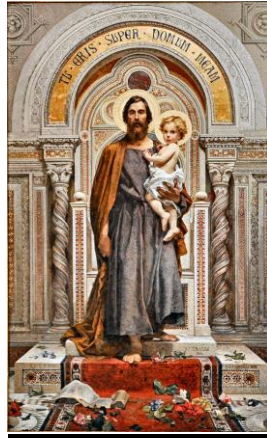


St. Joseph Society



Objective: Catholic morality is the practical outworking of the great dogmas of the Catholic faith. St. Paul commands us to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). Last month, we investigated the nature of the human person. As Romanus Cessario, O.P. says, “Since moral theology concerns the good of the human person, it is necessary to consider the nature of the creature whose good it directs” (*Introduction to Moral Theology*, 21). This month, we are going to investigate the end or goal of the Christian life which is happiness with God in heaven.

- Unit 1 – Introduction to Moral Theology
- Unit 2 – The Nature of Man
- Unit 3 – The End of Man
- Unit 4 – Making Moral Choices
- Unit 5 – Freedom
- Unit 6 – Conscience

Unit 3 Podcast Schedule

- Episode #9 – What is happiness?
- Episode #10 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #1
- Episode #11 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #2
- Episode #12 – The Beatific Vision

Episode #9 – What is happiness?

I. Introduction

1. Opening Question: What is happiness?
2. Last month, we discussed the nature of man, and this month we are going to turn our attention to the end or goal of human existence.
3. This week, we are going to the goal of ethics which is natural happiness before turning our attention over the next two weeks on non-Christian approaches to happiness. Finally, we will complete this unit by looking at supernatural happiness which is called the Beatific Vision.

II. What is happiness?

1. Introduction – Thomistic Moral Theology is Teleological

- a. Teleology is “the doctrine that there is purpose in the world, that nothing ever happens merely by chance, and that no complete account of the universe is possible without final reference to an all-wise God” (Catholic Dictionary). The study of final causes is named teleology because *telos* is the Greek word for end. As Vernon Bourke explains, “To say that ethics is necessarily a teleological science, means that we cannot get along in moral philosophy without giving some thought to the final cause, or end, of human actions” (*Ethics*, 28).
- b. Brian Davies – People are creatures that are endowed with an intellect and a will and are drawn to goals that attract them. Human actions are always a voluntary aiming for an end perceived as good. Since goodness is perfective, or fulfilling, proper human action (ie. The moral life) is always a movement to what is fulfilling or perfecting of the agent whose movement it is. People by nature desire or are attracted to what perfects or fulfils them, and in this fact is the foundation of morality” (*The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 227-232).

2. Key Terms

- a. Aristotle defines the **end** as “that for the sake of which a thing is done” (*Physics*, bk. II, ch. 3, 194b 33; *Metaphysics*, bk. V, ch. 2, 1013a 33), and the **good** as “that which all things aim” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. I, ch. 1, 1094a 3.).
- b. Every end is a good and every good is an end. An end would not be sought unless it were somehow good for the seeker. However, it is important that we distinguish between apparent and actual goods. Some things appear to be good but are not actually good for you.
- c. What is happiness? – **Happiness** is desire satisfied by the conscious possession of the good.
 - i. Contentment is not happiness. Happiness is not the same as joy or gladness. It is a lasting condition, not a passing feeling or emotion. Happiness is the basic motive in everything we do.
 - ii. Perfect happiness comes from the complete possession of the perfect good, from that which fully satisfies all our desires.

3. Why should we believe that man's last end is perfect happiness?
- a. St. Thomas Aquinas – “The will naturally tends toward its ultimate end; for every man naturally desires happiness. And all other volitions are caused from this natural volition, since whatever a man desires is wished on account of an end. Therefore, the love of the good, which man naturally desires as an end, is a natural love; but the love derived from this, of a good loved for the sake of the end [in other words, the love of a means to the end], is an elective [i.e. free] love” (ST I, q. 60, a. 2, c.)
 - b. Argument:
 - i. Man has a desire for perfect happiness.
 - ii. Man's desire for perfect happiness is a natural desire, one that springs from human nature itself. How do we know this? Among all man's desires this desire for perfect happiness is unique, inasmuch as it is:
 1. Universal, for it is found in all men without exception.
 2. Unavoidable, for its last throughout life and cannot be got rid of.
 3. Irresistible, for it insistently demands satisfaction.
 - iii. Such a natural desire must have been implanted in human nature by its Author, God.
 - iv. A desire implanted in human nature by God must be intended not for frustration but for fulfillment.
 1. Truthfulness, wisdom, and goodness are found in God.
 2. Lying, folly, and cruelty are not found in God.
 3. Therefore, once God has implanted in man a desire for perfect happiness, He must provide some attainable object by which this desire can be satisfied.
 - v. The fulfillment of this desire, or the attainment of perfect happiness, is man's last end.

