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## Augustine of Hippo

### Confessions (Works of Saint Augustine)



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Author: Augustine of Hippo

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## Description

Heartfelt, incisive & timeless, *The Confessions* has captivated readers for over 1500 years. Retelling the story of his long struggle with faith & ultimate conversion--the first such spiritual memoir ever recorded--Augustine traces a story of sin, regret & redemption that is both deeply personal &, at the same time, universal. Starting with his early life, education & youthful indiscretions, & following his ascent to influence as a teacher of rhetoric in Hippo, Rome & Milan, he's brutally honest about his proud & ambitious youth. In time, his early loves grow cold & the luster of worldly success fades, leaving him filled with a sense of inner absence, until a movement toward Christian faith takes hold, eventually leading to conversion & the flourishing of a new life. Philosophically & theologically brilliant, sincere in its feeling, & both grounded in history & strikingly contemporary in its resonance, *The Confessions* is a timeless class that will persist as long as humanity continues to long for meaning in life & peace of soul.

## Insightful reviews

Justin Evans: Considering that the style of Augie's work is completely and utterly impenetrable, this is actually a pretty decent read. Just come to it expecting circularity, meditation, rapturous theology and self-flagellation, and you'll come away impressed.

Don't expect anything linear, and you'll be all the more impressed when he ends up, every now and then, out-Aristotling Aristotle with arguments of the  $(x \rightarrow y) \& (y \rightarrow z) \& (z \rightarrow p) \& (p \rightarrow q)$ ;  $\sim x$  is absurd; therefore  $q$  variety.

Don't expect any modern 'you are a unique and special snowflake and your desires are good it's just that your parents/society/upbringing/schoolfriends/economic earning power have stunted you' self-help guff. It'd be nice to read someone more contemporary who's willing to admit that people do things wrong, all the time, and should feel really shitty for doing wrong things.

Don't expect Aquinas. This is the hardest bit for me; if someone's going to talk about God I prefer that they be coldly logical about it. Augie goes more for the erotic allegory, self-abasement in the face of the overwhelming eternal kind of thing. No thanks.

Finally, be aware that you'll need to think long and hard about what he says and why he says it when he does. Books I-IX are the ones you'll read as autobiography, and books X-XIII will seem like a slog. But it's all autobiography. Sadly for Augie, he doesn't make it easy for us to value the stuff he wants to convince us to value, which is the philosophy and theology of the later books. The structure, as far as I can tell, is to show us first how he got to believing that it was possible for him to even begin thinking about God (that's I-IX). X-XIII shows us how he goes about thinking about God, moving from the external world, to the human self in X and a bit of XI, to the whole of creation in XI and XII, to God himself in XIII. I have no idea if this is what he had in mind, but it roughly works out. That's all very intellectually stimulating, but it's still way more fun to read about his peccadilloes and everyday life in the fourth century.

Stian: "*People travel to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering.*"

An extremely fascinating look at the life of one of the most eminent Christian thinkers. The prose

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is magnificent (translated by Garry Wills) and that added to making this book a very pleasurable read.

I don't find most of the arguments Augustine makes any good, but they are still fascinating. It was also interesting to see how lax St. Augustine was on interpreting scripture, and also writing that women are only inferior to men physically, but more than capable of competing intellectually and morally. But these matters are discussed in the last three parts of the book (parts that have been, as I understand it, often removed for whatever reason in other editions). There is also a discussion about time and the concept of time which I found to be extremely interesting in its own right.

The majority of the book, however, consists of St. Augustine talking about his life and search for God, starting with his childhood until he meets St. Ambrose at 29, turning away from Manichaeism at 30, and eventually converting to Christianity at 32, after a lot of inner turmoil and uncertainty. He touches on various other theological topics (the meaning of certain scripture, the nature of God, did God create the universe ex nihilo? and many other interesting things), and all in all this was a very fascinating read.

With goodreads' rating system I'm never sure what to rate books, but I think it's a stretch to say that I "really" liked it, but I did at the very least like it! It was very enjoyable to read. So, three stars!

