

Taylor University

Pillars at Taylor University

Presentations

Undergraduate Research

4-26-2019

Love and Friendship in Ambrose, Augustine, and Aelred

Trayvon Estey
Taylor University

Hank Voss
Taylor University, hank_voss@taylor.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://pillars.taylor.edu/sr-undergradlecturevideos>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Missions and World Christianity Commons](#), and the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Estey, Trayvon and Voss, Hank, "Love and Friendship in Ambrose, Augustine, and Aelred" (2019). *Presentations*. 9.
<https://pillars.taylor.edu/sr-undergradlecturevideos/9>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Research at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Presentations by an authorized administrator of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact pillars@taylor.edu.

Augustine On Friendship

Trayvon Estey

Taylor University

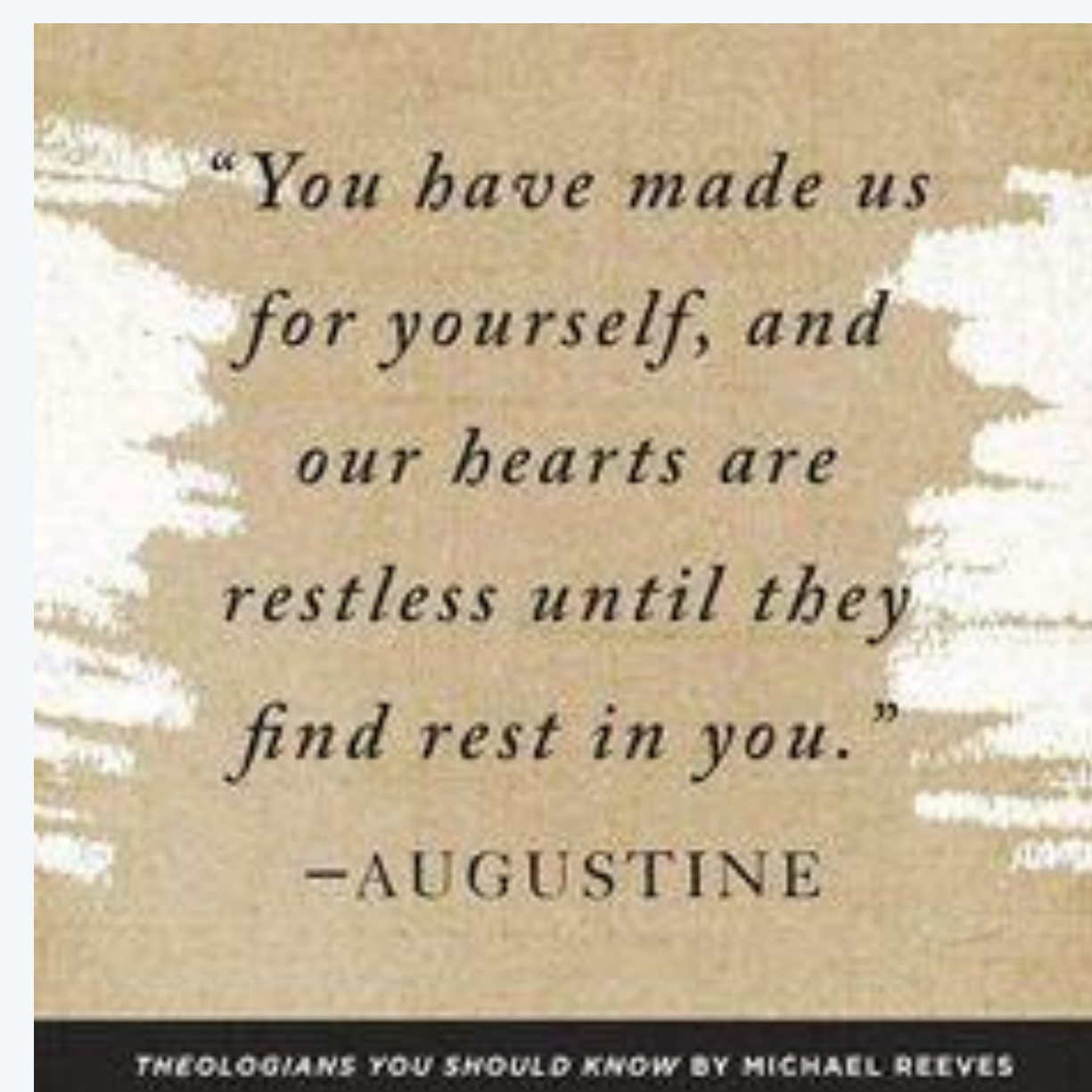
INTRODUCTION

In the days of antiquity, ancient philosophers, such as Plato and Socrates, used the following Greek terms to describe the different types of love: *Agape*, *Eros*, and *Philia*. *Eros* is understood to have originally meant love in the sense of a kind of passionate desire for an object, typically sexual passion, or the love of desire. *Philia* originally meant a kind of affectionate regard or friendly feeling towards not just one's friends but also possibly towards family members, business partners, and one's country at large. And *Agape*, which has its origins primarily in Christianity, is God's love for all humanity, spontaneous and unmotivated, as Helm Bennet states in his article titled *Love in The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2013 Edition)*.

