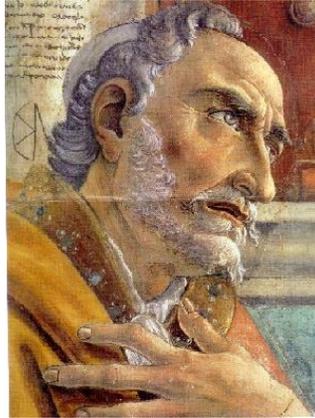


THE CONFESSIONS

by Augustine of Hippo



THE AUTHOR

“Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee.” These words are found in the opening paragraph of the *Confessions*, the spiritual autobiography of Augustine of Hippo (354-430). Augustine was the greatest of the church fathers, leaving a legacy that touches deeply Catholic and Protestant churches alike.

Augustine did not begin like a saint of the church, however. Born in Tagaste (in present-day Algeria) to a pagan father and a Christian mother, he seemed determined to follow his father in frustrating his mother's prayers. His father, Patricius, was a local government official who shared the loose morals typical of the day. Augustine's mother Monica put up with her husband's infidelity, but prayed daily for his salvation, and that of her son. Augustine revealed his powerful mind at a young age, and his parents were determined to get him the best education available, despite their limited means. He began his education in nearby Madaura, where he acquired a life-long distaste for Greek, and became what teachers today refer to as an underachiever, not applying himself to anywhere near the extent of his ability. When he went away to school in Carthage, the provincial capital, at the age of eighteen, he quickly fell in with a rowdy crowd, and before long had acquired a mistress and fathered a son out of wedlock. To his credit, he remained faithful to this girl for the next thirteen years, though he never married her, and did his best to raise his son.

Spiritual and philosophical confusion accompanied his moral turmoil. Despite the pleas of his mother, he rejected the Bible as grotesque in its stories and poorly written, and turned to the popular Manichaean cult. Like many young people who are drawn into involvement with cults, he did so not so much because he believed the Manichaean doctrine as because he was dissatisfied with his life and had no answers. He remained a Manichaean for nine years, during which time he served as a teacher of rhetoric, first in Carthage and then in Rome. He didn't find any satisfaction, either in teaching or in Manichaeism. As a teacher, he was a brilliant lecturer, but had trouble controlling his classes. His students were often disruptive, and rarely paid their bills. When he expressed a desire to go to Rome, Monica objected, but Augustine sneaked aboard a ship while she was in a chapel near the dock praying that God would prevent his departure!

In 383, he arrived in Rome, ready for bigger and better things, but terribly confused. He wanted to know the truth and to do what was right, but he had no idea where to turn, and lacked the self-control to live morally. He gave up Manichaeism and tried Neoplatonism, but that didn't seem to help very much. After a year in Rome, he was offered a teaching post in rhetoric in Milan, where his mother Monica joined him and continued her praying and pleading. Monica finally convinced her son to settle down and get married, at which point he callously sent his mistress of thirteen years away. He then found out that the girl to whom his mother had engaged him was only ten years old, and that he would have to wait at least two years before marrying her. Crying out, "God, give me chastity, but not yet!", Augustine broke off the engagement and took another mistress.

By now he was at the end of his rope. While in Milan, his mother had asked him to go listen to Ambrose preach, and he had agreed, largely because of his interest in the bishop's rhetorical skills. The more he listened, however, the more the message began to penetrate, and the lessons Monica had been pounding into his head for thirty-two years finally began to take hold. One day in 386, while walking in a garden, he heard the voice of a child singing "Take and read." He picked up a Bible and read the first thing he saw - "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Romans 13:13-14, NIV). These words were exactly what he needed. Right on the spot, he gave himself to Christ. The next Easter, he and his son were baptized by Ambrose, and his mother finally saw her prayers answered.

