined to find out what you are meant to be in this life, and what the Maker of the world intended you to be -- and what He wants you to be with Him forever -- then if you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him. That's what He said.

His Son Jesus explained that if a son asks his father for bread, will he be given a stone? Now you know that he won't. The father will give his child bread, and not a stone to mock him. Then Jesus said how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask.

The Holy Spirit is, of course, God's own Spirit and that is what is needed to bring your spirit alive. You need His Spirit, His life, to come into you again to make you alive inside. He will make your spirit come to life and to recreate the "I" deep down -- the "you" that He has planned you to be.

It is not the selfish "you" that you have become, but an unselfish "you" that has been made in His image. He has promised that if you ask Him, He will give you the Holy Spirit. That's what Jesus said. If you ask like an ordinary son asks his father for bread,

then your heavenly Father -- who is the perfect Father, which all other fathers try to follow -- how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask.

The Holy Spirit is His Spirit. His Spirit comes into your spirit and makes it alive and aware of Him. It brings you into an awareness of Him and of His life. You become aware of His presence, and you begin to sense what He is thinking about you and what He wants you to do. That comes when you ask Him with all your heart, and that is actually all you have to do to begin with. There are many things you have to enter into after that, but to begin with, what is often called the "new birth" is an experience that you can have by faith in God. That can take place in a moment. It can actually take place this moment.

If you have seen the sense of the things we've shared, and you know the reality of that deadness inside, then you can, today, at this very moment, say to God that you hardly know Him, but you need to come alive inside. You can ask God to send His Spirit into you, the Spirit of His Son, to make you alive inside, so that you can begin to hear Him and can begin to find yourself again. You have only to ask Him. And God will do it. He will do it.