





Philosophy

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Philosophy

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Part 1

A large rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for taking notes. The interior of the box is completely blank.

AUGUSTINE, *ON FREE CHOICE OF THE WILL*

Study Questions

BOOK ONE

Chapter 1 (pp. 1–3)

1. What are the two kinds of evil Augustine distinguishes?
2. According to Augustine, why would it be contradictory for God to do evil?
3. Why is it fitting, in Augustine's view, that God be a cause of the evil that people suffer?
4. According to Augustine, how do we know that an evildoer causes (performs voluntarily, from free will) his or her evil deeds?
5. Explain Augustine's argument that evildoing cannot be something that is learned.

Chapter 2 (pp. 3–4)

1. What "troubling" argument does Augustine present to show that God seems to be responsible for the sins people commit?
2. What assumptions about the nature of God do Augustine and Evodius make as they begin their inquiry into the cause of evildoing?

Chapter 3 (pp. 4–6)

1. After rejecting the view that adultery is evil because it is against the law, what two answers does Evodius give to explain why it is evil?
2. How does Augustine refute each of these answers of Evodius?
3. What is Augustine's initial theory about what makes adultery (and all other sins) evil?

Chapter 4 (pp. 6–8)

1. According to Evodius, how is fear included in the category of desire?
2. How does the example a slave who kills his or her master to escape a life of fear challenge Augustine's theory about the nature of evildoing?
3. How does Evodius defend his belief that the slave who kills the master does evil?
4. How does Augustine elaborate his theory of evildoing to make it include cases like the slave killing the master?

Chapter 5 (pp. 8–10)

1. On Augustine's expanded theory of evildoing, why does it seem sinful to kill someone who tries to take our life, our liberty, or our chastity?
2. What is Evodius's distinction between the law of the people (temporal law) and the law of God (eternal law)? What is Augustine's assessment of this Evodius's distinction?

[We will skip Chapters 6–9.]

Chapter 10 (pp. 16–17)

1. According to Augustine, why can desire never overpower the mind?
2. According to Augustine, why cannot a virtuous mind be overpowered by a vicious (unjust) spirit? by a material object? by a virtuous (just) spirit?

Chapter 11 (We will cover p. 17 – p. 18, line 13 *only*.)

1. In Augustine's theory, what makes the mind a slave to inordinate desire?
2. According to Augustine, why is it just that people be punished for their sins?
3. Explain Augustine's theory that sin (inordinate desire) its own punishment.

Chapter 12 (We will cover top p. 19 – p. 20 *only*.)

1. What does Augustine mean by a “good will”?
2. According to Augustine, why is a good will better than wealth, honors, or physical pleasures?
3. Explain Augustine’s point that the ability to have a good will lies in the will itself.

[We will skip Chapter 13.]

Chapter 14 (pp. 23–24)

1. According to Augustine, why are some people unhappy, even though (a) everyone wants happiness (b) a good will causes happiness, and (c) and having a good will lies in our own power?
2. In Augustine’s view, what does it mean to live rightly?

[We will skip Chapter 15.]

Chapter 16 (pp. 27–28)

1. According to Augustine, what does evildoing (sin) consist in?
2. What does Augustine hold to be the cause of evildoing?
3. According to Evodius, why does God seem to be the cause of a human being’s evil deeds?

BOOK TWO

Chapter 1 (pp. 29–30)

1. What two reasons does Evodius give for his claim that we have our existence from God?
2. What reason does Augustine give for his claim that, if God did give us free will, God gave it to us so that we would live rightly?

Chapter 2 (We will cover p. 30 – p. 32, line 16 *only*.)

1. What objection does Evodius give to Augustine's claim that God gave us free will so that we would live rightly?
2. According to Augustine, what can we conclude about the source of free will, if free will is a good gift? if free will is *not* a good gift?

Note: In the first paragraph of Book II, Chapter 3 (p. 33), Augustine outlines his plan for showing, in the remainder of Book II, that free will comes from God (that free will is a gift rightly given):

- I. God exists (Book II, Chapters 3–15)
- II. All good things come from God (Book II, Chapters 16–17)
- III. Free will is a good thing (Book II, Chapters 18–20)
- IV. Therefore, free will comes from God.

I. GOD EXISTS (Chapters 3–15)

[Note: Because of the complexity of sections I and II of Augustine's argument, these sections are presented in outline form, rather than in question form. The question form resumes with section III.]