III. Application

1. Keep practicing the Rule of Life
2. Meditate on the fact that every event of our life is part of God's plan for our lives. In the St. Joseph Society mission statement, we attempt “To Order All Things to Christ.” This is an expression of the teleological nature of the universe and our spiritual lives. This meditation should help you to stay motivated to grow in virtue and prayer.

Episode #10 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #1

I. Introduction

1. Opening Question: What will make us truly happy?
2. Last week, I argued that the subjective goal of man's life is to become perfectly happy. When I say that the subjective goal of man's life is to be happy, I don't mean the goal is different for every man; rather, I am simply pointing out that happiness is the goal of all men, and happiness resides in him subjectively.
3. Over the next three weeks, we are going to attempt to answer the question: What is the object in which man can find perfect happiness? Over the next two weeks, we'll look on non-Christian approaches to happiness before turning our attention to the state of supernatural happiness known as the Beatific Vision.

II. Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness – Hedonism and Utilitarianism

1. The Object of Man's Happiness – Three Options
 - a. Something Below Man (wealth, family, honor, fame, power, influence, etc.).
 - b. Man Himself (goods of the body and soul – hedonism, utilitarianism, stoicism, evolutionism)
 - c. Something Above Man (God)
2. Aristotle – “We always desire [happiness] for its own sake and never as a means to something else, whereas honor, pleasure, intelligence, and every virtue we desire partly for their own sakes, but partly also as means to happiness, because we suppose they prove instruments of happiness. Happiness, on the other hand, nobody desires for the sake of these things, nor indeed as a means to anything else at all . . . happiness [is] the most desirable of all things . . . Happiness is something final and self-sufficient and the end of all action” (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b13-1096a10).
3. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Hedonism
 - a. Pleasure is the end of life and the highest good. According to philosophers like Epicurus, virtue is useful as restraining us from excessive passion, which is rough motion and unpleasant.
 - b. A Critical Examination of Hedonism
 - i. The hedonist correctly identifies that pleasure is a necessary ingredient for happiness, but it should not be mistaken to be happiness itself.
 - ii. Pleasure is the accompaniment of normal exercise of the faculties which exist for the accomplishment of another purpose (ex. pleasure accompanies eating, but pleasure is not the goal of eating, sustenance is). Therefore, pleasure cannot be the goal of our lives.
 - iii. Furthermore, the pleasures of life are not attainable by all men at all times. If hedonism is true, then many people would live lives that had no possibility of attaining happiness or achieving meaning.

4. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Utilitarianism

- a. The extension of hedonism beyond mere selfish pleasure to the pleasure of the group. The moral goodness of an act is to be judged by its utility in promoting the common welfare of all as well as the personal advantage of each. The aim of human life is expressed in the Greatest Happiness Principle: “The greatest happiness for the greatest number.”
- b. What is interesting about utilitarianism is that it is the first to reduce the fundamental questions of morality to social policy. Many of our ethics classes today reduce ethical questions to social policy. For the individual then, the person has a choice on what policy to advocate for. To be moral is to advocate for an agenda or policy. Utilitarians judge laws by the consequences they produce. The utilitarian believes that all men want to be happy, insofar as they want to experience the greatest amount of pleasure and the least amount of pain. The utilitarian’s job is to find a way for the most amount of people to get what they want and then convince everyone else why they should back such legislation.
- c. A Critical Examination of Utilitarianism
 - i. Many utilitarians propose altruistic pleasure as the meaning of life, but even altruistic pleasure, though laudable, is unsatisfactory. Altruistic activities are worthy of praise, but philanthropy cannot be the end of man’s existence. If living for others is our last end, then what is the last end of those who are bettered, the betterment of others? What happens when everyone is better and there is no longer any meaning in life?
 - ii. Though not all utilitarians and hedonists were materialist or atheists, this view of life makes temporal welfare the end of human existence. This can only be true if there is no God and no afterlife.

