

In sum, Augustine's *De libero arbitrio*, books 1-3 offers a comprehensive view of our in relation to God. The dialogue begins with Evodus, friend & future bishop of Uzalis, but the dialogue is soon replaced by a continuous discourse.

I. Contextual Information:

A. HOW TO OBTAIN HAPPINESS:

Morality is the path to Happiness:

Everything culminates in morality, in clarifying for humanity the sure road to happiness, which is the goal of human behavior.

Happiness is found in God:

Whereas Aristotle believed happiness to be achieved when a person fulfills natural functions through a well-balanced life (*eudaimonia*: "human flourishing" or "successful living"), Augustine held that happiness required that a person go beyond the natural to the supernatural: "*Our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee.*"

We are Designed to Love:

a. We bear God's signature:

Why? Because God made us; thus we bear the mark of His creation. Some of the marks include permanent relations, actual and possible, between us & God. It is not by accident that we even seek happiness. It is a consequence of our incompleteness, our finitude.

b. We inevitably love:

To love is to go beyond oneself & to fasten one's affection upon an object of love. What makes it inevitable that people will love is, again, incompleteness.

c. Wide range of objects we can choose to love, reflecting the variety of ways in which we are incomplete:

(1) physical objects; (2) other persons, or (3) even oneself. From those we can derive satisfaction for some desires & passions. Why? All things in the world are good because all things come from God, who is goodness itself. Consequently, all things are legitimate objects of love. Everything that people love will provide them with some measure of satisfaction and happiness.

Our moral problem is attachment & expectations to Disorderd Love:

Our moral problem consists not so much in loving or in the objects we love as in the manner in which we attach ourselves to these objects of love & in our expectations regarding the outcome of this love. We expect to achieve happiness & fulfillment from love, yet we are miserable, unhappy, & restless. Why? He places blame on "disordered" love. Disordered love consists in expecting more from an object of love than it is capable of providing. Disordered love produces all forms of pathology in human behavior. For example, the essence of pride is the assumption of self-sufficiency.

Only God can Satisfy our Need for Love:

Our basic need for human affections can't be satisfied by things made to love God. Because only God, who is infinite, can satisfy that peculiar need in us.

B. THE CAPACITY OF OUR WILL

Predicament is both our free will & the presence of alternatives

1. The cause of evil is not ignorance; Our predicament is that they stand in the presence of alternatives. We are free to turn toward God or way from God. But whichever way a person chooses, it is with the hope of finding happiness. Said differently, we are capable of directing our affections exclusively toward finite things, persons, ourselves, & away from God.

"This turning away and this turning to are not forced but voluntary acts."

Evil is the product of a free will:

It is not ignorance, nor the work of the principle of darkness permeating the body as the Manicheans said. In spite of original sin, all humanity possesses the freedom of the will.

Freedom of the will is not true liberty:

True spiritual liberty is no longer possible in its fullness in this life in view of original sin.

Freedom to do good requires God's grace:

We use free will to choose wrongly, but even when we choose rightly, they do not possess the spiritual power to do the good we have chosen; we

Virtue is the product of God's grace not act of free will whereas evil is caused by an act of free will.

Moral Law:

The moral law tells us what we must do, but in the end it really shows us what we can't do.

FIRST BOOK:

Where does evil come from?

Problem: how can these affirmations be reconciled?

(1) God is good; (2) God is the creator of all things; (3) There is evil in the world

God does not cause any moral evil; he does however cause the evil of punishment (but that does not contradict his goodness) (1.1, p. 1).

Can moral evil be traced to God, so that he is indirectly the cause of evil, mediated by evil creatures? What is it to do evil? (1.3, p. 4) To act against the eternal law (1.5.6, pp. 8.11).

What does the eternal law command? That all things be perfectly ordered (1.6, p. 11)

What does it mean for a human being to be perfectly ordered? That reason rules the irrational part of the soul (1.8, p. 14) Thus, **when the mind or reason doesn't rule the irrational part, this is sin; when inordinate desire enslaves the mind, this is sin** (e.g. adultery).

How is it possible that inordinate desire may enslave the mind? (cf. 1.10) What makes the mind subject to inordinate desire? (What makes a good person do evil?) Is inordinate desire more powerful than the mind. No, because the weaker does not control the stronger; The mind must be more powerful than cupidity precisely because it is right & just for the mind to rule over cupidity; Every virtue is superior to every vice (1.10, p. 16).