Augustine then left for North Africa, intending to live a life of seclusion. His mother died on the way home, and his son died two years later. He settled in his home town of Tagaste, but soon he was ordained to the priesthood in the nearby city of Hippo, and in 395 became the bishop of that city. He wrote his *Confessions* about the year 397. He remained in Hippo for the rest of his life, writing voluminously on many subjects, including his classic *The City of God*, in which he sought to explain how the "Christian" Roman Empire could fall before the assaults of the pagan barbarian tribes. He died while the barbarian Vandals were besieging the city.

SUMMARY

The *Confessions* is written as a prayer to God, and contains autobiography interspersed with expressions of worship and devotion. It concludes with three chapters of commentary on the opening of the book of Genesis. Augustine begins with his childhood, and speaks of his sinfulness, even in infancy, drawing his conclusions from his observations of other infants, though he does not remember his own experiences at that age. He then speaks of his carelessness as a student, his laziness (he hated Greek because it was too much work to learn something other than his native language) and desire for play rather than for work, and the fact that he was drawn to secular fiction (such as the *Aeneid*) rather than edifying works of literature.

As he enters his teens, he engages openly in sexual immorality, spurred on by his companions, to the extent that he makes claim to actions that he never engaged in in order to win their approval. He also speaks of an incident in which he and some of his friends stole pears from a neighbor's tree, not because they were hungry, but just for the thrill of it - they took the pears and threw them to a group of pigs.

When he was seventeen, his father died and he and his mother moved to Carthage, where he continued his education. While there, he took a mistress and bore a son, Adeodatus. He also became enamored of the theater, longing for the synthetic emotions stimulated by the actors on the stage. He excelled in his studies in rhetoric and philosophy, and was particularly impressed by the writings of Cicero, and was moved to seek wisdom. He even sought it in the Scriptures, but because of the blindness of his unconverted heart, he rejected the Word of God as infantile compared to the great writings of the philosophers of old. His search for wisdom led him at age nineteen to join the Manichaean cult, of which he was a member for the next nine years despite the pleas and prayers of his mother. In her desire for the salvation of her son, she received a vision from God assuring her that he would ultimately be saved. When she begged a local bishop to try to convince Augustine of the truth, he refused, recognizing that, in his pride, he was not prepared to listen, but he assured Monica that her prayers would not be in vain.

At this point Augustine returned to Tagaste to teach rhetoric. Though he acknowledged that he never taught his students to use their skills to condemn the guiltless, he admitted that he taught them ways to spare the guilty. During this time, still enmeshed in Manichaeism, he amused himself by entering drama and poetry competitions, and became increasingly interested in astrology. A wise physician warned him that astrology was nothing but deception, but he at this point was not fully convinced. Soon after, a dear friend died. This childhood friend was Augustine's companion in his reckless living, but was baptized while unconscious from his fever and awoke converted, though he died soon after. In his grief, Augustine returned to Carthage, where he again immersed himself in philosophy and other areas of academic study. He quickly learned everything to which he put his hand, though all left him empty. At the age of twenty-seven, he wrote several books in which he meditated on "the fair and the fit" (the nature of beauty), though he could do no better than conclude that beauty was something inherent in the object itself. He dedicated the books to the Roman orator Hierius, whom he had never met; at this point, he muses about the nature of hero-worship. He was at this point still in the grasp of the Manichaeans.

At the age of twenty-nine, a Manichaean bishop by the name of Faustus came to Carthage. Augustine had long desired to hear him speak, but the result of the encounter was to foment doubts about the whole Manichaean system. Not only did the Manichaean teachings about the stars and planets contradict known facts, but Faustus was unable to explain the discrepancies, nor did he seem to have more than a surface grasp of philosophical issues. In his disappointment, Augustine decided to pursue Manichaeism no further, though he did not yet sever his bonds with the cult. At the same time, he was becoming increasingly frustrated with his teaching career. His students were rowdy and undisciplined. When the opportunity arose to take up a position teaching rhetoric in Rome, he jumped at the chance, having heard that students there were more serious about their studies. Despite his mother's pleas that he remain in Carthage, he snuck aboard a ship while she was in a nearby chapel, praying that he would stay, and thus escaped to Rome. There, he found that students were little better than those in Carthage - they skipped out without paying their bills on a regular basis. When a position opened in Milan, he went there, where he met the famous preacher Ambrose, bishop of the church in Milan. Ambrose received him kindly, and Augustine began to attend his preaching because he was a widely-known orator. He had no thought of actually listening to the content of what Ambrose was saying, but gradually became impressed with the soundness of his arguments, and decided to leave Manichaeism once and for all and submit himself to instruction in the catechism of the Catholic Church.

