WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 210
Finding our Sense of Identity
by Ernest O'Neill

Just imagine for a moment that you were a god. Could you do that? Just imagine that you were a god. And that is a supreme being of some kind, a being that was greater and more powerful than anything else anywhere. Now I'm sure you've often tried to be God, so it shouldn't be too difficult to just for five or ten minutes with me imagine that you are God.

And let's suppose that you have the intellect to see that though you have made integers and though you have made calculus and simultaneous equations, and though you've made the DNA molecule and the chart of the elements, and though you have made protons and neutrons and all kinds of other particles that nobody has ever discovered yet, and though you have the ability to keep all the planets and the stars in perfect order, and though you have the ability to do in a second all kinds of calculations and to see centuries stretched out before you in a moment, yet you know that the most valuable thing you have is your relationship with your son.

And you know that the greatest thing possible in existence is a relationship of love with another person. And so you do grasp that the most valuable thing, despite all the material things that you've created, the most valuable thing is a loving personal relationship with someone who cares about you and respects you and trusts you. And so you decide that you want others to enjoy the same relationship as you have with this dear son of yours.

And you determine that you're going to make creatures. And you're going to make them as like yourself as you possibly can,

because you want them to be your friends. You want them to be sons like your own son. He is begotten by you and is kind of heart of your heart, spirit of your spirit in a unique way, but you want to make others that will be like him. And then you suddenly realize if they're going to really be like him they have to be free. They have to have free wills, because only people with free wills would be able to love you. Otherwise all you've got is a bunch of performing monkeys.

And so you realize that you have to make them with free wills. And then you realize that they actually have to, therefore, choose freely to either like you or not like you. If you make them like you -- that is, similar to you -– so that they can't be anything but what you're like -- they won't have that free will. So if you're angry, and you're ruthless and you're bad tempered then you make them ruthless, angered, and bad tempered. If you're kind, and gentle and loving, then you make them kind, gentle and loving. Then they will just be little robots. In other words, they won't have free will.

So you realize that you have to make them with free will and give them the freedom to choose to be whatever kind of people they want to be. Because only then will they be people whom you will enjoy and who will enjoy you and who will be able to be part of the family that you have started with your son.

And so you make these creatures, and you put them, of course, on one of your planets, and you give them free will. And you are watching them and you know fine well that, of course, you have hidden coal and oil in different parts of this planet. And you've hidden bauxite and gold and silver in different places.

And you have a whole arrangement for the way the crops will grow on that planet and the way the flowers will bloom and for the way the birds will fly and the animals live. And you know

exactly how that planet should continue to be developed. And so you give them the job of developing that planet. And of course you conclude that they will certainly look around and see that they're on a kind of sphere flying through space with no visible means of support and that they will draw the conclusion that someone has put this whole thing there and they will begin to want to know who you are.

And they'll begin to reach out to you even in their thought life. And of course as they do that you will be free then to move towards them, because it will be the exercise of their free wills that is choosing you. And so you will be free to respond to them. Otherwise, if you just come down upon them whether they want you or not, it will again override their free wills. And so you determine to operate that way.

But as the years go by, even though from time to time you give a hint to some of them that you're there and some of them do recognize you, the great majority of them just ignore you and start trying to develop the world for their own benefit whatever way they can.

And they obviously realize that they're very insecure; they're like little fleas on a tennis ball blasting through space at thousands of miles an hour. And they realize this is a pretty insecure situation. And so, lo and behold, they all start working at it, trying to get as many of the pieces of the earth as they can, for themselves. So they start buying up real estate, and they start buying as many trees as they can and try to get as much fruit of the trees and grain and crops into their barns as possible to try to make themselves secure.

You can't believe it because you think, "Surely they'll see that however secure they are, they are only secure on that little earth. And they're going to come to an end soon and there's nothing."

But they keep going. And they just develop an attitude of trust in themselves and in the earth. And they have no trust in you at all.

And then, as you watch them, you decide, "Well, I will send my son. I will make him like them, put him into one of their small bodies, and send him to earth. And then they will see him living the kind of life that I live. And of course, they'll realize it's me and they'll want me."

And of course you do that, and they do the very opposite. They take umbrage against the son and oppose him and finally kill him and throw him off the earth. And you put him back on again, and think to yourself, "Well surely they'll see that, in fact, I mean, he is alive. And he must be therefore, more than just one of them." But it's amazing. But they actually see that, and they deliberately continue to ignore it. And they want to do what they want to do, except for a few of them.

And you're left in that position where you keep watching and keep waiting for some of them to begin to have an attitude of sense or sanity, and an attitude of respect for you and trust of you and gratitude to you. And as soon as they do, you always begin to feed back through their thoughts, thoughts of your own mind. And you begin to give them a sense of how caring you are of them and how providential your love is over them, but just a few of them do it. The majority keep on going as if it all happened by magic.

Now you may say, "Ah, well, I mean, I don't know. I'd just throw the whole lot. If I were the god you tell me to imagine to be, I'd break the whole thing up and throw it down to the bottom of the universe, wherever the bottom of the universe is. But I wouldn't put up with that. I mean that's just fiddling. That's just wasting my time." And yet that's pretty close to what reality is. That's what we have been discussing. What is the meaning of life? And that

imaginary story is actually fairly close to reality. That is exactly what has happened.

And often you and I feel so lost in the universe today, and we feel so insecure, and we feel worth so little, simply because of the fact that we have ignored our Creator. And we have pretended that He isn't there. And therefore we have this dreadful sense that nobody cares about us. And actually He does care about you. And He does love you. And He did put you here for the reasons that we outlined in the little imaginative story. He put you here so that you would become like Him and so that you would be His friend, and so that you would become His son or His daughter.

And many of us of course are here on the earth with a complete loss of identity. No wonder you lose your identity. When we forget the one "significant other" in the whole universe, it doesn't matter how many insignificant "others" we pay attention to, however great they may be. Whether they be the general secretary, or the prime minister, or president, or a king or a queen, it doesn't matter. If you ignore the one "significant other" in the universe, all the others will never make up for that. You'll always have a loss of identity, an identity crisis.

The only way of course, we've said, to get back to a sense of identity is by beginning to believe that this Maker is there, and that He does think of you this way. As you start to do that, He starts to feed His thoughts into your mind, and begins to make impressions on your spirit, which is the real you. And you commence to have a sense of identity again. Let's talk a little more about that tomorrow.