

# Looking for God and Finding Truth

## The Way of Memory in Book X of *The Confessions* of St. Augustine

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In Book X of *The Confessions*,<sup>1</sup> Saint Augustine turns from a recollection of his past life to ask what he knows of his present existence, what he knows of God, and how he knows both himself and God. Identifying memory as the seat of mind or self, and holding interior inquiry superior to exterior or material appeal, Augustine looks within for answers. If he is to know God then he must first know himself, a project that can only proceed in conversation with memory. This project does proceed, and produces a penetrating phenomenology of memory in the process. My concern in this paper, however, is with a move Augustine makes once his account of memory is largely complete. That move takes him from a conception of the happy life present in memory, to a consideration of joy, then to true joy, and finally to truth, identified by Augustine with God. My aim is to relate and clarify these transitions, and to suggest the surprising, coming from Augustine, support they offer to a conception of truth independent of specific religious commitments.

In his account in 10.17 of the workings of memory, which are at once the workings of the mind or self, Augustine traces a path from natural to transcendent objects of memory. God is the transcendence he most seeks to know, and Augustine sets himself to fathom the “profound and infinite multiplicity” that is memory, that is “I myself.” The path he follows first produces a phenomenology of the content and functioning of memory, full of “plains, caverns, and abysses...innumerable and...innumerably full

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<sup>1</sup> Rex Warner, trans., *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (New York: New American Library, 1963). References in paper are parenthetical by book and chapter; for example, Book X, Chapter 1, is cited as (10.1).

of innumerable kinds of things.” Cataloguing these innumerable, Augustine progresses from consideration of (1) memories present as images of sensory objects to (2) memories of matters learned but present in themselves, such as principles and arts, to (3) memories present as forms of consciousness or affections of mind, including memory itself. The next or fourth step in this logic of memory presents a paradox, for Augustine must “pass beyond memory” if he is to draw nearer to God. Memory alone is insufficient to the task, for birds and beasts alike share in memory. Augustine is explicit about the paradox, stating it much as Plato did in addressing the paradox of learning in the dialogue *Meno*: “If I find you beyond my memory, I can have no memory of you. And how shall I find you if I have no memory of you?” (10.17)

### The Happy Life

After delineating these initial steps of his inquiry into memory, Augustine shifts focus to the grounding purpose of his effort, which is to know God, a task that must follow the path of paradox, taking mind beyond memory. He enters on this path by identifying God with the happy life, “for when I seek you, my God, I am seeking the happy life.” (10.20) He then asks how it is that we know, if we know, the happy life. Do we seek for it “by remembrance” of something nearly but not completely forgotten, or “through desire to learn something unknown” or completely forgotten, at least to consciousness? First there is the fact, says Augustine, that “literally every single man without exception” desires the happy life. “But where did they get the knowledge of it, that they should desire it so? Where did they see it, that they should love it so?” (10.20) Augustine answers himself by distinguishing three levels of happiness. Some persons are actually happy, and possess happiness in some fulsome degree. In others, happiness is partial and exists primarily in the hope for happiness. Finally, some are “neither happy in fact nor in hope,” yet even these last must possess the happy life in some sense; “otherwise they would not (as they certainly do) have such a wish to be happy.” (10.20)

Augustine next asks whether this form of knowledge, by which each and every person, regardless of life situation, is empowered to wish for the happy life, is in the memory. If yes, if a vision of the happy life is present in or to memory, “then we must have experienced happiness at some time previously. ... For we could not love it, if we did not know it.” (10.20) Much as Plato

made a case for the necessary reality of transcendent forms based on the obvious fact that we make judgments of beauty, virtue, mathematical properties, and so on, Augustine argues for the necessary reality of happiness itself, for without it there would not exist what clearly does exist, the abundant and universal desire for and talk of happy lives and happy times.