Meanwhile, Augustine's faithful mother Monica had followed him to Milan, where she grew to love Ambrose as a spiritual guide and mentor (he corrected some of the superstitious practices she

had acquired in Carthage). He, in turn, appreciated her dedication to the church and to her son. Augustine still was caught up in a material concept of God (if God made man in His own image, God must have a body), and longed to discuss the matter with Ambrose, but the bishop was far too busy with his pastoral work and his studies. Nonetheless, Augustine came more to respect Catholic teachings as superior to those he had previously espoused. He continued to seek honors, fame, and to gratify the lusts of the flesh, however, though he was struck by the observation that a beggar, who had none of these things, could yet be happier than he was. He and his friends Alypius and Nebridius debate matters theoretical and practical at great length, but can arrive at no certainty. When Monica proposes that Augustine marry, he goes so far as to send his long-time mistress away, while keeping his son with him; but when he finds that the girl to whom his mother wishes to espouse him is only ten years old, he is unable to sustain a celibate lifestyle and takes another mistress.

During his thirty-first year, he overcomes his material conception of God through the writings of the Neoplatonists, but finds in their works nothing of the humiliation of Christ, nor of His deity while in the flesh. He also struggles mightily with the problem of the origin of evil; he sees that evil comes from the human will rather than the will of God, yet cannot see how God could have allowed it to exist. He finally resolves the issue by concluding that evil does not exist, but is the absence of being, a pure negation, since all that exists is created by God, and thus is good. He finally rejects astrology once and for all. His theology is improving; he is in many ways a biblical theist, but is not yet a Christian, since he has no understanding of the role of Christ in salvation.

At the age of thirty-two, Augustine was growing increasingly miserable. He knew and believed the doctrines of the Christian faith, but could not summon up the courage to renounce his manner of living. He sought out an old man named Simplicianus, who told him of the conversion of Victorinus, a noted professor of rhetoric in Rome, and Augustine determined to follow the same path, but still feared to give up his old life. Disgusted with his inability to choose Christ once and for all, he and his friend Alypius retreated to the garden behind the house where they were staying. Augustine went alone to the rear of the garden and cast himself before God, begging for mercy. He then heard a child's voice from the neighboring garden saying, "Take and read." He took this as a personal message from God, and returned to Alypius, with whom he had left a scroll. He opened it and read the first thing upon which his eyes fell - Romans 13:13-14. He was at that point converted. He told Alypius what had happened, and his friend was converted as well. They went inside to tell Monica, who rejoiced greatly at the answer to her prayers. Augustine then determined to eschew marriage and give himself entirely to the Lord's service, and Monica asserted that this was far better than giving her grandchildren.

At the age of thirty-three, Augustine determines to leave his post as professor of rhetoric in Milan quietly, which he is able to do because he develops a throat problem that makes it hard for him to speak. He then spends time in meditation preparing for his baptism. He, his son Adeodatus, and his friend Alypius are all baptized by Ambrose. On his way back to Africa to devote his life to the service of Christ, his mother Monica dies in the town of Ostia. He then remembers her godly life and her steadfastness in praying for him.

Book Nine ends the autobiographical narrative, and in Book Ten Augustine speaks of his spiritual condition at the time he is writing the *Confessions*. He takes time to marvel at the possibility of man having a knowledge of God, and muses about the wonders of the human memory. He then speaks of the temptations with which he continues to struggle, addressing them under the categories of the lust of the flesh ("concupiscence"), the lust of the eyes ("curiosity"), and the pride of life ("desire for acclaim").