Chapter 3 (We will cover p. 33 – p. 35, line 15 *only*.)

- A. The first three levels in the hierarchy of being (starting with lowest)
 1. Existence
 2. Life
 - a. Bodily senses (the five senses)
 - b. Inner sense (coordinates input of bodily senses; judges the functioning of the bodily senses; says what to seek and what to avoid)
 3. Reason (mind, understanding)
- B. Arguments for the above hierarchy
 1. General argument: "argument from inclusion"

[We will skip Chapter 4.]

Chapter 5 (pp. 38–39)

2. Specific arguments
 - a. Bodily senses are higher than existence: judge/judged relation
 - b. Inner sense is higher than the bodily senses: *not* because of perceiver/perceived relation, but because of judge/judged relation

Chapter 6 (pp. 39–41)

- c. Reason is higher than inner sense (judge/judged relation)
- C. If we can discover something higher than our reason, and this thing is eternal and immutable, God exists
 1. If the thing we discover is God, then God exists
 2. If there is something higher than what we discover, then *that* is God
 3. So either way, God exists

[We will skip Chapter 7.]

Chapter 8 (We will cover p. 44 – bottom p. 45, and last paragraph on p. 46 *only*.)

- D. The truth of number
 1. Truth of number is present to all who think
 2. Grasping of numbers differs from grasping of food
 3. Truth of number perceived by the mind, not by the bodily senses

Chapter 9 (We will cover p. 47 – middle p. 48 *only*.)

- E. Wisdom
 1. There are many concepts of wisdom
 2. The correct definition of wisdom
 3. Relation wisdom to the highest good
 4. Relation of happiness to the highest good
 5. Why all persons want to be wise

[We will skip Chapters 10–11.]

Chapter 12 (pp. 54–55)

- F. Truth is something higher than our minds (our reason)
 1. Truth is either inferior to, equal to, or superior to our minds
 2. Truth is not inferior to our minds
 3. Truth is not equal to our minds
 4. Truth, which is eternal and immutable, is therefore superior to our minds.

Chapter 13 (We will cover p. 55 – middle p. 56 *only*.)

- G. The happiness of possessing truth is greater than any temporal delight

Chapter 14 (pp. 57–58)

- H. No one can lose truth against his or her will.

Chapter 15 (We will cover p. 58 – p. 59, line 13 *only*)

- I. God exists (pp. 58–59)
1. The fact that something higher than our mind exists, proves that God exists
 2. Knowing that God exists brings joy

II. ALL GOOD THINGS COME FROM GOD (Chapters 16–17)

[We will skip Chapter 16.]

Chapter 17 (pp. 62–64)

- A. All changeable things (which include body and soul) have form.
- B. Nothing can give itself form.
- C. All changeable things get their form from unchanging Form itself (God).
- D. All things *are* insofar as they have form; without form they would not exist.
 1. Evil is a *privation* of form.
 2. Insofar as things are evil, they are *not*.
- E. Therefore, all things *are* insofar as they are from God.
- F. But God is good.
- G. Therefore, insofar as things are, they are good.
- H. Therefore, all good things come from God.

III. FREE WILL IS A GOOD THING (Chapters 18–20)

Chapter 18 (pp. 64–66)

1. In Augustine's view, does the fact that we can wrongly use free will prove that free will is not a good thing?
2. According to Augustine, what is better—something without which we *can* live rightly, or something without which we *cannot* live rightly? How does this apply to sight and to free will?

Chapter 19 (pp. 67–68)

1. What does Augustine include in the class of great goods? of lowest goods? of intermediate goods?
2. Explain Augustine's point that virtues cannot be used wrongly.
3. According to Augustine, what does the happy life consist in?
4. In Augustine's view, when does the will commit sin?
5. In Augustine's view, why is it just that people be punished for turning from the unchangeable good toward a changeable good?

