
The Life Of Augustine in The Confessions

Introduction

Saint Augustine was born on November 13, 354 CE. As a child he grew up in Roman North Africa, now as an adult he lives in eastern Algeria, where he's speaking Latin, both at home, and in school as well. Augustine's father Patricius used to be a landowner, and Augustine's mother, Monica, appears to be larger in the Confessions than Augustine's father Patricius does, the reason why is because she has been a Christian her whole life, she has always hoped that Augustine would become a Christian believer. His father Patricius remained a Pagan (O'Donnell, 2019).

Book One

Book one of Augustine's Confessions talks about Augustine's life as a child, from him being an infant, all the way up through his days as a young schoolboy. Augustine wasted no time getting into the philosophical content of his autobiography, Augustine talks about how the early years of his life lead him to reflect on human origin, will and desire, language, and memory. Augustine begins Book one of the Confessions, with a prayer in praise of God, The first question that Augustine raises is the concerns on how one can seek God without yet knowing what he really is, and what he even looks like, and is God even a he? In other words, how can we look for something or someone, if we don't know exactly what we are looking for? Augustine starts to talk about a brief discussion of God's attributes. Asking God to go into him. "And how shall I call upon my God--my God and my Lord? For when I call on him I ask him to come into me. And what place is there in me into which my God can come? How could God, the God who made both heaven and earth, come into me? Is there anything in me, O Lord my God, that can contain thee? Do even the heaven and the earth, which thou hast made, and in which thou didst make me, contain thee?" (Augustine p.22) God cannot be restrained by what he has created, so he can't go into Augustine. At the same time, God is the existence of anything, so he is actually in Augustine already. This shows that it doesn't make any sense for Augustine to ask for God to come into him. Augustine then re-words his question about God's nature, asking "What, therefore, is my God? What, I ask, but the Lord God? "For who is Lord but the Lord himself, or who is God besides our God?" (Augustine p.23). This direct approach generates images that concerns God. For example, "Most high, most excellent, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful and most just; most secret and most truly present; most beautiful and most strong" (Augustine p.23). This list develops no reasonable argument about God--it just introduces the mysteries of the question. Augustine then turns to the story of his childhood, beginning with his birth. Augustine then hypothesizes, on how the soul can join the body which in orders you to become an infant. Augustine then writes, "For what do I wish to say, O Lord my God, but that I know not whence I came hither into this life-in-death. Or should I call it death-in-life? I do not know" (Augustine p.25). Augustine then leaves an open possibility that life is just really some kind of death. Also true life is enjoyed by the soul. Another huge issue Augustine had growing up as a young child, was to consider what his religious status was going to be. Born to a Catholic mother, and a pagan father. Meanwhile, the foolishness of school for Augustine continues. The rest of Augustine's Book one is dedicated to the problems of Augustine's early education teachers, they had no knowledge of the proper purposes of education. Augustine was very

unhappy with his teachers, he was forced to read a language, that he was supposed to learn from them but they didn't know how to teach it. Augustine was against fiction, he sees it as a waste of time, he argues, that he shouldn't have to read of other people's sins while remaining ignorant of one's own.

Book Two

In book two Augustine talks about, how he has finished grade school, and he was preparing to leave for Carthage for further study. Augustine's father Patricius actually raised enough funds in order for this to happen, Augustine was so happy, Augustine then praised his father thanking him for trying so hard, in order to educate his son. His mother Monica on the other hand didn't feel the same, as Augustin's then says, "But in my mother's breast thou hadst already begun to build thy temple and the foundation of thy holy habitation--whereas my father was only a catechumen, and that but recently. She was, therefore, startled with a holy fear and trembling: for though I had not yet been baptized, she feared those crooked ways in which they walk who turn their backs to thee and not their faces" (Augustine p.45). Augustine's mother Monica who was catholic often informed Augustine about being against sexual encounters, which also meant that no one can be married to each other, which now made him recognize that God was speaking right through his mother. "These appeared to me but womanish counsels, which I would have blushed to obey. Yet they were from thee, and I knew it not. I thought that thou wast silent and that it was only she who spoke. Yet it was through her that thou didst not keep silence toward me; and in rejecting her counsel I was rejecting thee-- I, her son" (Augustine p.45). After Augustine decided to go against all of his mother's rules, of being catholic, as well as possibly still wanting to have a family, which go completely against being catholic. Monica still had no choice but to let Augustine do what he thought was the best for his life, his mother still feared that having a wife at this stage would ruin Augustine's chances for having a good career. Later into book 2 Augustine kept on thinking about his early teenage years pranks that he used to do. One was about being peer pressured into stealing some pears. What disturbs him about doing this is that he did this as a prank, and he did it for no reason at all, other then the want to do wrong. Augustine then says, "For had I at that time loved the pears that I stole and wished to enjoy them, I might have done so alone, if I could have been satisfied with the mere act of theft by which my pleasure was served. Nor did I need to have that itching of my own passions inflamed by the encouragement of my accomplices. But since the pleasure I got was not from the pears, it was in the crime itself, enhanced by the companionship of my fellow sinners" (Augustine p.51). Augustine then again concludes that his actions were simply because of God-given goodness. After reading on with Augustine's books, Augustine, catches a passion for the search of Philosophical truth, learning all of the beliefs of Manicheism, skepticism, and Neoplatonism. This shows that the Confessions are the most powerful expression of his complex combination of Catholic theology with Neoplatonic ideas. After reading on with Augustines books, the last few books talks about how he also continues to pursue his career as a teacher of rhetoric, Augustine also deicedes that it is okay to have sex when you are married but only when you are married. This causes Augustine to finally decided that being Catholic was the way to go in his life. Even though he went against his mother, as a young child, and did not agree with her at first, and didn't obey any of her rules.

Conclusion

I think overall that Augustine is a good man, yes maybe he should of listened to his mom after

all especially that he decided that being catholic was the right road to go down. Also I like that he wanted to live his life without any help from his parents, yes his father Patricius did save up money for Augustine, in order for him to continue his life, and follow the path in order for him to figure out what he wanted to really believe in, but Augustine was going to do no matter what, no one was going to stop him, and the end result to this was him becoming a teacher, and growing up, and becoming a very happy Catholic man as well. If people were to argue, and say that he changed his mind on what he wanted to be, and or do, to many times, and that he was wrong for that, I would say to those people that they are wrong because everyone has had times in there life that they changed what their overall big picture will be on what they want to do with there life. I know that I have, not just once but multiple times as well from when I was a young boy to now. So many times in my life that I kept on changing, what the big picture of my life will actually be, what do I want to do with my life, or what do I want to be, and to be honest I still don't really know right now. I can also see myself being friends with Augustine, it seems like we have a lot in common with each other, the biggest thing would be wanting to do things for ourselves, and not having anyone take that away from you.

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