

# Why This Present Life?

by Ernest O'Neill

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*The purpose of this present life is to show us what life is like without God and to demonstrate the contrast between God's life and our godless one.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 3:5, John 14:26, John 18:36, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 2:10, Ephesians 5:1, Colossians 1:15, Colossians 1:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:16, James 1:5

**Topics:** "Purpose Of Life", "Living In Christ"

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## Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the purpose of life and the existence of suffering, emphasizing that our current world is a reflection of life without God. He highlights Jesus as the image of the invisible God and explains that our purpose is to live in Christ for good works. O'Neill stresses the importance of living a life that reflects Jesus, showcasing the contrast between God's life and our godless one. He challenges listeners to let the life of Jesus impact the world through them, demonstrating an other-worldly way of living that focuses on God's will.

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## Transcript

Peggy Lee was a famous jazz singer. One of her hits was entitled 'Is that all there is?' It referred, of course, to life and its many experiences and implied that it's all rather disappointing and 'a bit of a let-down'. Whether you think this or not, you've probably wondered what its purpose really is.

Why is There Suffering?

This sentence is so well-known that we often refer to it simply as the 'problem of suffering'! Usually it crops up in a discussion of the origin of the world. Someone says something like there must have been a Supreme Being to make whatever produced the 'Big Bang' or there must have been an Intelligent Mind to program purpose into the process of evolution from simple to complex. But another person protests "how could a good God make a world where there is so much suffering?"

What we have been saying so far is that this is the whole point of this present life -- to show us what life is like without God. Jesus of Nazareth was not just a Jewish carpenter who became a travelling rabbi -- he existed as a human being long before that. He was (as Paul writes in Colossians 1:15-17) 'the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation -- he is before all things'. In other words, Jesus is not only the unique Son of God who existed with the Creator before there was any universe, but His Father conceived Him not only as his divine Son but also as the human-being who would express outwardly his

mind and character. That's why `in him all things were created...through him and for him'.

It's also the reason why (as in Ephesians 2:10) `we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them'. We exist only because `in him all things hold together' (Colossians 1:17). When we human beings live the way we have for thousands of years -- as if these things aren't true -- the result is this present world ! But why would our Creator allow that to happen ? Why doesn't He step in and stop it ? Because he wants us to be like himself -- have a choice -- have freedom to choose the best because we can see the worst. God does not want `goody-goodies' who are good because they cannot be otherwise; He wants children who are like Him because they want to be like Him.

How Then Should We Live?

Strange though it may sound -- we are not here to `make the world a better place' -- as we so righteously say. Our Creator knows that our present preoccupation with ourselves cannot achieve that. This is why Jesus said `if my kingdom were of this world, my disciples would fight'. Only the first and great human being will change this world-system -- and Jesus Christ will do that only after the human race sees that life is impossible without God. Should we then not even try ?!

It's vital that we spend our lives letting the life of Jesus touch the world through us. Only then can the effects of his life and attitude be seen clearly -- and only then can the huge contrast between God's life and our godless one be plainly demonstrated. This is the purpose of this present life and world -- and the purpose, therefore, of our own personal lives.

Is there any difference, then, between this kind of living and ordinary living of useful lives ? Much in many ways ! Often we measure the usefulness of lives by the visible improvements in building or commerce or science that are known and publicized. But Godly lives are often unknown and apparent failures. The emphasis is the difference between the world and heaven rather than their increasing similarity. The purpose and motivation of the one is this world's betterment; the purpose and motivation of the other is the other-world's reality. The dynamic of the one is human need while the dynamic of the other is God's will.

How Can Such an Other-worldly Life be Lived ?

How can you live like this ? After all, we live in the midst of the tyranny of the urgent and the incessant ringing of the cell-phone. Everywhere we look we are faced with the needs of the world and its obvious imperfections clamoring to be removed. How can you live above all of this and be used to clarify the difference between living in the light of God's existence and living as if he's dead ?

Only if we can tell what our Creator is thinking and planning for us each day. He alone knows how his cosmic plan can be forwarded each moment by his Son in each of us. The reality expressed in the sentence we quoted above is that we will `do the good works which he has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them'. Only Christ has the infinite foresight to have already done those works in eternity taking into consideration the way we would exercise our free wills. So, only as we take seriously the fact that we are `the members -- or limbs -- of his body' and that he is the `head of the body' -- only then can we find out daily the life we are meant to live.

Moreover, this life can be directed by God himself only if there is some way that He can transmit his thoughts to us moment-by-moment. And this is possible only if we ourselves possess and develop the

capacities to receive and execute the directions. Let's talk about these capacities next.

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