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Intro to Philosophy

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Reading Questions

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

Socrates believes that good is an authoritative truth. And that there are two sorts of good virtue and happiness both unconditional. He says that good is more prized than knowledge and truth, and yet is the only way to achieve truth and knowledge. Good is the justification for understanding and discernment.

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?

Glaucon is trying to show how acting justly is often only self serving. His point that justice is always self-interested is backed up by the fact that mankind by nature is selfish and unjust. Therefore people are only just because of the benefits it brings, for example being just may give you a good reputation by the people around you.

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 agree that equity is attractive to have in a man's life to ensure foul play does not occur. They argue that since justice is self-serving, and mankind is inherently selfish individuals will act without regard for anyone else, but themselves. They believe that nobody acts just enthusiastically, and that equity is self interest. This makes sense, but I'd like to believe some people would act just not just to appease themselves to others around them.

1. Characterize the "happiness" (Greek: eudaimonia) that Aristotle thinks is the ultimate end for man's pursuits.

Aristotle accepts that happiness is the most elevated great. He also accepts that all human activities aim at happiness or eudaimonia. Not a passive internal feeling but something, always active, living well, living the best life. an example used if this is every art, craft, or inquiry aimed at something good for example, musical arts aims at the creation of music, engineering aims at the creation of bridges and houses, etc.

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

Aristotle argues the notion of a function by saying the function of a knife is to cut a knife is a good one when it cuts well. An item is classified as a knife, because it can be used to cut things. What makes human beings distinct is irrational behavior, and ability to gain knowledge, and act with reasoning. I Aristotle believes the function of humans is to live a life full of virtue.

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

Virtue is a trait that contributes to a person functioning well as a human being and examples of this could be bravery, generosity, friendliness, etc. I've heard she was not just feeling for example, a person who feels brave does not act on it. It is an action not just done once, not a natural inclination. But virtue is a learned disposition or tendency to reason and act in a certain way

4. How do we gain virtue?

We gain virtue by gaining characteristic functions by getting a learned disposition to reason and act in a certain way. By adopting a tendency or characteristic that we regularly show.

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

Aristotle describes virtue as a mean or intermediate between two extremes as one of excess and one of deficiency. His example is bravery on the battlefield, and how much we let fear, restrict or modify our actions and how bravery is the “mean” or “intermediate” between cowardliness and rashness. Another example he provides is that the mean for giving and taking money is generosity. The excess is wasteful, and the deficiency is ungenerosity.