III. Application

1. Keep practicing the Rule of Life
2. Though pleasure is a necessary ingredient to the good life because it would be absurd to hold the view that happiness is irrelevant to the good and happy life. However, we discovered above that pleasure cannot be equated with the good and happy life. This week, take some time to meditate on the proper role of pleasure in a Christian’s life.

Episode #11 – Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness #2

I. Introduction

1. Opening Question: What will make us truly happy? Part 2
2. Last week, we discussed two non-Christian approaches to happiness that centered on the idea that maximizing pleasure is the main point of life. Though pleasure, whether egotistical or altruistic, accompanies a happy life, it cannot be identified as the happy life because pleasure serves other purposes (ex. Eating is pleasurable, but serves nutrition) and if true people whose lives are devoid of pleasure would be living a meaningless life which is absurd.
3. This week, we are going to discuss the final two non-Christian approaches to happiness, namely, stoicism and evolutionism. As we will see, Stoics believe that happiness can be equated with virtue, while those who fall under the evolutionary approach will argue that self-progress or self-realization is the goal. Today, we will give a critical examination of both.

II. Non-Christian Approaches to Happiness – Stoicism & Evolutionism

1. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Stoicism
 - a. Stoicism is directly opposed to hedonism. Hedonism made pleasure the goal of the ethical life and used virtue as a means for acquiring pleasure. Stoics believed that virtue is not the means to happiness, but happiness itself.
 - b. According to the stoics, virtue is its own reward. For the stoics, the virtuous man stands firm though the world crashes about him. He has developed apathy, or a state of indifference to all things. He has complete control of his emotions for emotions are irrational and bad and all his actions are conducted according to reason for reason alone is good. This according to the stoics is virtue.
 - c. A Critical Examination of Stoicism
 - i. Virtue as its own reward cannot be true, for virtue is a means to the end of happiness not happiness itself.
 - ii. Further, moral virtues perfect the will, but man has an intellect and a body that needs to be perfected as well. Hence, stoicism is not sufficient to attain man's happiness.
2. Non-Christian Pursuits of Happiness: Evolutionism
 - a. The theory of evolution is but the expression in biological terms of the most influential concepts of the 19th Century, that of unlimited progress and of the perfectibility of man.
 - b. Broadly understand, proponents of an evolutionary model of ethics which inevitably understand man and society as progressing toward a life that is more self-realized and satisfactory.
 - c. Since evolution is a continuity of change, readjustment, and redirection, for the ethical life there is no fixed goal, rather the ethical life is an ever-progressing realization of one's own potential.

d. A Critical Examination of Evolutionism

- i. Evolutionism, personal or social self-realization, cannot be the end of man. Self-realization of the self only results in a fully developed man who cannot be satisfied with himself.
- ii. Furthermore, progress of the human race does no good to the individual now and leaves unanswered what the race is for.

3. The Object of Man's Happiness – Three Options

- a. Something Below Man (wealth, family, honor, fame, power, influence, etc.) – **No**, the things below man cannot make man perfectly happy. These things are means, not ends. They are for man, not man for them.
- b. Man Himself (goods of the body and soul – hedonism, utilitarianism, stoicism, evolutionism) – **No**, for the reasons given above, all of these are incapable of making man happy.
- c. Something Above Man (God) – **Yes**, Man is by nature a rational animal, and rationality shows itself in two main tendencies: the tendency of the intellect to know all truth, and the tendency of the will to possess all good. God alone is perfect Truth and Goodness. Therefore, without God man's intellect and will cannot be satisfied.

III. Application

1. Keep practicing the Rule of Life
2. As we have discovered the previous two weeks, non-Christian approaches to happiness fail to pass the test of critical examination. As we discovered last, equating pleasure with the good life is a non-starter while stoicism and evolutionism also fail. Though virtue is a means to the end of happiness, it is not an end in itself; hence, stoicism fails to account for the proper object of human happiness. Evolutionism also fails because it cannot account for the progress of the human race and is not good for the individual, and the progress in evolutionism is directionless.

Episode #12 – The Beatific Vision

I. Introduction

1. Opening Question: What is the supernatural view of happiness?
2. The last two weeks, we have discussed four non-Christian approaches to happiness, namely, hedonism, utilitarianism, stoicism, and evolutionism. In episode 9, we talked about a natural approach to happiness.
3. This week, we are going to discuss supernatural happiness which is the end or goal of every person's life. This tremendous truth is called the Beatific Vision.