Happiness, Augustine observes, carries many names, which are written and sounded variously by the various languages. And while the Greek term excites pleasure only in Greek speakers, and the Latin term only in Latin speakers, “all of us would agree that we desire the thing signified by the name; for it is not simply the sound of the word that pleases us.” (10.20) Clearly, it is happiness itself that everyone “longs to attain,” whatever the language or culture in question. Augustine is emphatic that “could all be asked with one voice: ‘Do you wish to be happy?’ they would without any doubt reply, ‘We do.’” (10.20) Augustine is equally emphatic about what follows from this hypothesized exchange: The answer given, that all wish to be happy, “would not be so unless the thing itself, signified by the word, was contained in their memory.” (10.20) Thus, via a consideration of everyday conceptions of happiness, Augustine establishes happiness itself as necessarily resident in mind or memory. Happiness, so residing, enables and impels desires for itself, a phenomenon reminiscent of “the good” of Plato and the “unmoved mover” of Aristotle. For both, this “highest entity” is at once source and goal of life. Augustine’s “happiness” differs of course, for its truth lies ultimately in the Christian God, which absorbs and supersedes these earlier conceptions.

Having, like Aristotle, identified happiness as that which all seek, Augustine in 10.21 inquires into the character of this happiness and into the way in which we know it. We do not know it as we know Carthage in memory, having its image in mind after having viewed Carthage in person, “for the happy life, not being a body, is not visible to our eyes.” Nor do we remember happiness as we remember numbers, which, though invisible to the senses, offer contentment in merely knowing them. “But we who have a knowledge of the happy life and therefore love it, do want to go further so that we may reach it and become happy.” (10.21) Augustine next asks whether eloquence, a mode of conduct, might offer insight into our relationship to happiness. We do know of it and desire to be like it, to reach it ourselves. Yet the analogy falls short, for eloquence or any virtuous disposition is known by being

observed in the behavior of others, and “there is no bodily sense which enables us to experience the happy life in others.”

These analyses culminate in the question whether we remember happiness as we remember joy. This is possible, says Augustine, “for I remember my joy even when I am sad, just as I remember the happy life even when I am unhappy.” Moreover, “never by any bodily sense did I see my joy,” but rather “experienced it in my mind at the time I was joyful, and the knowledge of it stuck in my memory so that I can call it back to mind,” whether with contempt or longing, as the joy was base or worthy. (10.21)

After positing the memory of joy to be close in character to the memory of happiness, Augustine poses two further questions. First, and in passing, the familiar question of origin: “Where, then, was it, and when was it that I experienced my happy life, so that I should remember it and love it and long for it?” (10.21) Yet before pursuing that question (in 10.24-25), Augustine addresses the extent of the overlap or identity of joy and happiness, a question implicit in his earlier observation that some joys are unworthy. We are given the example of two men answering differently to the question whether they want to join the army, one yes and one no; but answering identically, yes and yes, to the question whether they desire to be happy. Thus, both wanted to be happy, but one saw happiness in joining and the other in not joining the army. Augustine then observes that perhaps different things make different people joyful. He adds that most people likely “think that joy itself is the same as the happy life.” This, however, cannot be, for everyone on reflection will admit that not all joys conduce to happiness. The happy life is indeed joyful, but it is a state of true joy and not one of passing or misdirected joys or pleasures. Still, and notably, there is value in even mistaken conceptions of true joy, for such erring beliefs nevertheless demonstrate wills that are “still involved in some image of [true] joy.” (10.22) These involvements in varied images of joy indicate a kinship with true joy, thereby preserving the possibility of subsequent remembering and discovery of the real joy that Augustine characterizes as joy in truth.

### **Truth, God, Reason**

The identification of God with truth is Augustine’s final step in uncovering God in and through memory. Significantly, with this move, witting or not, Augustine secures an objectivity for his account of memory. This is so because the concept of truth here

carries no necessary or specific religious or theological commitments. One may, then, view Augustine's project in spartan or a-religious fashion as an examination of memory in search of truth, placing in abeyance its express aim and motivation, to know the Christian God. Even so, and express aim aside, it remains important to attend closely to Augustine's identification of truth and God, and to the implications of this identification for explaining why some resist belief in God.

Having observed that everyone's will is involved in some image of joy, and having recognized a kinship among competing conceptions of joy, Augustine exhibits an optimism that belief in true joy can prevail. He arrives at this optimism by considering two responses to the phenomenon of belief in false images of joy. Either people do not want true happiness, or they want the happy life but are too confused or weak to pursue it. Discounting the first option is easy. "For if I ask anyone: 'Would you rather have your joy in truth or in falsehood?' he would say, 'In truth,' with just as little hesitation as he would say that he wants to be happy." (10.23) The task, then, is to reconcile the universal wish for true happiness with the widespread failure to act on that wish and actively pursue the happy life. Obviously, joy is variously and commonly experienced in everyday life. As Aristotle memorably observed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, there are many goods, and the challenge is to identify and secure a complete and self-sufficient good, one sought for itself alone and for which the many goods are valued primarily as means to the highest good, happiness. This is not, however, an easy task, for these intermediate ends carry attractions independent of their proper role as stepping stones to true happiness. Truing an aim requires intelligence, a truth readily evident in pleasures commonly overindulged, from desires for wealth, power, or recognition to physical desires for food, sex, or comfort. Other pleasures align more readily with reason, exhibiting value in themselves as well as value in realizing true happiness; for example: kindness, community, art, and learning.

Demonstrations of joy in truth, however, excepting the pleasure taken by some in learning, are not so evident in everyday experience; indeed, for most, truth and joy appear to only weakly correlate. This was as surely the case in Augustine's time as in our own, so his assertion that people express love of truth as readily as they express love of the happy life calls for explanation, which Augustine offers via an imagined response to an imagined question: "Would you rather have your joy in truth or in falsehood?" to which anyone

would reply “In truth,’ with just as little hesitation as he would say he wants to be happy.” (10.23) Again, Aristotle’s reasoning on the good life offers a template for understanding Augustine’s identification of the happy life with truth and truth with God. Both ask what everyone most desires and both answer happiness, but Augustine further asks about desire for truth, concluding that everyone equally loves truth (see above). Putting aside the asserted identity of truth and happiness, the challenge is to show the desire for truth to be as universally desired as happiness. How can one affirm joy in truth over joy in falsehood and yet show obvious disregard for truth in the everyday affairs of life? Augustine clearly recognizes this dissonance and undertakes to dissolve it. Moreover, his argument for its dissolution rests implicitly upon a complex idea of truth in which the intuition or perception of the ultimate truth (for Augustine, God) either presupposes or requires as companion a theory of truth explicable in now-familiar coherence or correspondence conceptions of truth.

Truth, for Augustine, is not mere belief, for there are myriad beliefs, many of which are demonstrably false. Truth, however, is not various in this way, whether in its everyday manifestation in coherent expression or correct reference, or in its character as transcendent being—God, Reality, the Good. Perhaps the clearest model of truth for Augustine is that suggested by Plato, who while maintaining and arguing for the transcendent character of true reality, gives us Socrates as the epitome of reasoned examination of everyday matters. Socrates’ stock in trade is dialectical conversation that examines beliefs for their coherence and consistency, and for their correspondence to plain facts of everyday experience. The *Euthyphro* is a particularly illuminating example, at once demonstrating the midwifery of reason in the search for truth and addressing a question of significance to Augustine and his conception of truth. The dialogue casts light on the problematic character of the common (unexamined) belief that whatever the gods command must be true, a dilemma for Augustine to be examined closely below.

Particulars aside for the moment, Augustine’s respect for Socratic critique is big-picture evident in the very scheme of self-examination that is *The Confessions*. More importantly for present purposes, this respect is evident in his engagement in the weeds of confusion that abound in daily life. For although people love truth, they err in what they take truth to be, for “this human mind of ours, so blind and sick, so foul and ill-favored, wants to be hidden itself, but hates to have anything hidden from it.” (10.23) Yet

despite the power of immediate or unexamined desires to distract us from truth, our minds retain the capacity for knowledge, and in reason the basis for its attainment. As Augustine compactly puts it, people “would not be able to love it [truth], unless there were some knowledge of it in their memory.” (10.23) What is needed, then, is a project to uncover and extend this incipient knowledge, a project to dispel distraction and referee confusion. What is needed is reason in service to truth, reasoning operating both as touchstone for judgment in practical affairs and as endpoint of the desire for happiness that is union in God. Thus, while Augustine is clear that truth as God is the happiness we seek, he is equally clear on the authority of reason in earthly deliberations and judgments, on matters secular as well as laic.

