

Jamie Willix

Professor Sanchez

Philosophy

14 March 2023

Reading Questions

Plato, "Morality and Happiness" – pp. 487-492

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

The three different ways Socrates believes we consider things to be good include, things that are good in themselves, things that are good for their consequences, and things that are both. Things that are good in themselves are things that are considered good for their own sake, regardless of any other benefits they might bring to us, like health and happiness. Things that are good for their consequences are considered good because of what they bring to us, such as money and power. Things that are both considered good because they are good in themselves and bring us benefits, such as virtue and justice. Plato believes that we should work towards these things because money and power only bring us temporary satisfaction, while justice and virtue contribute to our overall well-being.

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 story is about a shepherd named Gyges who finds a ring that gives him the power to become invisible. He uses the ring to commit various crimes because he has no fear of being

caught. He eventually uses the ring to become king by killing the current king and marrying his wife. Glaucon uses this story to make the point that if given the opportunity, most people would behave unjustly if they could guarantee they would get away with it, without fear of consequences. He believes that people only behave justly because of the fear of punishment and the desire for a good reputation.

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 believe that the best life for a man is a just life, which includes cultivating virtues like wisdom and courage. Besides the obvious justice systems that must be in place to pursue this kind of life, I believe we can pursue a just life by following the virtues of honesty and holding ourselves accountable with integrity. Merely by following God and his commandments we strive towards a just life. I agree with their belief in living a life in these manners because I think every man should live by integrity and honor, especially with God in their corner we should follow his commandments and not sin against him.

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

1. Characterize the "happiness" (Greek: eudaimonia) that Aristotle thinks is the ultimate end for man's pursuits. Aristotle thinks the ultimate end for a man's pursuit is a state of happiness. He believes that happiness is not a fleeting feeling that comes from seeking pleasure or material wealth, rather he believes it is a state of being that comes from a life of virtuous activity and fulfillment of one's potential.

2. What does Aristotle argue is the function of a human being? Aristotle argues that the function of a human being is to engage in rational activity in accordance with virtues and to

pursue the ultimate end of happiness. He believes this because, unlike any other animal, humans possess a capacity for reason to do so.

3. What does Aristotle mean by saying virtue is a disposition, and not just a feeling or a capacity? When Aristotle says that virtue is a disposition, he means that it is a habitual state of mind, rather than just a fleeting feeling. He argues that virtues are developed through practice and repetition, and become part of a person's character over time. He believes that virtues are consistent and stable, unlike emotions or feelings. He believes virtues are not just a capacity because they require action in real-life situations.

4. How do we gain virtue? According to Aristotle, we gain virtue by consistently acting in accordance with our virtues. In order to become a virtuous person we must make a habit out of this, as eventually it will become a part of our character and ultimately achieve our true happiness.

5. Explain how virtue is like a mean, or balance point between extremes. Present an example of such a virtue. Aristotle believes that virtues involve finding the balance point between excess and deficiency in our behavior and emotions. For example, honesty is the virtue that lies between the excess of boastfulness and the deficiency of self-depreciation. For, someone who is boastful may exaggerate their accomplishments or abilities, presenting themselves falsely. While someone who is self-deprecating may downplay themselves to an unhealthy level. Someone who finds the balance between the extremes exhibits the virtue of honesty. For, they present themselves truthfully and accurately, while also being humble when acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses.