

# The Inner Guide

by Ernest O'Neill

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*The sermon teaches that the normal way of living is to get our direction from within ourselves, following our Creator's plan for our lives, rather than following what others do.*

**Scripture:** John 3:3, John 14:26, Romans 8:14, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 5:7, Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:25, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 3:2, 1 John 2:6

**Topics:** "Faith Formation", "Spiritual Guidance"

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## Description

Ernest O'Neill preaches about the journey of life, highlighting how we initially learn to live by observing and imitating others, but ultimately, we are called to live from the inside out, following the unique design and purpose our Creator has for each of us. He emphasizes the importance of faith in accepting our identity as God's workmanship, created for good works, and the shift from living reactively to living proactively based on God's will revealed to us day by day through His Spirit. O'Neill encourages a transformation where we walk by faith, not by sight, allowing the spirit of God's Son to influence our behavior and thinking, leading us to a new life directed by Jesus.

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## Transcript

When we were children, we slept when we felt tired and we ate when we felt hungry. Soon our mothers began to feed us when they reckoned it was good for us. Later, we began to eat at the times most other people eat -- usually three times a day. This is the way we did most things -- play, attend school, and work: we learned by observing what other people did -- and we followed that pattern.

Thus we learned what to do and think and speak by watching others. This source of guidance was enhanced and refined when we discovered books and television until all our daily decisions and actions were guided by what we observed others doing or not doing. There were occasions when we would sense that we ought to do something different, but usually we rejected that inner urge and did what we sensed society did. Anyway, the urge to do something else could often be traced to a selfish desire to get our own way or to make somebody else do what we wanted, so we did feel some guilt about this inner urge. Moreover, we were rarely encouraged by older people to follow our inner urges and this seemed reasonable advice as we saw how many of these urges were anti-social.

In this way, most of us grew up believing that this was the only method of finding your way in life and so we followed the guidance of our examinations and test scores until we graduated to our present jobs.

## The Really Normal Way

What we've seen in these last ninety-nine chapters is that this ordered universe of regular sunrises, orbiting planets, and intricately designed organisms was made by an intelligent and gracious Being who made you and me inside His only Son. He then planned the detailed actions and words by which His Son in each of us would complete our own creation and that of the universe. The completion of our individual creation involves our willing choosing of the ways He designed us to act and think: this is what our present life is all about.

This meant that our Creator had to be willing to face all the consequences and pain that our rejection of his plans for us would cause: this is what we observe in this present temporary world. But, as we gradually turn to his moment-by-moment will for our lives, his spirit within us begins to give us directions from his will and our lives stop inflicting pain on Him and others. This is the normal way we have been created to live rather than the way most of us have become used to - simply doing what we saw others do. It means living from the inside out rather than from the outside in -- getting our direction in life from within ourselves rather than from watching what others do either to us or themselves. It means no longer living simply in reaction to circumstances as they occur but taking independent initiatives based on our own understanding of our Maker's heart. It means basing our behavior on the fact that He has planned a certain life for His Son to live in us -- and that He will reveal that to us day by day.

## Living Inside-Out

Faith is accepting that this is reality -- that "we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works that he has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" -- faith is believing that this is the purpose of our lives rather than believing that we've to do what others do to us or themselves. We are to "walk by faith and not by sight". As we adopt this attitude to life, God "sends the spirit of his Son into us" so that we begin to want to behave as his sons and not as just our independent selves with no one to please but us ! Gradually as we walk by this faith rather than by sight -- watching for the hints that come from our Creator, we find a new awareness of an inner life and experience that enables us to sense our Maker's desires in the various situations that we face. We are able to perceive a whole new attitude or spirit in ourselves and we can see similarities between it and the attitude of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus we seem to talk in that spirit more than we walk in the spirit of those around us -- more by faith rather than by sight. It's this viewpoint or attitude that increasingly governs our behavior and our thinking so that we realize the spirit inside us is influencing our wills and minds and feelings rather than other people and things and circumstances.

This is often called being born again because it seems as if we've started living in a new way and in a new world that is directed by the Son of God Himself. And, in fact, that's what has happened!

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