Augustine did not simply maintain that truth, happiness, and God are one, he worked to establish that unity through logical argumentation that engaged the facts, beliefs, and debates of the day, as Plato had earlier done for the unity of truth and the Good. The point, in brief, is that Augustine’s operative conception of truth was not that of divine command but was rooted in respect for the exercise and application of human reason. This is evident in his effort to demonstrate the presence, if but a glimmer, of a love for truth (ultimately God) in the many who appeared content with unexamined beliefs or misguided or narrow conceptions of happiness. Yet how is the popularly attested (perhaps presumed) joy in truth to be squared with an apparent unconcern with truth in everyday matters? For Augustine, this gulf between loving and pursuing truth is a result of the vagueness or obscurity of our memories of truth. People do not find their joy in truth “because they are more strongly taken up by other things which have more power to make them unhappy than that, which they so dimly remember, has to make them happy.” (10.23) Truth is thus hidden and must be actively sought if it is to be uncovered and its brightness and influence restored. This seeking is not easy; in Augustine’s (earlier) words, it is “hard labor inside myself,” an observation well-modeled in the work of *The Confessions*. So, we remember truth sufficiently to love and desire it, but insufficiently to constitute it as our active guide and goal, whether in relation to the supreme truth that is God or in relation to truth in matters ethical, scientific, or interpretive. Three facts thus intertwine to preserve the gap between loving truth and acting on that love. First, our dim perception of any transcendent being, whether Augustine’s God, Plato’s Forms, or anyone’s conception of

ultimate reality. Second, the hard work needed to make our perception of truth clearer, an effort requiring sustained Socratic inquiry into the coherence of our beliefs one with another, and into the correspondence of our beliefs to observable reality. Third, the bright attractions of immediate pleasures, requiring the cultivation of what John Stuart Mill famously characterized as “the higher pleasures” uniquely available to rational beings.

How, then does Augustine proceed? As noted above, when he speaks of truth, he clearly has God in mind, for he identifies truth with God. Yet what he implicitly argues for is the reality and necessity of truth. Compactly and simply put, Augustine can be viewed as reasoning that if truth is real, and God is truth, then God is real. The “is” here asserts identity and not mere predication. God is thus *the* real, reality itself, counterpart to Plato’s form of the Good, at once constituting the origin and the truth of what exists. An objective foundation or starting point is thus claimed for truth, in principle free of the cloudiness attending its everyday applications. For Augustine, the reality of truth is evident even amidst, perhaps necessarily amidst, its myriad and variable attestations: “Since joy in truth is what all desire,” knowledge of truth must already be in memory; otherwise there would be no basis for desiring it and therefore no desires for it. But, of course, everyone does love truth or, more precisely, the idea of truth. As Augustine observes, “I have met many people who wanted to deceive, but no one who wanted to be deceived.” (10.23) Thus, a commitment to truth as objective reality is widely affirmed, notwithstanding that by truth’s side stand commitments to individual and varying truths or beliefs, truths often partial or incomplete, and beliefs often mistaken or unfounded. This should not surprise, for, as noted above, the way to truth is fraught with the challenges of clear perception, hard work, and moderation of appetite.

