

## Reading Questions Week 5

1. Explain the three different ways Socrates believes we consider things to be good.

Socrates, one of the most influential philosophers of ancient Greece, is renowned for his thought-provoking theories on the nature of morality and the pursuit of justice. One of his most famous ideas is that of the three different ways in which we consider something to be good. According to Socrates, these three ways are: 'Good by nature', 'Good by convention', and 'Good by law'.

The first way in which they considered something to be good, according to Socrates, is by nature. This means that something is inherently good; it has an innate quality or essence that is intrinsically good. For example, love, honesty, and happiness are all things that are seen as good by nature.

The second way in which they considered something to be good is by convention. This means that something is seen as good based on the standards of society. For example, many cultures view marriage as a good thing, even though it is not necessarily good by nature.

The third way in which they consider something to be good is by law. This means that something is seen as good based on the laws of a given society. Laws are generally enacted to ensure that good is maintained and that people are kept safe.

Socrates' idea of the three different ways in which we consider something to be good is an important one. It helps us to understand why some things are seen as good by some people, even though the same things may be considered bad by others. It also allows us to think critically about the standards of morality and justice that exist in our society. All in all, Socrates' view on the nature of good is an important one and one that is worth exploring further.

2. Present in your own words the "Ring of Gyges" story that Plato's brother Glaucon discusses. What is the ultimate point Glaucon is trying to make about why we behave justly?

The Ring of Gyges is a story from Plato's Republic, told by Glaucon. It tells of a shepherd who discovers a magical ring that makes him invisible. With this newfound power, the shepherd is able to do whatever he pleases without consequence. Glaucon uses this story to illustrate that people are

only just because they fear the consequences of being unjust. He argues that if people were able to act without consequence, they would be more likely to act unjustly.

Glaucon's point is that justice is not something that is inherent in human nature, but rather is something that is imposed by society. He believes that people act justly out of fear of the consequences of being unjust, rather than out of any moral obligation. This is why he uses the story of the Ring of Gyges to illustrate his point. The shepherd in the story is able to do whatever he pleases without consequence, and thus he is more likely to act unjustly.

The ultimate point Glaucon is trying to make is that people behave justly because of the fear of punishment, not because of any inherent sense of morality. He believes that if people were not held accountable for their actions, they would be more likely to act unjustly. This is why he uses the story of the Ring of Gyges to illustrate his point. It is a cautionary tale that warns people of the dangers of unchecked power. Glaucon's point is that justice is not something that is inherent in human nature, but rather is something that is imposed by society.

3. What do Glaucon and Adeimantus ultimately think is the best life for a man, and how should we pursue it? Do you agree or disagree, and if so, then why?

Glaucon and Adeimantus, two of Socrates' closest friends, are presented with a challenge by Socrates in Plato's Republic. Socrates asks them to consider what the best life for a man should be and how he should pursue it. Glaucon and Adeimantus ultimately believe that the best life for a man is one of pleasure and power. They argue that a life of pleasure and power is the most desirable, and that a man should pursue it by any means necessary.

Glaucon and Adeimantus argue that a life of pleasure and power is the most desirable because it allows a man to live a life of luxury and to have control over his own destiny. They believe that a man should pursue this life by any means necessary, even if it means taking advantage of others or using unethical methods. They argue that a man should be willing to do whatever it takes to achieve his goals, even if it means going against the law or morality.

I disagree with Glaucon and Adeimantus' view that the best life for a man is one of pleasure and power. I believe that the best life for a man is one that is lived with integrity and purpose. A life of pleasure and power may be desirable in the short-term, but it does not lead to true happiness or fulfillment in the long-term. A life of integrity and purpose, on the other hand, will lead to a more meaningful and fulfilling life. Therefore, I believe that a man should pursue a life of integrity and purpose, rather than a life of pleasure and power.