Jeff Miller: Been over a decade since I last read this, but still it enraptures me. This time around I noticed just how much scripture was weaved into everything he said. Often he blends St. Paul into whatever he is talking about; especially in the later chapters after the main part of his conversion story.

Also this time I tried an audiobook version for my commute.

The narrator was Bernard Mayes whose voice matched the material. Kind of British professorial.

Didn't know who he was and looked up his Wiki entry. Oddly for a narrator of St. Augustine the man was a priest who left the priesthood became an atheist and had same-sex attraction. Still he did an excellent job of narration.

I managed to get this audiobook for basically \$3.99, by buying the .99 Kindle ebook and then the Audible version for another \$2.99. Thank you Amazon.

Michael: Written through the waning of the Roman Empire round 400AD, this account of the youth of a seminal theologian of the Catholic church is a private point of view on what he regards as his sinful lifestyles top as much as his conversion. His writing is strangely accessible, nearly sleek in its method of weighing the standards that give a contribution to starting to be up. His mom was once a Christian, yet he took decades to return around. He excelled at school and hungered to clarify summary knowledge, finally changing into a grasp of rhetoric, like his hero Cicero. but from his youth, he adored sexual and different worldly pleasures whereas mockingly aligning himself with the Manicheism theology that condemned the Christian guideline of a

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human Christ for now not being religious enough. His explorations of the way he labored his means towards conversion represents an early develop in psychology. He covers good how his personality was once formed by means of maternal nurturing, paternal discipline, peer relations, early loves, confident position models, and private tragedies. His reflections at the dating of sensory notion to knowledge, the relativity of conception and emotions, the best position of reminiscence to consciousness, and confident potential of language are clean precursors to present perspective. He attempts to make feel of the problem of human unfastened will vs. God being a part of everything, yet does not have a compelling option to me. I loved his musings at the nature of time, logically concluding past, present, and destiny are all significant simply from a gift viewpoint (with "now" finally infinitesimally short). His fight to account for construction having a starting with God current open air time (and the which means of the pre-creation "ithout shape and void"version of matter) resembles to me the problem for contemporary physics of what existed ahead of the large Bang. at the draw back for a non-religious individual studying this booklet this day is that he evidently could not break out the worldview of dualism among matter/body and spirit/mind/soul. but he does not come to forged worldly reviews and pleasures as meaningless or evil or converse a lot of the satan or Hell. For him, the starting place of evil lies in being out of God's gentle or in willful ignorance, now not from a separate source. it is a disgrace that this worldly Christian philosopher did not evolve extra to the magical view of God fairly being within the world, following the instance of Christ for the "Word made flesh".

Gwen Burrow: Feels a bit like examining the Psalms. that are supposed to inform you it is good.

Sean: In his "Confessions", Augustine tells the tale of his formative years and supreme reputation of a Christian life. Augustine used to be born in 354 on a farm in Algeria, the son of a Christian mom and a pagan father. He describes his early life, in which time he mastered Latin literature and have become a instructor of literature and public speaking. Augustine describes intimately his secular life, marriage of 15 years, in addition to his own religious trip from a lifetime of earthly wishes in the direction of the popularity of the Christian values that he had realized from his mother. Early in his life, Augustine took an interest in Manichee theosophy, yet finally deserted Manicheism for the Neoplatonic mysticism of Plotinus. on the age of 32, after a imaginative and prescient in a Milanese garden, he renounced his secular lifestyles and committed himself to Christianity. The tale of Augustine's youth and look for a religious philosophy is fascinating reading, although now not a quick story. The "Confessions" will be learn as greater than only a non secular journey, but additionally as a cultural historical past of the Roman international of the overdue 4th century. Augustine's descriptions of his family and friends are very actual and provides a very good photograph of existence at the moment in Algeria and Italy. In the final 4 books of the "Confessions", Augustine strikes from an outline of his personal own background to a theological dialogue of the Christian view of production and the character of time, between different topics. for somebody no longer attracted to theological hair-splitting, those books can get beautiful tedious. As an example, Augustine spends many, many pages discussing precisely what God created whilst he made the "heavens and the earth" and which he created first. this can be quite a lot much less compelling to learn than his past discussions of existence in Milan.

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