Chapter 20 (We will cover the first paragraph on p. 69 *only*)

1. According to Augustine, what causes the will to turn from an unchangeable good toward a changeable good?

The Republic

Plato

Plato was born in Athens in about 428 B.C.E. As a youth he associated with Socrates, a philosopher who constantly challenged fellow Athenians to think about virtue and to improve their souls. Plato's initial interest was in politics, but he soon became disillusioned, especially when, under the democracy that was restored after the rule of the "Thirty Tyrants," Socrates was arrested on false charges of impiety and the corruption of youth, convicted, and condemned to die. After the execution of Socrates, Plato moved to nearby Megara for a time and may have traveled to Egypt. In 388 he visited Italy and the city of Syracuse in Sicily. Returning to Athens, he founded the Academy, a school devoted both to philosophical inquiry and to the philosophically based education of politicians. Plato spent most of his life teaching at the Academy (Aristotle was his most famous student) and writing philosophical works. He made two more trips to Syracuse, in 368 and 361, apparently with the intention of turning the city's ruler, Dionysius the Younger, into a "philosopher-king." (If this was indeed his purpose, he failed.) Plato died in Athens in 347 at the age of eighty-one.

Most of Plato's works are written as conversations between Socrates and one or more interlocutors on some topic concerning morality. His best-known "dialogues" (the name by which his surviving works are known) are the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Meno*, *Symposium*, and *Republic*.

Our selection is from the *Republic*, a work cast as a report by Socrates of a conversation he had the previous day with several people, including Glaucon and Adeimantus (Plato's older brothers). In the dialogue Socrates presents his views on a number of topics, but scholars agree these views are Plato's own, not those of the historical Socrates. Our readings are taken from exchanges between Socrates and Glaucon in Books V, VI, and VII.

In Book V Glaucon asks Socrates who the true philosophers are. Socrates, alluding to the etymology of the word ("lovers of wisdom"), says that they are "lovers of the vision of truth." Expanding on this notion, Socrates explains that philosophers are those who love the One rather than the Many. For example, a philosopher goes beyond the love of individual beautiful things to love absolute beauty (beauty itself, the form of beauty). The forms are fully real and are the objects of genuine knowledge, whereas the Many lie between being and not-being and are the objects of mere opinion.

In Book VI Socrates explains that the Many belong to the visible world, which is seen by the eye, while the forms reside in the intelligible world, which is grasped by the mind. He illustrates the two worlds by describing a line divided into two main parts, with each of these parts subdivided into two parts. Each of the resulting four segments of the line represents a type of object of knowledge. Corresponding to each of the four types of object of cognition is a distinct condition in the soul.

Socrates further illustrates this theory of knowledge in Book VII through the famous allegory of the cave. We are like prisoners who live their entire lives inside a cave. Just as such prisoners would think that shadows on the cave wall were real and would be unaware of the real world outside the cave, so we think that the visible world of the Many is real, ignorant of the intelligible world of forms.

Book V

... [Glaucón asked:] Who are the true philosophers?

Those, I [Socrates] replied, who are lovers of the vision of truth.

That is right, he said; but I would like to know what you mean.

I might have difficulty explaining it to someone else, I replied; but I am sure that you will admit a proposition that I am about to make.

What is the proposition?

That since beauty is the opposite of ugliness, they are two.

Certainly.

And inasmuch as they are two, each of them is one.

True again.

And of the just and the unjust, good and evil, and of every other class, the same remark holds; taken singly, each of them is one; but from the various combinations of them with actions and things and with one another, they are seen in all sorts of lights and appear many?

Very true.

And this is the distinction that I draw between the sight-loving, art-loving, practical class of people, and those of whom I am speaking, who are alone worthy of the name of philosophers.

How do you distinguish them? he asked.

The lovers of sounds and sights are, as I conceive, fond of fine tones and colors and shapes and all the artificial products made out of them, but their mind is incapable of seeing or loving absolute beauty.

True, he replied.

Few people are able to attain the sight of this.

Very true.

And he who, having a sense of beautiful things, has no sense of absolute beauty, or who, if another leads him to a knowledge of that beauty, is unable to follow—is such a one awake or in a dream? Reflect: Is not the dreamer, whether asleep or awake, one who likens dissimilar things, putting the copy in the place of the real object?

I would certainly say that such a one was dreaming.

But take the other case, one who recognizes the existence of absolute beauty and is able to distinguish absolute beauty from the objects that participate in it, neither putting the objects in the place of absolute beauty nor absolute beauty in the place of the objects—is he dreaming or is he awake?

He is wide awake.

And may we not say that the mind of the one who knows has knowledge, and that the mind of the other, who opines only, has opinion?

Certainly. . . .

I would ask the person who is of opinion that there is no beautiful in itself or no unchangeable form of beauty itself, but who believes in many beautiful things—the lover of beautiful sights, who cannot bear to be told