

# The Ideal You

by Ernest O'Neill

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*Jesus' death and resurrection made it possible for us to reject God and then accept the new, balanced version of ourselves that he had recreated before we were born.*

**Scripture:** John 11:25, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:22

**Topics:** "Identity In Christ", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the concept of 'The Ideal You' by contrasting Plato's idea of perfect forms in heaven with Jesus' teachings on the perfect forms of each human being. He emphasizes the need for a radical new beginning to align with God's intended purpose for our lives, highlighting the destructive nature of seeking self-worth and security from external sources. O'Neill explains that through Jesus, God offers us a chance to reject our distorted selves, experience the pain of separation, and embrace the balanced version of ourselves that God has recreated.

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## Transcript

### The Ideal You

Plato was an ancient philosopher who has greatly influenced the way men have explained the meaning of life through the centuries. One of the surprising ideas he presented was that somewhere in heaven THERE IS A PERFECT FORM OF EVERYTHING HERE ON EARTH. Every artist or designer therefore is simply attempting to reproduce that perfect form in their particular specimen. A chair is an imperfect imitation of the perfect chair that exists in heaven.

Several hundred years after Plato, the unique human being, Jesus, lived in Nazareth. He differed from Plato in many ways. Plato died and was never seen again. Jesus died and was seen by hundreds for weeks after he came back from the dead. Plato talked about the One True Good, but Jesus talked about God as his own personal father. Plato talked about perfect forms of inanimate objects in heaven, but Jesus talked about perfect forms of each human being that existed in heaven.

This is the remarkable fact that we discussed last month. Most of us have realized that just as our arteries clog up with cholesterol and our bodies wrinkle with age, so our personalities become increasingly twisted and perverted as the years pass. We become dependent for our sense of self-worth on what people think of us. We become dependent on our possessions for our sense of security. As a result our emotional peace and balance is governed by people and things until we seem to be puppets who merely respond or

react to outside stimuli. The heroin addict seems to be simply a very crude example of the complex deterioration that afflicts us all. Often we have thought: "IF I COULD ONLY START ALL OVER AGAIN -- the way I was as a child -- a fresh, clean slate!"

### The Perfect You

That is the miraculous change that Jesus explained was possible! He made it clear that such a basic, radical new beginning was the only possibility for our lives to be what his Father intended. Jesus showed that his death completed what God had started when he gave us free wills. Free will meant that we could choose to love God as our own father or separate ourselves from him. But separation entailed separating ourselves from the one person who loved us unselfishly, from the one person who could protect us forever, and from the one person who knew why we were here. Without these certainties WE BECAME WANDERING NOMADS; we felt like alien orphans on a strange planet, so we set about making ourselves secure and happy. However, everyone else was doing the same so we ended up the perverted little parasites that we are today -- badgered by petty jealousies of which we're ashamed and twisted by selfish ambitions that fill us with fear.

God foresaw this development, destroyed it in his son Jesus before the foundation of the world -- and then let it "play in Peoria" so that we could make a real and final choice. Out of sheer kindness to us, the Creator gave us a chance to "HAVE OUR CAKE AND EAT IT". He made it possible for us to reject him and cause him pain, see what that did to us and him, and then "go round again" and accept the new, balanced version of ourselves that he had recreated before we were born here on earth.

### How Does Eternity Penetrate Time?

Many of us see the necessity for such a superhuman change because we have tried and tried to improve ourselves 'til we have given up. But how does eternity penetrate time- How is the recreated ideal version of me actualized here in time-space- This is where the absolute simplicity of God's solution bewilders all but the most desperate.

God alone can reproduce in you the ideal version of you that he has recreated in Jesus. He does it IF YOU BELIEVE HE DOES! That's it -- it's tantalizingly, infuriatingly incomprehensible. But that's really how it works. If you believe you've been destroyed in Jesus -- that selfish, unchrist-like, angry, critical you -- and set your mind and will on the fact that Jesus now lives in your body instead of you, then God makes that a fact!

### Not Power of Positive Thinking

It's not that your thinking positively makes it so. It's that the Creator sees your faith in Him and uses His miraculous powers to replace time with eternity. HE LITERALLY MAKES THE CLOCK GO BACK FOR YOU. The difference between faith and the 'power of positive thinking' is that positive thinking tries to change reality by the power of thought whereas faith simply thinks and wills what is reality.

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