



**SUMMARY:** We all want to be happy. We pursue happiness through pursuit of desires. To be happy is to have one's desires fulfilled in the best way. To possess what one desires that cannot be lost, is better than pursuing what can be lost. Wisdom will tell us what to pursue, what the highest good is. Possession of this good will make us happy. Such a good must be eternal, available to all, and superior to ourselves. Truth itself. Hence, happiness is a state of the soul oriented to Truth. SOUL- Non material- Good and God- non material-Being is pure good

Something that changes can be lost. To be susceptible to loss, is to not be happy.

**Genuine truth** is something one cannot make or alter. It can only be recognized. Truth is superior and beyond our subjective mental states. If it were not, it would be subject to change and would merely reduce to whatever mental states anyone would have at a given moment, would be changeable thus can be lost. Truth is eternally the same. Our minds change. Truth is something one cannot lose against one's will.

**Why is there unhappiness at all? Error/ignorance.**

**Why is there error? Sin.**

**Why is there Sin? Perverse Will that chooses to turn away from truth, leads to separation from the inner light of truth.**

**Plato:** How is anything intelligible? How is goodness intelligible? Participate in the GOOD.

**Socrates:** Reason (examined life)----- knowledge-----virtue

**Augustine:** Will/commitment ----- then understand (Socrates was committed to virtue via the examined life)

**False happiness:** pursuing desire of the temporary, seeking truth/fulfillment in oneself (perversity of the will taking itself as the criterion of everything, all value)----- unhappiness ----- divided self, not whole, separated from truth of happiness that it is first an act of the will, then a movement via pursuit of wisdom toward the truth.

**Perversity of the will---** orient via faith/commitment, then understand. Will is more fundamental than intellect.

**Intellect** must be oriented, directed, INTENDED, then it can understand. Only the light within, the yearning for truth can lead one. All have this light, not all pursue it.

**Genuine happiness** is truly unchangeably good that is implied in all our judgments about better. Which is better happiness that lasts, or that does not last? Better implies BEST. Best implies Good and Truth.

**Happiness** is fulfillment of desire but must desire the right things. Right Things: p 233: Cannot lose.

**Wisdom:** to see that one's will must pursue what will last with no possibility of loss, then vulnerability to loss and fear of loss cease.

**SKEPTICISM ABOUT SUCH TRUTH:** Augustine answers against the skeptics: I know three things that cannot be doubted: p.233 I exist, I know it, I am glad of it

**Other truths:** p 234: Geometry. Does not depend on us and is knowable by us.

**Practical truths?:** better implies best.

**Truth is eternal,** same and open to all- now doubt, no loss. Do not decide the Pythagorean Theorem is true, acknowledge it.

**TIME:** past and future do not exist. The past is no more and the future is not yet. We are always in the now. Time is only the immediacy of the moment: present memory, present awareness, present expectation or anticipation. Humans are temporal beings and time is the experience of yearning, being pulled. Yearning is our connection to God, the inner yearning not satisfied by temporary fulfillment of desire

**Problem of Evil:** Natural Evil: Lack of good, lack of being. **Moral Evil:** perversity of the will choosing the lesser good.

**God did not create evil. Evil is a lack of being and a separation from God/Truth**

**QUESTION:** WHAT kind of being would see things this way sketched above? We are fundamentally vulnerable beings. We are mortal, fallible, finite, can be harmed, made to suffer, can suffer evil and can perpetrate it. We cannot master this situation, cannot even understand ourselves and the enigma of death, the greatest evil and threat to our being. Our being is in fact dependent not on ourselves, but something that is not finally understandable even by science. Therefore, we are in need of **salvation**. **Salvation** is only through grace, cannot be earned. The only approach to our situation is through faith and hope. Faith and hope are the only response to our yearning for what we cannot achieve. And it cannot be achieved by an effort, but is a gift by grace alone. This is fundamentally an impossible view and so can ONLY be approached through faith that somehow beyond our capacity and comprehension, all can be made consistent with the gift of being through the gift of grace. It is not ours to question the manifest incoherence of the gift of grace but to live in complete devotion and love without expectation. Of course, this is completely contrary to all ordinary human awareness and motivation. So again, it is only in a complete leap of faith, as Kierkegaard fifteen centuries later with reiterate, that we are able to live by faith, be in the world, but not of the world.

**THE BIBLE:** It is a book of spiritual transformation and should be read spiritually, not literally (gets this from Ambrose). To paraphrase the last chapter of Augustine's book **My Confessions**: since a sacred text is a text aimed at spiritual transformation in the lived experience of the reader, no interpretation can claim to be true exclusively of any other. Rather, if the interpretation brings the reader to live in the presence of the sacred, then the interpretation was "true" or successful. As long as one approaches the sacred with the attitude of deep humility and does not have the arrogance to claim to know the truth, then one has the most appropriate attitude with which to approach the sacred. This is entirely unsatisfactory from an historical, scientific, or logical/textual approach. But Augustine warns that logical and historical thinking should guide us when looking at the world, but not when we approach the sacred/God. Likewise, to historicize or logicize a sacred text is to undermine its purpose and power. The sacred, which for Augustine is not something that can be addressed with historical or logical thinking, can only be approached with the deepest of humility, with the attitude that one knows nothing with regard to the deepest mysteries. This is a matter of deep humility, not claims to truth or knowledge. It is arrogance to think otherwise. On the other hand, self-correcting well-reasonedness is our best and most responsible approach to what IS open to our understanding about the world that we can know something about. God is not a possible object of knowledge, is a matter of faith, not even belief, since belief is susceptible to falsification, whereas, faith is not. We might say that faith is completely inward and matters of belief and knowledge are matters of evidence.