The last three books in the *Confessions* contain comments on the first chapter of Genesis. These are highly allegorical, since Augustine was convinced that Christ was the theme of the Scriptures beginning from the first verse thereof. In these last three books, he deals with the nature of time, speculates about the meaning of “heaven and earth” in Genesis 1:1 (though he finally admits that there are many possible interpretations, all of which could be correct), discusses the Trinity, and gives a lengthy discourse on the allegorical interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis as a description of the Church.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Augustine of Hippo - The author of this autobiography, he tells the story of his spiritual pilgrimage from childhood through his conversion, baptism, the death of his mother, and his decision to enter a monastic life.
- Monica - Augustine’s mother, a Christian who prayed for her son for many years and finally lived to see him come to Christ.
- Patricius - Augustine’s father, a minor civic official and an unbeliever, he had ambitions for his son to prosper in politics or academia. He died when Augustine was seventeen, having been converted to Christianity on his deathbed.
- Adeodatus - Augustine’s illegitimate son by his long-time mistress, he was baptized at the same time as his father and died two years later at the age of seventeen.
- Faustus - A Manichaean bishop whose weak arguments caused Augustine to question the teachings of the cult.
- Ambrose - Bishop of Milan, his preaching drew Augustine to the truth of Scripture. It was under his ministry that Augustine was converted and baptized.
- Alypius - A student of Augustine who becomes a close friend and travels with him in his pilgrimage toward the Christian faith. The two are baptized by Ambrose at the same time.
- Simplicianus - An old man who encourages Augustine to trust Christ by relating the story of the conversion of Victorinus, a famous Roman professor of rhetoric.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee.” (p.11)

“And when I was not presently obeyed (my wishes being hurtful or intelligible), then I was indignant with my elders for not submitting to me, with those owing me no service, for not serving me; and avenged myself on them by tears.” (p.14)

“The weakness then of infant limbs, not its will, is its innocence.” (p.15)

“I, poor wretch, foamed like a troubled sea, following the rushing of my own tide, forsaking Thee, and exceeding all Thy limits; yet I escaped not Thy scourges. For what mortal can? For Thou wert ever with me mercifully rigorous, and besprinkling with most bitter alloy all my unlawful pleasures: that I might seek pleasures without alloy.” (p.28)

“Howsoever, when he suffers in his own person, it uses to be styled misery: when he compassionates others, then it is mercy. But what sort of compassion is this for feigned and scenical passions? for the auditor is not called on to relieve, but only to grieve: and he applauds the actor of these fictions the more, the more he grieves.” (p.37)

“Then in the theaters I rejoiced with lovers when they wickedly enjoyed one another, although this was imaginary only in the play. And when they lost one another, as if very compassionate, I sorrowed with them, yet had my delight in both. But now I much more pity him that rejoiceth in his wickedness, than him who is thought to suffer hardship, by missing some pernicious pleasure, and the loss of some miserable felicity.” (p.37)

“As yet I knew not that evil was nothing but a privation of good, until at last a thing ceases altogether to be.” (p.42)

“Go thy ways and God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish.” (unnamed bishop to Monica, p.47-48)

“The good that you love is from Him; but it is good and pleasant through reference to Him, and justly shall it be embittered, because unjustly is any thing loved which is from Him, if He be forsaken for it.” (p.57-58)

“For when I hear any Christian brother ignorant of these things, and mistaken on them, I can patiently behold such a man holding his opinion; nor do I see that any ignorance as to the position or character of the corporeal creation can injure him, so long as he doth not believe any thing unworthy of Thee, O Lord, the Creator of all. But it doth injure him, if he imagine it to pertain to the form of the doctrine of piety, and will yet affirm that too stiffly whereof he is ignorant. And yet is even such an infirmity, in the infancy of faith, borne by our mother Charity, till the new-born may grow up into a perfect man, so as not to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. But in him who in such wise presumed to be the teacher, source, guide, chief of all whom he could so persuade, that whoso followed him thought that he followed, not a mere man, but Thy Holy Spirit; who could not judge that so great madness, when once convicted of having taught any thing false, were to be detested and utterly rejected?” (p.68)

