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## Augustine View On An Innate Desire

Augustine believes that God had intended for man to obey God and woman to obey both God and man. He also thought that God intended there to be a hierarchy between body and soul. The soul, being rational, moral and capable of understanding was to be the ruler of the body and govern the spiritual part of a human. Prior to his conversion, Augustine follows the Manicheans beliefs that physical matter is an evil force distracting the pure soul. However, post-conversion, he believes that both body and soul are created by God. Our mind is programmed to direct our body's actions, but our sexual organs hold a strong weight in how we act. While marital sex is an exception, sex is always linked to a higher desire of pride and power. The mind is superior to the body, however; the body is easily corruptible, particularly with lust. Augustine believes that our sexual organs, therefore our disobedience, can be attributed to Adam and Eve's passionate acts as after the fall, sexual desire is no longer under the control of human reason. Augustine indicates that as the bodily part of a human submits to the passions and desires, the intellect is then clouded. Augustine believes that all humans, both male and female, act consciously through their given mind and body, with the exception of our genitals; he argues that the nature of original sin is rooted through desire.

Augustine did not think sex was inherently sinful, recognizing that God creates Adam as a male and Eve as a female and therefore he intended for our different sexual organs to serve a divine purpose. Therefore, it is only the lust and desire that makes sex sinful. Augustine takes an interesting approach to Adam and Eve's sin in the garden, believing the fault lie in sex. The "forbidden fruit" was truly the idea of sex, something that humanity should stray from, but Adam and Eve did not. The image of Eve conceiving and boring children in pain is because sex is sinful and this desired lust brings pain. (Genesis 3:16) Adam and Eve's original sin infected all humans with this same longing for pride and lust. Thus, sexual desire is an innate human feature, marking the beginning of human disobedience. In our fallen state, our sexual desires, and thus our bodies, are never fully under our control. Augustine attributes sexuality to an interior state where the carnal will (*cupiditas*) rules over the spiritual will (*caritas*). He writes "The truth is that disordered lust springs from a perverted will; when lust is pandered to, a habit is formed; when habit is not checked, it hardens into compulsion. And so the two wills fought it out- the old and the new, the one carnal, the other spiritual- and in their struggle tore my soul apart." (144) Augustine's carnal will influences sinful actions, while the spiritual will is a self-less love with the notion of being united with God.

Sin is like a cycle of addiction; the pleasure brings upon lust, and the lust leads to pride and the cycle continues with very little guilt, if any at all. The idea that humanity does not feel guilt by lust is our own fault. We are all innately untrustworthy, as the original sin affects all of us because of Adam and Eve. "I thus came to understand from my own experience what I had read, how the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit strives against the flesh... I was enduring them against my will rather than acting freely. All the same, the force of habit that fought against me had grown fiercer by my own doing." (144) Here, Augustine recognizes these cycles as purely our own actions- not those of God. Augustine views conception as an immense moment of pleasure inferring that Adam and Eve would similarly find pleasure in sex. There was no biological change post-Fall, therefore the difference between Pre and Post Fall is solely how we react to pleasure. Therefore, sex is not a sin of pleasure but rather the desire for sinful things,

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that are always present in us, such as pride,

Throughout Augustine's childhood, he falls into temptation, discerning the root of his sin as disordered desire. This love and desire is not an attempt of rebellion, but rather the perverted desire to imitate God. It is a desire to be in control of one's body and mind. St. Augustine demonstrates that lust and pride are the ultimate forms of sin. He battles sexual lust and worldly ambition at the center of his persona. Augustine confesses "I had been extremely miserable in adolescence, miserable from its very onset, and as I prayed to you for the gift of chastity I had even pleased, "Give me chastity and self-control, but please not yet." I was afraid you might hear me immediately and heal me forthwith of the morbid lust which I was more anxious to satisfy than to snuff out." (149) While Augustine's sexual impulses were a great source of anxiety to him, he still battles greatly in order to remove them from his life. The only way for him to overcome these desires is through the power of God; his conversion serves as a sense of ripping his habits away from him. Augustine begins the journey away from carnal indulgence and worldly ambitions to his conversion in being a Catholic, like his mother Monica.

Lust, in itself, is a disordered desire that humanity struggles to control. Pride disorders our desires, as Augustine claims "From the mud of my fleshly desires and my erupting puberty body belched out murky clouds that obscured and darkened my heart until I could not distinguish the calm light of love from the fog of lust." (33) This lust causes humanity to lose sight of what is truly important; this happiness can only be found through loving God. After the Fall in Eden, we are geared towards seeking this love in others, opposed to just God, for our own pleasure. With this mindset, our will is weakened as we fall into lustful passions, experience, and pleasure- bringing us to sin. While receiving pleasure is often the soul's justification for the sin, the sin of sex is really just the pride. However, humans tend to believe that the pleasure is an immanent virtue. These pleasures extend beyond just sex, including eating, drinking, power, and more. However, these desires can all be limited and controlled. In comparison, during the act of sex, humans strive for an ultimate end goal: an orgasm. This orgasm is not a matter of having control, as biologically, it is something to be achieved and will happen without one wanting it to.

Throughout Confessions, Augustine attributes his sexual impulses to images of disorder, pain, and discomfort. Holding such a negative perspective on the entailments of lust influence his definition of original sin. Augustine slowly began to see, after his conversion, the beauty of chastity alongside Christ. Augustine uses the creation story of Adam and Eve to amplify that the desire for pride and lust, through sex, is an inherent feature in us all. The action itself is not sinful, but rather the desire to gain something greater- something we can achieve through God himself.