Nearly 725 years later during the period of the church fathers and mothers, also known as the Patristic Period (AD 100-451), Christian theologians and philosophers were still concerned with the multifaceted idea of love, as well as cohesion between Judaism and Christianity, the establishment of the NT Canon, the role of tradition, and natures of Christ. Although the biblical material is not voluminous, a distinct vision of friendship emerged from their contemplation of the past and their thoughts about Christian doctrine. For the purpose of this study, I will focus on the relationship between love and friendship as presented in Augustine's *Confessions*.

Purpose and Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to understand the role of love and friendship as Augustine presented it in hopes that it will provide a greater understanding of how it can or can not be applied to ministry.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Origin of Augustine (354 AD - 430 AD)

Saint Augustine of Hippo was a Roman African, early Christian theologian and philosopher from a small north-African town formerly known as Tagaste (present-day Algeria, Souk Ahras). His writings are known for influencing the development of Western philosophy and theology.

Pre-Christian views of Friendship

In his youth, Augustine adopted a Ceronian view of friendship, which defined friendship as "an agreement in things human and divine, with goodwill and charity (See citation 5)." In other words, friends are those who share the same view (mostly) on everything and have the same intentions, with goodwill and charity. Examples of this can be seen in book two when he recounts how he and his friends stole pears from a farm; and in book four when his anonymous friend dies. In this friendship, Augustine was confronted with all of the mystery of human love for the first time.

Influence of Ambrose

In book five, Augustine describes his initial interest in Ambrose after arriving in Milan to teach. He discovered that his original intention for listening to Ambrose shifted from listening to acquire greater skill in rhetoric to listening to what Ambrose was saying about Christianity. Ambrose is significant in the life of Augustine because he played an integral role in Augustine's conversion.

Conversion

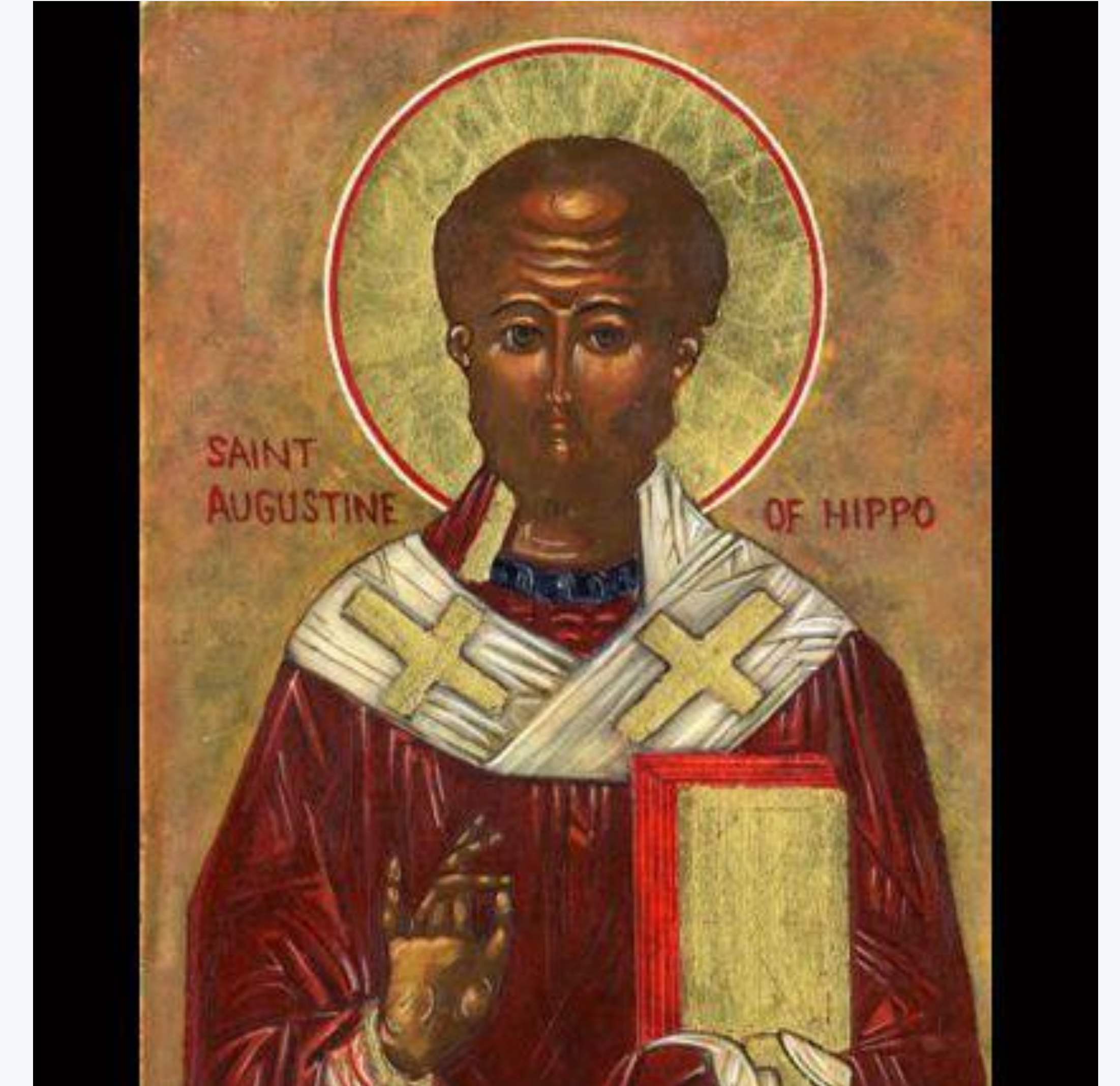
Augustine's conversion, unlike most people's understanding of it, took place over a long period of time. By the time he started engaging with the works of Plato, he had already had experiences with many people. In Plato's works, he saw overlap in the truths that scripture presented and Neoplatonic thought, although the latter didn't specifically talk about Christ as a savior. After his struggle in the garden, Augustine accepts Christ as Lord, but he had to struggle with all of the questions that he had in order to reach that point of acceptance.