“For I kept my heart from assenting to any thing, fearing to fall headlong; but by hanging in suspense I was the worse killed. For I wished to be as assured of the things I saw not, as I was that seven and three are ten.” (p.83)

“Then Thou, O Lord, little by little with most tender and most merciful hand, touching and composing my heart, didst persuade me - considering what innumerable things I believed, which I saw not, nor was present while they were done, as so many things in secular history, so many reports of places and of cities, which I had not seen; so many of friends, so many of physicians, so many

continually of other men, which unless we should believe, we should do nothing at all in this life; lastly, with how unshaken an assurance I believed of what parents I was born, which I could not know, had I not believed upon hearsay - considering all this, Thou didst persuade me, that not they who believed Thy Books (which Thou hast established in so great authority among almost all nations), but they who believed them not, were to be blamed; and that they were not to be heard, who should say to me, ‘How knowest thou those Scriptures to have been imparted unto mankind by the Spirit of the one true and most true God?’” (p.83-84)

“Loving a happy life, I feared it in its own abode, and sought it, by fleeing from it. I thought I should be too miserable, unless folded in female arms; and of the medicine of Thy mercy to cure that infirmity I thought not, not having tried it.” (p.92)

“For the rejection of heretics makes the tenets of Thy Church and sound doctrine to stand out more clearly. For there must also be heresies, that the approved may be made manifest among the weak.” (p.112)

“Give me chastity and continency, only not yet!” (p.125)

“No further would I read; nor needed I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.” (p.131)

“Give what Thou enjoimest, and enjoin what Thou wilt.” (p.181)

“But if before heaven and earth there was no time, why is it demanded, what Thou then didst? For there was no “then,” when there was no time.” (p.194)

“While every man endeavors then to understand in the Holy Scriptures, the same as the writer understood, what hurt is it, if a man understand what Thou, the light of all true-speaking minds, dost show him to be true, although he whom he reads, understood not this, seeing he also understood a Truth, though not this truth?” (p.218)

“But when he saith, ‘Moses meant not what you say, but what I say,’ yet denieth not that what each of us say, may both be true, O my God, life of the poor, in Whose bosom is no contradiction, pour down a softening dew into my heart, that I may patiently bear with such as say this to me, not because they have a divine Spirit, and have seen in the heart of Thy servant what they speak, but because they be proud; not knowing Moses’ opinion, but loving their own, not because it is truth, but because it is theirs.” (p.222)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Discuss the author’s assessment of the sins of infancy in Augustine’s *Confessions*. Have you observed the same evidence of original sin in babies of which he speaks? Why would the Bible lead us to expect exactly what Augustine describes? Support your arguments with specifics from the book and from Scripture.

2. In Augustine's *Confessions*, the author describes his love for stories of adventure and dislike for serious books. He sees this as sin on his part. Do you agree? Support your arguments with specific quotations from Augustine's autobiography and from Scripture.
3. From an educational standpoint, Augustine was a classic underachiever, as he admits in his *Confessions*. He sees this as sin on his part. Do you agree? Support your arguments with specific quotations from Augustine's autobiography and from Scripture.
4. In Augustine's *Confessions*, the author writes of his reaction to stage plays in the following words: "Then in the theaters I rejoiced with lovers when they wickedly enjoyed one another, although this was imaginary only in the play. And when they lost one another, as if very compassionate, I sorrowed with them, yet had my delight in both." If the entertainment in the fourth century tended to encourage people to love what was evil by sympathizing with those who were acting sinfully, how much more is that true of the entertainment in which our contemporary society is immersed? How significant is the danger against which Augustine warns his readers? Use the book, the Bible, and your own experience to discuss the dangers of being drawn to entertainment that encourages the viewer to love what is evil.
5. In Augustine's *Confessions*, he argues that "The good that you love is from Him; but it is good and pleasant through reference to Him, and justly shall it be embittered, because unjustly is any thing loved which is from Him, if He be forsaken for it." Why does he believe that the good things of this world cannot fail to disappoint if they are not enjoyed in reference to the God who made them? Evaluate this statement in the light of Scripture and illustrate it from Augustine's own experience.
6. In Augustine's *Confessions*, after the author encountered Faustus and was disillusioned about the Manichaeian heresy, he meditated on a Christian's knowledge of science as follows: "For when I hear any Christian brother ignorant of these things, and mistaken on them, I can patiently behold such a man holding his opinion; nor do I see that any ignorance as to the position or character of the corporeal creation can injure him, so long as he doth not believe any thing unworthy of Thee, O Lord, the Creator of all. But it doth injure him, if he imagine it to pertain to the form of the doctrine of piety, and will yet affirm that too stiffly whereof he is ignorant. And yet is even such an infirmity, in the infancy of faith, borne by our mother Charity, till the new-born may grow up into a perfect man, so as not to be carried about with every wind of doctrine. But in him who in such wise presumed to be the teacher, source, guide, chief of all whom he could so persuade, that whoso followed him thought that he followed, not a mere man, but Thy Holy Spirit; who could not judge that so great madness, when once convicted of having taught any thing false, were to be detested and utterly rejected?" Why did he argue that there was a difference between holding a scientific belief in ignorance and immaturity and holding the same belief and teaching it as if it were an article of the faith? How can Augustine's insight be applied to modern controversies about science and the Bible?

7. In Augustine's *Confessions*, the author struggled for certainty even after he had gained a measure of understanding of the truth, yet he maintained that this very struggle for certainty led him down the path to spiritual death. He said, "For I kept my heart from assenting to any thing, fearing to fall headlong; but by hanging in suspense I was the worse killed. For I wished to be as assured of the things I saw not, as I was that seven and three are ten." Why do you think that his search for certainty damaged Augustine in his journey toward God? Support your answer from the book and from Scripture.
8. In Augustine's *Confessions*, the author said, "Loving a happy life, I feared it in its own abode, and sought it, by fleeing from it. I thought I should be too miserable, unless folded in female arms; and of the medicine of Thy mercy to cure that infirmity I thought not, not having tried it." What did he mean when he said that he sought happiness by fleeing from it? Do people today do the same thing? Have you ever done it? Discuss the meaning of Augustine's statement, and the importance of seeking happiness in the right way.
9. Augustine, in his *Confessions*, argued that heresy played an important role in the progress of the church. He said, "For the rejection of heretics makes the tenets of Thy Church and sound doctrine to stand out more clearly. For there must also be heresies, that the approved may be made manifest among the weak." Was he right? Support or refute his statement by giving arguments from your knowledge of Church History and from Augustine's own experience.
10. In Book Eight of Augustine's *Confessions*, he discusses the problem of a divided will - an apparent reference to Romans 7. While he is concerned to refute the Manichaean idea of two natures, he is also reflecting his own struggles in his attempt to come to Christ. In your opinion, do you believe that Paul, in Romans 7, is talking about the experience of a believer or an unbeliever? Why? Was Augustine's problem a divided will, or a will that as yet refused to submit to God? Support your answer from Scripture and from the book.
11. Discuss the view of baptism found in Augustine's *Confessions*. Though he clearly believed in salvation by grace rather than by human works of any kind, he nonetheless speaks of baptism as if it in itself produced salvation. How does the Catholic view of the sacraments contained in his writing compare to what the Bible teaches on the subject? In what way does the Catholic view of the sacraments ultimately undermine the teaching of salvation by grace alone?
12. In Book Ten of Augustine's *Confessions*, the author argues that to enjoy beauty for its own sake is sinful and to be avoided. Do you agree? Interact with Augustine's arguments and support your conclusions from Scripture.
13. Near the beginning of Augustine's *Confessions*, the author states, "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee." Modern speakers have put the same idea differently, often asserting that everyone who is born into this world is born with a "God-shaped void" in his heart. Do you believe that this is true? Support your conclusion, both from Scripture and from Augustine's autobiography.