II. The Beatific Vision

1. What is the meaning of life? What perfects or fulfills human beings? What is really good for them?
 - a. We are perfect and fulfilled when we are happy. In saying that human goodness lies in happiness, does not mean that human fulfillment comes from doing whatever we happen to feel like at any particular moment. Happiness is not a matter of “doing whatever turns you on.”
 - b. Happiness is something to be understood while bearing in mind that a human life has a goal. Christian thinkers (ex. Jesus, Augustine, Aquinas) have always held that this is nothing short than God himself.
2. Man's Capacity for God
 - a. CCC 1-3, 27-30 – The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself.
 - b. Jesus – “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.” (John 10:10)
 - c. St. Augustine – Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God and “In regard to what is supremely good . . . philosophers have taken many different stands – all striving with the highest earnestness to determine what it is that makes men happy. By definition, our supreme end is that good which is sought for its own sake, and on account of which all other goods are sought” (*Confessions*, 3).
 - d. St. Thomas Aquinas – “Since everything desires its own perfection, a man desires for his ultimate end, that which he desires as his perfect and crowning good . . . man's end is twofold . . . In the first sense, man's last end is the uncreated good, namely, God, Who alone by His infinite goodness can perfectly satisfy man's will. But in the second way, man's last end is something created, existing in him, and this is nothing else than the attainment or enjoyment of the last end. Now the last end is called happiness. If, therefore, we consider man's happiness in its cause or object, then it is something uncreated; but if we consider it as to the very essence of happiness, then it is something created” (ST I-II, q. 1, a. 5; I-II, q. 3., a. 1).
3. What is the beatific vision?
 - a. What is the meaning of life? – To see what fulfills people (what is good for them), one must consider what marks them out from other things in the world. Human beings are by definition

intelligent animals so our ultimate good and happiness must lie in our understanding. For Aquinas, then, human happiness, properly speaking, is the Beatific Vision, or the vision of God (Matt. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:12; Psalm 17:15).

- b. The immediate knowledge of God which the angelic spirits and the souls of the just enjoy in Heaven. It is called "vision" to distinguish it from the mediate knowledge of God which the human mind may attain in the present life. And since in beholding God face to face the created intelligence finds perfect happiness, the vision is termed "beatific".

4. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange on The Beatific Vision – *Life Everlasting*

- a. “The saints in heaven, seeing God face to face, love Him above all things, because they see with the most perfect evidence that God is better than all creatures combined. This love will never pass away. . . . love of God in heaven is nothing but the perfect act of charity, whereby the soul . . . without cessation loves God more than itself . . . and enters into a state of uninterrupted ecstasy” (231-232).
- b. In the fatherland, . . . We shall see infinite Goodness as He is in Himself. We cannot find in Him the least aspect which can displease, nothing to drive us away . . . Our eternal act of love will never suffer the least shadow of weariness. Infinite goodness . . . fills so perfectly our capacity of love that it attracts us irresistibly more than any ecstasy that can be had on earth.” (236).
- c. “Not only will the saints love God above all, but “Seeing one another in God, the saints love one another. The degree of this love is measured by nearness to God. Each rejoices at the degree of beatitude which others have received. Yet each loves with special affection those to whom he has been united on earth” (244-245).
- d. “This instant, when we enter heaven, when we receive the light of glory and begin to see God forever, must be prepared for. In this preparation three other instants of life have pre-eminent importance:
 - i. that of receiving justification by baptism,
 - ii. that of reconciliation with God if we have offended Him gravely,
 - iii. that of a happy death, that is, final perseverance.

III. Application: What should one do on this side of heaven? – Keep practicing the Rule of Life

- 1. Insofar as a person functions to the extent of their capacities, they are living the best life possible and in this sense are happy. In other words, human goodness lies in acting in harmony with what people are by nature insofar as reason can discern this. Our primary moral imperative, one might say, is to recognize what we are and to act accordingly.
- 2. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange – “Beatific love, we know, corresponds to the intensity of our merits. Not in heaven do we learn to love God, but here on earth. The degree of our life in eternity depends on the degree of our merits at the moment of death. There are many mansions in the Father’s house, corresponding to varied merits (Jn. 14:1). ‘Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.’” (240).