

Augustine's *Confessions*

Book II Study Questions

Chapter 1

1. What motive(s) does Augustine give for offering these confessions to God?
2. For what did Augustine yearn during his teen years? What did you yearn for in your teen years?

Chapters 2

1. Augustine calls attention to the effects upon his lust that puberty brought on. Do hormones, "chemical imbalances," or other physical issues excuse or diminish our sins?
2. In what ways is God's silence toward our sin and act of His judgment?

Chapter 3

1. What does Augustine wish he had done during this time of great sexual desire?
2. What seems to be Augustine's view of marriage?

Chapter 4

1. How does Augustine, looking back, see God's rod driving him even through his sinful actions?
2. What was Augustine's parents' primary concern at this time?

Chapter 5

1. Roughly, how far is Madauros from Thagaste? Why was Augustine in Madauros?
2. What stated purpose does Augustine give for composing the *Confessions*?
3. How does Augustine both praise and criticize his father?

Chapter 6

1. As Augustine matured into manhood, what prospect did his father eagerly look forward to?
2. What was the spiritual state of Augustine's father during this time?

Chapter 7

1. How does this chapter convey Augustine's flight from God and God's pursuit of Augustine?
2. How did Augustine respond to his mother's admonitions about not engaging in sexual immorality?
3. What role did peer pressure play during this time?

Chapter 8

1. Why did Monnica not pursue a marriage for young Augustine? What does this say about her spiritual condition?
2. How did the lack of restraints and the idleness of being home from school impact Augustine mentally and spiritually?

Chapter 9

1. What did Augustine steal in this chapter? Why?
2. Have you ever committed a sin simply because it was a sin? What was going through your mind at the time? What was driving you?

Chapter 10

1. How does Augustine view the relationship of material things of this world with heavenly things?
2. When does the use of or desire for earthly things become sinful, according to Augustine?

Chapter 11

1. What typically motivates people to commit crimes?

Chapter 12

1. How do Augustine's reflections from 2.11 magnify the sinfulness of his stealing of the pears?
2. What does Augustine mean when he says, "*If any of that fruit actually entered my mouth, my crime was the flavoring on it*"?

Chapter 13

1. In what ways does Augustine show how natural man mimics God's character and attributes?
2. How is such mimicry, in reality, a distortion?

Chapter 14

1. How does natural man's "backward imitation" of God disclose that God is the creator of all things?
2. In what ways was Augustine's theft of the pears an attempt to act as if he were god?

Chapter 15

1. Is Augustine's confession of these past sins an example of morbid introspection?
2. To whom does Augustine attribute his sin? To whom does he attribute his not committing other sins?
3. What attitude does Augustine say his readers should have if they have not committed such sins as he?

Chapter 16

1. What role did peer pressure play in the theft?
2. Does that lessen or increase the sinfulness of the crime?

Chapter 17

1. What role does shame play in peer pressure?

Chapter 18

1. Augustine states that he does not “*want to pay any attention*” to his sin. He doesn’t even want “*to look at*” it. Why then has he spent so much time doing so thus far?

Summary

1. How does the descriptive language used by Augustine to describe his lust capture the feeling of being swept up by desire?
2. How many Scripture references does Ruden identify in Book II?
3. “Augustine looked to 1 John 2:16 as an especially important verse to reflect on his life. Is there a particular biblical passage that expresses how you have reflected on your own life?”¹

¹ Jason Byassee, *Reading Augustine: A Guide to the Confessions*, Cascade Companions (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2006), 16.