Still, the question remains why or how this variance or gap can be so great as to “give birth to hatred.” Augustine provides the answer:

It is because truth is loved in such a way that those who love something else would like to believe that what they love is the truth, and because they would not like to be deceived, they object to being shown that they are in fact deceived. (10.23)



In short, people reject or hate truth when it challenges existing beliefs or practices. Of course, people do not say or think “we hate truth”; rather, they reject the challenging belief as itself untrue. In practice, then, we welcome evidence that reinforces present beliefs, but shun or attack contrary or contradicting evidence. Clearly, people “love the light of truth, but hate it when it shows them up as wrong.” (10.23) What then is the remedy for this uncomfortable situation? Certainly not the psychological dodge and easy comfort of holding fast to a security blanket that equates any given belief with truth. This is so even where the security blanket invoked as authority is divine command. Yes, Augustine’s theory of truth may be grounded in divine command, because God is truth, but the vehicle of God’s expression as worldly truths is human reason. Reason is the path to such truths, truths of the world, truths that matter in the world. Plato saw this, even while taking these truths to be stepping stones to the ultimate truth, the form of the Good. Augustine saw this as well, for he clearly recognized the necessity of reason as interpretive arbiter in a world of myriad and swirling opinion. Even God’s will requires the mediation of reason for its recognition and expression in human life. This mediation operates via principles of coherence and correspondence, terms later taken to represent discrete and competing theories of truth. In short, what one takes as true *matters*, from the belief that God exists and is truth, largely a matter of faith, to myriad everyday beliefs marked or not marked by internal coherence and consistency or by correspondence or non-correspondence to observed, experienced reality.

Augustine’s critique of truth thus constitutes a considerable, if implicit, argument for openness and objectivity toward beliefs, a valuing of beliefs in proportion as evidence reasonably considered recommends. His steadfast advocacy that God is truth, and that Christianity expresses and serves that truth, does not lessen the force of his underlying case for holding beliefs to a standard of rational consideration. Moreover, alert to the uncertainty and imperfection of human knowledge, Augustine welcomes multiple interpretations as meaningful contributions to the search for knowledge and understanding. As science welcomes competing interpretations of observable phenomena in pursuit of the fittest, most complete account of the natural world, so Augustine welcomes diversity of exegetical opinion in pursuit of the fullest account of the truth of scripture, a stepping stone to the encompassing truth that is God. In refereeing a debate over what Moses meant in his statements on creation, Augustine addresses

the disputants, asking “Why not as you both think, if what each of you thinks is true?” He extends this to “a third or a fourth truth, or indeed any other truth at all.” (12.31) Practically considered, this implies receptiveness to competing opinions and rejection of singular claims to authority for any given opinion, a position surprisingly reminiscent of Hegel’s famous assertion, “the true is the whole.” In Augustine’s words,

I should prefer to write in such a way that my words could convey any truth that anyone could grasp on such matters, rather than to set down one true meaning so clearly as to exclude all other meanings which, not being false, could not offend me. (12.31)

As the qualification “not being false” indicates, not every opinion contributes to the truth of the whole. Implicitly, this recognizes the need for an objective consideration of claims absent which judgments of truth or falsity are meaningless. Reason is the referee and its tools are the principles of internal coherence (of a set of beliefs) and correspondence of beliefs or claims to evident facts of the matter, whether words in a text or observable states of affairs.

Augustine is of course not always so solicitous of differing opinions, at times expressing apparent intolerance toward those who do not believe as he does, warning of retribution to come for “those who do not want to stand in the light of truth.” (10.23) Yet his further characterization of the slippery elusiveness of truth softens such hard sentiments and, charitably interpreted, welcomes the aid of openness and tolerance in the search for truth. Even Augustine’s disparaging assessment of “this human mind of ours” as “so blind and sick, so foul and ill-favored,” as wanting “to be hidden itself” but hating “to have anything hidden from it” (10.23), does not reduce the value of his insights into truth and mind. Indeed, less tendentiously expressed, the assertions amount to a claim that mind is loath to know itself but eager to know all else, a proposition classically illustrated in the life and teachings of Socrates. Moreover, in a tone reminiscent of Socrates’ life of service to the Delphic Oracle’s admonition to “know thyself,” Augustine asserts that despite the mind’s desire to remain hidden, in the end “it cannot hide from truth, but truth can be out of sight.” (10.23) Hard work on oneself, on memory, which is the self, is necessary if mind is to overcome its urge to hide and is to endeavor to bring truth to light.