### **Aristotle, "Ethical Virtue" – pp. 492-495**

1. Characterize the "happiness" (Greek: eudaimonia) that Aristotle thinks is the ultimate end for man's pursuits. Aristotle's conception of happiness, or eudaimonia, is an ultimate end for man's pursuits. He believed that happiness is the highest good and the purpose of life. It is not a fleeting emotion, but rather a lasting state of being that is achieved through virtuous action. Aristotle argued that eudaimonia is the result of living a life of virtue and excellence. He believed that humans should strive to reach their full potential and that this is the only way to reach true happiness. He argued that the ultimate goal of life is to become the best version of oneself, which is achieved through virtuous action. He also believed that happiness is not found in material possessions, but rather in living a meaningful life.

Aristotle's conception of happiness is still relevant today. He argued that true happiness is found in striving to reach one's full potential and living a life of virtue and excellence. He believed that this is the only way to reach true happiness and that material possessions are not the key to lasting joy. His teachings are still relevant today, and his idea of eudaimonia continues to inspire people to strive for a life of meaning and purpose.

2. What does Aristotle argue is the function of a human being?

Aristotle argued that humans should strive for excellence in all aspects of life, including physical,

intellectual, and moral excellence. He believed that the best way to achieve this was to practice virtue, which he defined as the mean between two extremes of excess and deficiency. For example, courage is the mean between two extremes of rashness and cowardice. Aristotle believed that by practicing virtue, humans could reach a state of eudaimonia, or human flourishing.

3. What does Aristotle mean by saying virtue is a disposition, and not just a feeling or a capacity?

Aristotle's ethical theory is based on the concept of virtue. He believed that virtue was the key to happiness and that it was the only way to live a good life. Aristotle defined virtue as a "disposition", not just a feeling or a capacity. He believed that virtue was a state of character that was developed through practice and habit.

Aristotle's definition of virtue as a disposition means that it is not just a feeling or a capacity, but rather a state of character. It is not something that can be acquired overnight, but rather something that must be cultivated and practiced over time. Virtue is not just a feeling or a capacity, but rather a way of life. It is a set of habits and practices that must be cultivated in order to live a good life.

Virtue is something that must be worked on and developed over time. It is not something that can be acquired overnight, but rather something that must be cultivated and practiced over time. Aristotle believed that virtue was the key to happiness and that it was the only way to live a good life. He believed that virtue was a disposition, not just a feeling or a capacity, and that it was something that must be developed through practice and habit.

4. How do we gain virtue?

Virtue is a quality of moral excellence and is a desirable trait to have. It is something that we should all strive to achieve in our lives. So how do we gain virtue?

The first step to gaining virtue is to understand what it is and why it is important. Virtue is an essential part of a moral life, and it is something that can be developed and cultivated over time. It is important to understand the different types of virtues, such as justice, courage, temperance, and wisdom, and how they can help us live a more moral life. Once we understand the concept of virtue,

we can begin to make conscious efforts to cultivate it in our lives.

The second step to gaining virtue is to practice it. We can do this by making conscious decisions to act in a virtuous manner and by developing habits that encourage us to act virtuously. This could include taking time to reflect on our actions and the consequences of our decisions, or engaging in activities that promote virtue, such as volunteering or helping others in need. We can also practice virtue by reading books or articles that discuss the importance of virtue and how to cultivate it in our lives.

Gaining virtue is not an easy task, but it is worth the effort. By understanding what virtue is and why it is important, and by practicing it in our daily lives, we can develop a strong sense of moral excellence and be better people. With effort and dedication, we can all become more virtuous and live a more moral life.

5. Explain how virtue is like a mean, or balance point between extremes. Present an example of such a virtue

We often describe Virtue as a mean, or balance point, between two extremes. This means that virtue is a way of living that is neither too lax nor too strict, and instead finds a balance between the two. Virtue is the middle ground between two extremes, and it is the path of moderation. An example of such a virtue is patience. Patience is the balance between being too impatient and too complacent. It is the ability to wait for the right moment to act, without being too eager or too passive. Patience is a virtue that allows us to make decisions that are both timely and thoughtful.

Virtue is a valuable tool for navigating the complexities of life. It helps us to find a balance between extremes, and to make decisions that are both practical and ethical. By understanding and practicing virtue, we can create a life that is both meaningful and fulfilling.