

The Purpose of Work

by Ernest O'Neill

The purpose of work is to actualize Christ in you, revealing God's beauty and peace in the universe.

Scripture: Proverbs 16:3, Romans 8:19, 1 Corinthians 3:9, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:16, Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Gods Plan", "Christian Vocation"

Description

Ernest O'Neill challenges the notion of feeling insignificant and unnoticed, emphasizing that each individual is an integral part of God's plan for the universe. He explains that our purpose in life and work is to reveal the harmony and beauty that God has already established through His Son, Jesus Christ. O'Neill highlights that whether we are cleaning bathrooms or curing diseases, our work uncovers the order and reconciliation that God has woven into the fabric of the world, ultimately leading to the actualization of Christ in us.

Transcript

Are You a Nothing?

Most of us spend our lives thinking that we are little separate human creatures who appear for a brief moment -- and then go out like a light! Some of us feel we matter to our mothers, but many of us feel we matter to nobody. We feel this isn't somehow right, so we expend a lot of energy and thought to get society to notice us, but usually they never notice us enough.

This whole scenario is untrue! In the first thirty years of the first century the son of the creator of the universe lived on earth in Palestine and said that YOU ARE PART OF HIM. He and his father resolved that their completion of the universe would be carried out through you and the rest of us. They knew they would have to bear the consequences of our actions if we were to be free like them. That's what they have done -- in what for them is an agonizing millisecond in spaceless timelessness. The outworking of it is taking place now in time. The great news is that this is the meaning of your life in these present years.

Where Does Work Fit In?

It's also the meaning of your work-life. When our Creator conceived His Son, He also conceived your existence and that of the universe. He knew our potential and the chaos we could wreak on the earth. At that same moment, He resolved in His Son to bear the destruction we would cause to their loving life --

and in His Son to counteract this destructive chaos with constructive harmony. All of this occurred in a moment long before the earth was made.

We human beings were then created inside time and space to live out both of these effects of our free will in this present lifetime. Thus our lives and our work simply ignore or uncover the harmony wrought by Christ in the universe through each of us in Him. This "uncovering of something already done" is recognised by countless "discoverers" as they uncover the beauty of the structure of the DNA molecule or the simplicity of $E=MC$ squared. This "dearest freshness deep-down things" is the renewal or reconciliation that God has graciously worked into the torn fabric of man's life: Christ has planned to reveal some of that harmonious beauty through you at work.

This is part of the meaning of the statement in Ephesians 2:10 that "we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which He has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them". The real resolution of social, personal, economic or mechanical conflicts is the uncovering of a reconciliation that was worked into the fallen world from the beginning. Similarly the mental and physical benefits of removing dirt from a floor, disease from a body or error from a cashfiow are the results of eternal reconciliation wrought by the creator through his Son. The harmony of peace brought apparently by our actions comes from the hidden exercise of God's work in Christ. So He works -- and we work also!

What If I Clean Bathrooms?

Does this apply to all work? Yes -- in our jobs we are either "filling the earth" with the beauty and peace that the creator has worked in His son's death and resurrection or we are emptying it by the "sweat of our brow" for our own survival. Cleaning bathrooms or excising cancer uncovers God's beauty and harmony, but each worker determines how much he participates in the glory and benefit inherent in this work of God. So you in your daily work appear to create or order material or immaterial things, but actually you are only uncovering order that God has already worked into the universe through His son. Although you or Einstein or a policeman or a custodian may all seem to bring about improvement of various kinds, you yourself will experience absolute fulfilment only if you see that the effectual result has been brought about by God Himself. So the purpose of work is the actualization of Christ, God's own Son in you!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-o'neill/the-purpose-of-work/>

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