### The Test of Abraham

Truths of the world may also be “hidden,” in plain view yet rendered invisible by beliefs or preconceptions loathe to be disrupted by the empirically or logically evident, by facts of the matter or cogent argument. Take, for example, the Biblical story in which Abraham believes he is commanded by God to sacrifice his son Isaac, and undertakes to do so. How might Augustine respond, given the account of truth framed above—approvingly or skeptically? It was Kierkegaard, in *Fear and Trembling*, who later gave this dilemma its classic expression and offered a way out, though at a cost. Kierkegaard unflinchingly characterizes Abraham’s behavior as ethically indefensible, yet nevertheless admires him as a “knight of faith,” in the process courting a tacit approval of murder. Is such acquiescence open to Augustine, or does his inclusive conception of truth stand against the bifurcation (of faith and truth) on which the approval stands? Taken together, the content of Augustine’s account of truth and the fact of truth’s repeated invocation in the search for God in the *Confessions* make a case for the necessity of respect for truth of the conventional sort in uncovering the deeper truth that is God. Unlike Kierkegaard, Augustine would not have admired Abraham, would not have admired so unexamined a rush to action. Surely a belief so at odds with the most basic conception of goodness demands a reflective pause in which to ask of its authenticity: How do I know the voice was indeed God’s? Might I have misunderstood its message? Would the God I know play such a game with me: your son or my trust, you must choose. Augustine, himself a clear defender of faith over reason, would nevertheless recommend reflective pause. Although faith is for him the highest form of belief and requisite to belief in God, Augustine’s inclusive conception of truth demonstrates a respect for reason, for it is reason that, in *The Confessions*, blazes his path to God through the underbrush of memory and the winding ways of truth manifesting in the world. Moreover, Augustine is too influenced by Plato to accept a simple command theory of morality, certainly one that validates a command as authentic merely in virtue of its being claimed to issue from God. For both Plato and Augustine a leap of faith or intellectual intuition underlies or enables belief in ultimate being, in God or the Good, yet what this belief implies *in situ* must answer to reasoned examination. Augustine would thus not have granted a Kierkegaardian pass to Abraham, and would more likely

have counseled a reflective pause to consider the implausibility of a benevolent God issuing a command so radically contrary to universally recognized moral principle. Consider the many contemporary Abrahams, as sincere in their beliefs as was Abraham the first. Surely, to counsel admiration today is nigh unfathomable, for today we encounter on a global scale the killing of innocents in professed obedience to God's will, actions overwhelmingly condemned as terrorism. The story of Abraham is no longer the quaint illustration of faith tested under fire, very likely only ever viewed favorably because God changed his mind and Isaac was spared.

The Abraham story exemplifies Augustine's observation that truth hides and "will not reveal her light," for if ever a supposed truth were suspect and in need of reflective consideration, it is one that has you killing your son or daughter. Moreover, Augustine knows and demonstrates that truth is hard won and not marked merely by strength of belief, especially unexamined belief on consequential matters. Although for Augustine the ultimate object of the pursuit of truth is God, and because for him God and truth are one, the search is equally for truth; indeed, it is in finding truth that Augustine finds God. This valuation of truth on par with God exemplifies respect for determinations of truth in everyday affairs, for truths discovered "along the way" to the truth that is God. This in turn demands the exercise of reason in service to ideals of objectivity in consideration of evidence, coherence among beliefs, and correspondence of beliefs or claims to facts of the matter. Indeed, the fact that Augustine makes truth central to his quest for God testifies to a conception of truth that is not limited to a final intellectual intuition of ultimate truth, being, God. Thus, Augustine's observations on truth and the mind's relation to truth are as relevant and useful for non-theologically motivated inquiry as for inquiry focused on God as the source and being of truth proper. Augustine's primary aim was to know God, and his chief ally in the search was reason, but along the way he deployed reason, in alliance with more accessible conceptions of truth, to address and referee myriad worldly questions and disputes. Although these sidesteps were broadly in service to his goal to know God, they simultaneously modeled the exercise of reasoned inquiry in pursuit of truths of the world. This modeling implicitly recommends an objective approach to the conflicting beliefs or claims that populate everyday life, an approach that values evidence and logical argument over appeals to authority or mere feelings of

