

Conscience and Will

by Ernest O'Neill

Our spirits come alive and a new relationship with God begins when we respond to the guidance of our conscience and align our minds and wills with God's reality.

Scripture: Proverbs 20:27, John 4:24, Romans 8:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Human Spirit", "Spiritual Awakening"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the complexity of human personality, highlighting the layers of body, soul, and spirit, with the spirit being the innermost part that connects with the Creator. He emphasizes the importance of conscience, which has the ability to sense reality beyond intellect and self-consciousness, and how our spirits remember God's plan despite being dormant in most of us. O'Neill explains how aligning our minds and wills with God's eternal plan, as demonstrated through Jesus, can awaken our spirits and lead to a new dynamic relationship with God.

Transcript

Some of us feel that we are bigger than this short life we have here on earth. Something inside us makes us feel we were made to live longer. Somehow it seems such a waste that a complex organism like our brain and body, our emotions and our minds should end in dust. Moreover, deep inside us there seems to be a sense of worth or value that corresponds to the reasonable idea that we were made by an Intelligent Being who cares about us. All these 'feelings' come from part of our personalities that is deeper than the psychological entities of mind, emotions, and will -- these 'feelings' or intuitions come from a part of our personality designated in the Bible by the word 'spirit'.

Our Personality

One way to represent our personality is to think of the body as the outside visible coat which covers the inside psychological functions of mind, emotions, and will -- which, in turn, covers the innermost part -- the spirit. It looks like this:

You can see that in this diagram, the psychological part is labelled 'soul' -- from the Greek work 'psyche'. These levels of our personality can again be designated by certain functions that are performed:

You can see that our spirit, the innermost part of us, has the capacity of conscience, which etymologically and experientially, "knows" or senses reality first-hand -more deeply than the intellect. While the body

knows the world through the five senses and the soul knows itself through self-consciousness, the spirit seems to be able to contact the superhuman life of the Creator. Though the spirit is asleep in most of us, the conscience part of our spirits remembers what God's plan was before we began to ignore Him. So, even the proudest and most godless people still sense they were made for something greater than themselves-and have some value to someone beyond.

Your Conscience

What we have been saying during these months is that the Creator permitted us to exercise our free wills to live independent of Him- so that we could see what life was like when our spirits lost consciousness of Him and His love for us. Knowing that this would utterly corrupt our personalities, He pre-destroyed them in His Son's eternal death-and pre-resurrected them (whole and complete) in His Son's eternal resurrection. Both of these events were then set forth in time in 29 a.d. in Palestine so that we are now in a position to acknowledge their reality by aligning our minds and wills with them. When we do that, He "sends the Spirit of His Son into our hearts" (the heart of our personalities-the spirit), and our spirits come alive and a whole new relationship with God begins. Our personalities come alive from the inside and a new dynamic is experienced in our daily lives. All of this begins through our responding to these first signals from our consciences.

Following Your Star

The development of superhuman life in you depends on your faithfulness to the inner star of your conscience. Naturally, like the rest of us, you have difficulty distinguishing your conscience (God's ways planted inside you) from all the obligations and moral standards of your environment. But the development of superhuman life in your spirit is directly proportional to your response to the guidance coming from your conscience, confirmed and strengthened by the revelation of God's character through history. This is pre-eminently expressed in the inspired record of the Bible. Incredible though it is, God deals with you personally through your conscience. Only as your will is directly responsive to your conscience-and as you use your will to direct your mind and body accordingly-will God continue to strengthen your spirit so that your perception of Him becomes sharper than your perception of the world of people and circumstances.

At times your conscience will seem more liberal than the mores stored in your mind and memory. At other times, your conscience will require you to walk more narrowly than your mind's received opinions allow. While the constraint of the mind produces legalism, the constraint of the conscience produces Christlike freedom in the spirit. The former produces reformation of character, the latter produces regeneration of spirit.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-o-neill/conscience-and-will/>

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