14. The tendency of Augustine to interpret the Bible allegorically shows up most clearly in Book Thirteen of his *Confessions*, where he attempts to draw meaning about the nature of the church from Genesis 1. What are the dangers of interpreting Scripture in this way? Use examples from the book to support your argument.
15. Discuss the role of sexuality in Augustine's *Confessions*. What part did it play in his understanding of sin and salvation? Why were the changes in his view of sexuality so important in his conversion and subsequent Christian life? Do you agree with Augustine's view of this subject? Why or why not? Support your discussion with specifics from the book and from Scripture.
16. The format of Augustine's *Confessions* is that of a prayer addressed to God. The title refers, not only to confession of sin, but also to praise - a confession of the glory and goodness of God. Discuss the relationship between the form and content of this spiritual classic. Why is it significant that the book is structured as a prayer rather than a conventional autobiography or theological treatise? Support your arguments with specifics from the book.
17. Why do you think Augustine, in his *Confessions*, chooses to relate the incident of the theft of the pears when he was a teenager? Why did he think it was so important? What does it tell us about the real nature of sin and the depravity of the human heart? Support your discussion with passages of Scripture as well as details from the book.
18. With a few exceptions, the autobiographical material in Augustine's *Confessions* tends to be vague and general, lacking specific details. Why do you think the author chose to describe his past in this way? Is he trying to avoid sensationalism with regard to his past sins? Is he seeking to universalize his experience so that all may see their own story in his? Support your conclusion with specifics from the book.
19. Near the beginning of Augustine's *Confessions*, the author states, "Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it repose in Thee." Given this statement of direction, we would expect that the autobiographical work that follows would narrate a journey from restlessness to rest. Does it? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with specifics from the book.
20. According to the narrative found in Augustine's *Confessions*, what is the real nature of conversion? Is it doctrinal belief? baptism? moral reformation? a renewed heart? something else? Support your conclusion with details from the book.
21. Some critics have argued that I John 2:16, addressed at length by Augustine in Book Ten, provides the outline for his *Confessions*, to the extent that the spiritual pilgrimage found there involves consecutive immersion in the lust of flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, followed by the conquest of those sins in reverse order. Is this a legitimate way of reading the book? Support your conclusion with specifics from the text.

22. John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* may be viewed as the spiritual autobiography of a Christian Everyman that, in a sense, pictures the journey of all who come to Christ. Compare Bunyan's description with Augustine's *Confessions*. To what extent did the path to salvation followed by the great theologian of the Ancient Church follow the pattern set forth by Bunyan in his great allegory? Do you see any significant differences between the two?
23. Albert Camus' *The Fall* and Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions* both serve as confessions of sin, with the former explicitly indebted to the latter. Compare and contrast the two works in terms of the nature of the sins confessed, the growth of the protagonist, and the final outcome of the confessional process.
24. Albert Camus' *The Fall* draws heavily from the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. Both have much to say about love, both true and false - the love of women, the love of self, and the love of God. Compare and contrast the ways in which the two works deal with the subject of love. Why does the former conclude that true love is not possible, while the latter finds the secret to perfect love?
25. Discuss the significance of the theft of the panel from the Ghent Altarpiece in Albert Camus' *The Fall* and compare and contrast it with the story of the theft of pears by a young Augustine in his *Confessions*. What are both stories intended to reveal about the sinfulness of the protagonist and of the human race in general? Be sure to consider the contexts in which these incidents occur in the respective books.