certainty. Augustine, in effect and notwithstanding his guiding interest and motivation, demonstrated the fruitfulness of reason operating independently and wary of preconceptions, to illuminate ungrounded belief and determine the truth in contested matters, be they scriptural, ethical, or practical. This “along the way” essentially secular operation of reason and truth turns out to be the fruitful path even for the God-motivated, for it encourages a less doctrinally colored investigation into truth that yet in the end offers opportunity for the return of truth to transcendent being and its Augustinian namesake, God.

### **Truth Along-the-Way and Truth Transcendent**

As Augustine approaches the end of his search for truth in the *Confessions*, and even as he affirms the “wretched” state of “this human mind of ours” so intent on hiding from truth, he concludes optimistically that we can find truth, that we can know God, for this human mind of ours also “prefers to find joy in truth rather than in falsehoods.” (10.23) That Augustine collapses truth into God does not lessen its significance “along the way,” both as stalking horse for God and as necessary ally to reason in determining worldly truths and negotiating the labyrinth of memory that is mind. Stating explicitly for the first time (in 10.24) that he has found God in memory, Augustine affirms the success of his long inquiry into memory, his searching interior dialogue with himself, asserting that “when I found truth, then I found my God, truth itself.” Almost celebratory over establishing the presence of God (as truth) within memory, Augustine yet asks, “Where is it, Lord, in my memory that you stay?” (10.25) Augustine answers himself, and in a way that unwittingly testifies for the reality of truth independent of given or received beliefs, including foundational religious beliefs. He first recounts earlier steps of his search, in which he looked for but did not find God in images of material things, in affections of mind present in memory (emotional and other mental states), or in mind itself, which is memory (because the mind remembers itself). Certain that God dwells in memory, but equally certain that God is in no discrete place in memory (not in images, affections, or mind), Augustine reconceives the question of God’s location, the home of truth. “Where then did I find you, so that I could learn of you?” (10.26) And learning of you, hold and find you, truth, in memory as I do?

After replying “I could only have found you in yourself, above me,” Augustine turns to the language of truth for aid and

explanation: "Place there is none. ... Truth, you are everywhere in session, ready to listen to all who ask counsel" and ready to "answer all diversity of questions." (10.26) Thus does Augustine's search for God in the *Confessions* culminate, not only identifying God as truth but highlighting the truth correlate of the identity relation. Moreover, "listening to all" and "answering all diversity of questions" are hallmark attributes of the operation of human reason, whether in searching memory for truth writ large (God) or in deliberating and determining truth in the varied affairs of everyday life, be they practical, ethical, scriptural, whatever. So does Augustine answer the question of where God is to be found, namely, wherever truth is to be found, in a way that at once illuminates truth and advances the case for God's reality. Believers in the transcendence and reality of truth are thereby pressed to consider belief in God as well. At this point Augustine's inquiry into memory ends. Going forward, concerned that truth's clear answers are so little heard, Augustine proceeds to detail the worldly involvements, temptations, and human weaknesses that make the search for God, or truth, so difficult.

In Book X of *The Confessions*, Augustine interrogates memory in search of God. He proceeds by a series of steps, first establishing a phenomenology of the functioning of memory, then showing how memory, in connecting happiness and truth, leads him to God. In winding his way through memory's labyrinth, intent on finding and knowing God, Augustine produces a surprising and persuasive case for the independent reality of truth. Readers are offered a remarkable account of movement in memory from the happy life to joy, to true joy, to joy in truth, to, simply, truth. Whether one follows Augustine a further step and identifies truth with God, the implicit presence of this belief throughout Augustine's inner dialogue with memory unquestionably operates to deepen our understanding of human memory, transcendent being, and truth.