WHAT IS THE MEANING OF LIFE?
Program 211
What Do We Do About Our Feelings of Inadequacy?
by Ernest O'Neill

Do you ever have a sense of inadequacy? You know a feeling that you're really not quite up to the things that you have to do. Do you ever sense a kind of disappointment, and indeed maybe worse than that a feeling that you've let yourself down or let somebody down, or that there's something that you're not doing the way you should do? I think there are many of us who would answer that question by the word, "Yes." There are many times where we feel inadequate; inadequate in our job performance, inadequate in our performance as husbands or wives, or our behavior as fathers, or inadequate in regard to our filial affection and respect as sons or daughters.

Probably all of us feel in some way inadequate in regard to our job. And we feel there are times when we don't do things the way we should do them, and we wish we could. But don't you think that there is a more serious side to this kind of inadequacy, because one might say that everybody is, at times, bound to come up against things that they can't do and with a little bit of application and concentration, you come to the point where you can do it. But isn't it true that this inadequacy often extends rather deeper and that many of us live with a perpetual sense of inadequacy?

We always feel that we're not what we should be, or we're not doing things the way we should do. I mean it is very interesting that every great composer or writer actually feels that all the time. Indeed he would say often that that's what makes him strive for perfection or strive to make things better. It seems the greatest writers and the greatest composers feel this most strongly. After they've created a magnificent symphony, or after

they've written what to us seems a classic novel or poem, they will feel, "No, it's not nearly what I wanted it to be. And I would like to do it all over again and this time do it right."

So it seems that this sense of inadequacy or falling short of something that we think we should be, is deeper and transcends even our local failures in regard to our job or our particular social responsibilities. Now why is that sense of inadequacy there? I mean, why do we have such high standards? Why don't we accept, especially those of us who are the geniuses throughout history, why don't we accept that we have done the thing better than everybody else has ever done it, so that's it, that's good? What is it that makes us want to do more? What is it that gives us any idea of a standard that we ought to try to live up to in that way?

And that's just one of the symptoms of our present life that confirms the discussion that we've been having this past year. We've been saying, actually, that we are not living the way we were meant to live. That in fact, the order and design of our universe indicates that there is an intelligent being behind it. And that intelligent Being wants us to love Him and to trust Him. And that's what He said through His Son, that man Jesus of Nazareth that lived in the first century of our era.

He said, "I want you to actually love Me and trust Me and depend on Me. Now I'm here. I'm putting you on this earth so that you will become like Me. I want you to choose to become like Me, but you have the choice either to do that or not. But if you don't, reality will register in your mind that you are, in a sense, missing the mark that I had in mind for you. And you'll know it. And you'll have a sense of inadequacy and a sense of falling short. And there's no way in which you can get around that. You can sublimate it into inferiority complexes in regard to your brother or your mother, or in regard to another race."

"You can express it in terms of a feeling of failure or a sense of inadequacy or a sense of inferiority, but really the reason for it is that you are not living the way I intended for you to live. And I have arranged that reality will register that in your mind. And you'll know that. And so when you don't live in an attitude of trust in Me, but in fact you depend on everybody else, and you depend on everything else for your security instead of depending on Me, you will have a constant sense of falling short, a constant sense of inadequacy."

"And there's no getting around it. Then you'll have that until you die and after you die, if you continue to live in unreality. Because what you have there in that sense of inadequacy is a registration of your own unrealistic attitude to life."

And what we've been talking about is how you would, of course, get rid of that. And the Creator of the universe made it very clear how you get rid of it. You just begin to think differently. You start believing that He, in fact, is real and that He is looking at you now as you sit in the car, or as you sit down to dinner and He's seeing you, and He knows your name.

And He has even counted even the hairs of your head -- He cares so much about you. And He has a plan for your own life, and He is trying to bring you round to it. And He will happily make impressions on your spirit about that plan if you will just begin to believe that He is there and stop pretending He isn't. And as you do that, and you stop living the way you are living, living as if there is no God, living as if you are the greatest thing in the universe, living as if there is nobody to please but yourself; if you stop living that way you can have a sense of adequacy again.

And that's what He said repenting is; it's changing your mind about the way you're living and it's really turning around and

beginning to live the other way. And if you will do that then He will begin to give you a sense of adequacy again. And it's very interesting, you know, that adequacy is not an ability to jump the hurdle. Adequacy is primarily a sense that you're in a relationship with the person that is the important one in your life. That's it. A sense of adequacy comes from taking the Creator seriously and treating Him for real.

And then there comes a sense that there are resources that you need, and that they're available and that you can draw upon them. And actually that's what you can do. There is a real Maker in this universe and He actually does know you. And He has watched you from when you were born. And He has a whole program that He has dreamed for your life. And He is able to lead you along it, if you will start simply believing that He's there. And gradually, then His life Spirit begins to come in and touch you, and drive out that sense of inadequacy and that sense of falling short.

Some people have called it a sense of guilt, but we're so clever in this modern world, that I don't know that we have much sense of guilt left. But we certainly have a great sense of falling short or a sense of inadequacy. And I suppose you could say that we have a sense of guilt, some of us. But really, we have so manipulated standards today that many of us have no sense of guilt. But we do have a sense that we're not what we should be; we're not living the way we should live, or we're not performing the way we should perform. And that is the indication inside us, probably in our conscience partly, but partly probably in our intuition -- a sense that we are not living in relationship with reality.

And the way to deal with that is to begin to live in a relationship with reality which really means just tonight whether you kneel down or not isn't a big deal, but when you get into bed, at least

look up in your own thoughts, and say, "God, I have just ignored you, and I have obviously offended you, and I am sorry. And I want to start living with You in mind, and keeping an eye in the driving mirror looking to see if what I'm doing is what You'd like me to do. And I believe that if I live with that kind of consciousness, or that kind of faith, you'll begin to somehow get your ideas through to me, and I trust you to do that."

And that's the first step in coming into a new start in your life, a new birth, a kind of new creation. It's the beginning of starting all over again. And the Creator will enable you to do it. Let's talk a little more about it tomorrow.