Mature understanding of Friendship

Friendship is fundamentally of the flesh and not the spirit, something to take pleasure in for a time then transcends. Augustine believed that true friendship was a gift from God so that friends can seek God together, but that it is not to be enjoyed by itself. After conversion, Augustine became more convinced that no true friendship can exist unless it is rooted in the common love of God. This common law is at the center of the Christian faith, which calls believers to love God and their neighbor. Other forms of friendship, like those rooted in vice or utility, are viewed as lesser forms of friendship.

Findings

As a result of interacting with multiple texts in order to gain a better understanding of this spiritual classic, I have discovered that I need to think and read more in order to construct an argument that will adequately cover the history of love, friendship, eschatology, a more inclusive view of friendship, and how it relates to urban ministry. Although Augustine does not lay out a formal framework for friendship in urban ministry specifically, it is clear that friendship does not exclude different types of friendships. He was able to have friendships with many people and did not force his beliefs on others. He was always present and engaged with friends (people) often.



Future Studies

In concluding this part of the research, I know in the future I will need to look at the most prominent views of love and friendship that influenced Augustine and many other Christian writers, whether they be Christian or secular. I would approach research in this way primarily because I want to be able to discern between the most helpful and unhelpful works to develop a view of friendship that is not rooted in ignorance. Also, I would want to research specifically the history of urban ministers and what friendship has looked like for them, in contrast to their white counterparts. In doing all of these things, I hope that the voices of those who came before me will play a part in helping to discern between spiritual classics that will be most beneficial in an urban ministry context.

Bibliography

- Liddell, Henry G., Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. "with McKenzie, Roderick (eds.)(1940). A Greek-English Lexicon. 9th edn. With Supplement, ed. EA Barber et al. (1968)."
- Nygren, Anders. "Agape and Eros." *Trans. Philip Watson. Philadelphia: Westminster (1953).* Liddell et al., Greek-English
- Cooper, John M. "Aristotle on the Forms of Friendship." *The Review of Metaphysics* (1977): 619-648.
- Helm, Bennett, "Love", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/love/>.
- Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint,, Maria Boulding, John E Rotelle, William Harmless, and Augustinian Heritage Institute. *The Confessions*. 2nd ed. The Works of Saint Augustine : A Translation for the 21st Century. Part I, Books, V. 1. Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2012.
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Friendship, or Laelius*. New York, N.Y.: Internet History Sourcebooks Project, 199u. 199u. Accessed May 12, 2019