Is an evil spirit [ex. the devil, or a wicked person who tempts others to sin] more powerful than the mind? No: since virtue is superior to vice & stronger than vice, vicious spirit can't defeat spirit armed with virtue (1.10, p. 16).

Is a material object more powerful than the mind? (e.g., delicious cake, money, the beauty of a woman. No, because a spirit is better & more powerful than any material object (1.10, p. 16). Can a just spirit subject another mind to inordinate desire? (1.10, p. 16.17). No, because: a just spirit possesses excellence, & it would become vicious and thus weaker than the mind (1.10, p. 17).

Answer (1.11, p. 17):

The conclusions that we have reached thus far indicate that a mind that is in control, one that possesses virtue, cannot be made slave to inordinate desire by anything equal or superior to it, because such a thing would be just, or by anything inferior to it, because such a thing would be too weak. Only its own will & free choice can make the mind a companion of cupidity. Would it have been better if God had not given man free will? (If yes, then God must be blamed for the moral evil committed by man after all.) If we had not received a free will, we could not have done moral evil, but we could not do any moral good either. (2.1, p. 30)

SECOND BOOK:

How do we know we derive our origin from God?

A structured argument for God's existence.

Augustine wants to change Evodius, from the position of a simple believer who accepts the existence of God as a believer from one of mere belief to one of knowledge (2.1.5).

Augustine's strategy is to build up a hierarchy of beings of different kinds: We can divide things in the world into 3 classes:

(1) Lifeless things that merely exist (e.g., stones); (2) Living things that have sensation & not intelligence (e.g., dumb animals); (3) Things that have existence, life, & intelligence (e.g., rational humans).

We share with animals the 5 senses & we share with them also an inner sense. By this sense animals are aware of the operation of other senses & by it they feel pleasure & pain. But the highest thing in us is a "*kind of head or eye of our soul* [software]"

We grade these different faculties in a hierarchy: a. Inner sense is superior to outer senses; b. Reason is superior to inner sense. c. But if we find something outside ourselves superior to reason [hardware], then Augustine asks, shall we call that God? (2.6.14).

Among highest things in human mind are knowledge of numbers & judgments of value. Math is unchangeable, unlike fragile human bodies, & they are common to all educated people, unlike the private objects of sensation. 7+3=10 makes ten forever & for everyone.

Like math, there are ethical truths that are common property to all people. Wisdom is knowledge about supreme good: everyone wishes to be happy, & so everyone wishes to be wise, since that is indispensable for happiness. Though people may disagree about nature of the supreme good, they all agree on such judgments as that we ought to live justly, that the worse should be subject to the better, and that each man should be given his due (2.10.28).

These rules and guiding lights of virtue are true, unchangeable, & available for the common contemplation of every mind & reason.

The truth is not the property of any one person; it is shareable to everyone. Now is this truth superior, to or equal to, or inferior to our minds?

(a). If it were inferior to our minds, we would pass judgments about it, as we may judge that a wall is not as white as it should be, or that a box is not as square as it should be. (b). If it were equal to our minds, we would likewise pass judgment on it: we say, for instance, that we understand less than we ought: But we do not pass judgment on the rules of virtue or the rules of arithmetic. We say that the eternal is superior to the temporal and that seven and tree are ten. We do not say these things ought to be so. (c). So, the immutable truth is not eternal to our minds or equal to them: it is superior to them and sets the standard by which we judge them (2.12.34). (d). If there is something more excellent than truth, then is it God: if not, then truth itself is God. Whether there is or is not such a higher thing, we must agree that God exists (2.15.39).

Third Book: a. Returns to the movement by which the will turns away from God and asks how it is that we do not sin necessarily if God foreknows what we will do. b. He claims: God's foreknowledge of our free acts guarantees our freedom rather than destroys it. c. He then attempts to show God is not to be blamed for evil in the world. d. The tenor changes in 3.18.50 with the introduction of the penal conditions of ignorance and the difficulty under which we now labor as a result of Adam's sin. e. In 3.19.54 Augustine distinguishes the nature with which we are now born from the nature in which Adam was created.