

# Primary source analysis confessions

Business



Primary Source Analysis History, Religion “ Confessions” is a collection of thirteen books by St.

Augustine of Hippo chronicling his religious transformation and devotion to God. Extracted from this collection is Book 1, chapters 1-2. At this time of his life Augustine is 43 years old and the year is around 397. The period was religiously tumultuous, for one’s religious choice often sent a political message.

In Book 1, chapters 1-2, Augustine makes clear his choice and religious alignment with the Christian faith as he humbles himself before the glory of God and yet, struggles with his inability to find himself worthy of God’s attention. Augustine carries on in this way all the while knowing that to be in His focus is the only way to honor Him.

The opening sentence of Book 1, “ Great art thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is thy power, and infinite is thy wisdom,” (Outler, Book 1, Chap 1) is a grand display of Augustine’s praise to God.

It serves as a confession of Augustine’s commitment as a Christian and acknowledges his insignificance before God. A recurring theme throughout “ Confessions,” Book 1, Chapter 1 is Augustine’s struggle with the complexities that surround the logic of his faith, exemplified by his acceptance of his own unworthiness to invoke God, yet knowing he must have faith and bravely continue to seek out God in order to praise Him.

The turmoil Augustine feels within is apparent when he beseeches God, “ But who can invoke thee, knowing thee not? ” (Outler, Book 1, Chap 1) If in Book

1, Chapter 1 Augustine finds fault in the logic of his faith, it is in Chapter 2 that he finds fault in his own heart and, again, begs God, " Is there anything in me, O Lord my God, that can contain thee? " (Outler, Book 1, Chap 2) Augustine's mind runs in circles chasing one thought with another struggling, seeking, to know if God's existence is proof of Augustine's faith.

He settles deep within and examines his heart's ability to contain the presence of God, who is everywhere and can " fill heaven and earth.

" (Outler, Book 1, Chap 2) Finally, Augustine accepts that he is indeed worthy to worship, praise and welcome God into his heart by reasoning that he could not be had God not first existed within himself. Augustine's struggles as a Christian convert is apparent in the opening chapters in " Confessions. " These first chapters accurately convey a true confession of heart and mind.