

The concept of
happiness in
gilgamesh, odyssey
and augustine's
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Most people throughout the centuries have pursued happiness one way or another. Even ancient texts support this claim. There are different means of achieving happiness though. This all depends on the way that happiness is understood and defined. The books of Gilgamesh, Odyssey and Augustine's Confessions all have different definitions of happiness, therefore they see prescribe different means of achieving such happiness.

Gilgamesh and the Pursuit of Heroic Fame.

In the Epic of Gilgamesh (George, 2003), the pursuit of heroic fame, which may appear as foolish to some is regarded as the source of happiness. Even if Gilgamesh is being reprimanded by his friend Enkidu of the apparent folly of his acts, he still proceeds to challenge other powers and prove himself as a capable hero and king. As he proceeds with his exploits and adventures, however, his best friend Enkidu gets punished with death. When he realized how much he loved his friend, he went out of his way to look for means to revive him. So in the end, the readers can understand that happiness does not come only from heroic pursuits but more so from the love of a friend.

Odyssey and Happiness Found in Home and Family.

Homer's Odyssey (Camps, 1980) also echoes the love for adventure and heroic pursuits in Gilgamesh. After succeeding in Troy, Odysseus is stranded at sea for several years and could not rejoin his wife, Penelope, and his son Telemachus. His family also could not realize their happiness because Odysseus is stranded at home and there were suitors making their lives miserable. With the ongoing battles and journey of Odysseus, he is given strength by the hope of going home. No matter how much he is tempted and

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prevented by Poseidon, demi-gods and demi-goddesses from reaching home, he still strives to do so. His inner resolve is strengthened by his internal desire to see Penelope and Telemachus once again. It took him ten years to fight in the Trojan War. During this time, he achieved renown and fame. Yet, his happiness still belonged to his wife and son. So he sails on for another ten years until he reached Ithaca and his happiness and his family's is ensured once again.

Augustine and the Concept of Happiness

"Confessions", by St. Augustine (Warner, 1963), is the story of his life. It also shows how his concept of happiness changed from his boyhood and until he was converted to Christianity. At first, the reader can notice the way that Augustine put a premium on the approval of his peers and the way in which he succumbed to lust. Although he relies on retrospection, he is in effect showing that the sources of his happiness before his conversion to Christianity were the approval of his friends regardless if the activities they were doing together were right or wrong. Then he went on to explore worldly passions and lust. In the end, he converted to the Christian faith and declared that his happiness is found in being connected with God and pursuing what God's will in his life.

Reference

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