

Humility in Augustine's Moral Thought

AUGUSTINE'S NOTION OF PRIDE seems to take precedence over what he understands to be its antidote, the virtue of humility.¹ For Augustine, pride is the foundation of all sin and certainly takes a prominent role in his thought as that foundation.² Yet, while Augustine's focus on humility is by no means disconnected from his understanding of pride, pride is not the only perspective from which he approaches the idea of humility. Humility for Augustine has a significant, positive role to play both in his thought and in the lives of those entrusted to his pastoral care. Humility is a multi-dimensional concept that lies at the foundation of his moral theory.

Augustine derives his interest and dependence on the idea of humility from many of the principles I have discussed in my previous chapter. Pride, as I have mentioned, plays an important role in setting the context for his understanding of humility. So, too, does Augustine's interpretation of Scripture. As we will see in this chapter, Augustine's understanding of morality is also of fundamental importance to his position on humility and greatness. Augustine's views of faith, love, the will, grace, virtue, and wisdom all have consequences for his understanding of humility, and in turn, are affected by that understanding.

My goal in this chapter is to demonstrate the role humility plays within Augustine's moral thought. My demonstration will proceed through

1. Augustine, *Trin.* 8.3.7. Cf. Augustine, *S.* 123.1 (WSA III/4:244) and Augustine, *S.* 341.4 (WSA III/11:285). Each of the above texts is a sample in which Augustine characterizes humility as the medicine or mechanism through which pride is overcome.

2. Augustine, *Gn. Adv. Man.* 2.14.21–15.22. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 14.13. Cf. MacQueen, "Contemptus Dei," 252–53.

four stages. In the first stage, I will evaluate the words that Augustine uses to describe the idea of humility. Secondly, I will describe the distinctive manner in which Augustine adapts and interprets the eudaemonistic moral tradition to which he is heir. Augustine's understanding of knowledge, love, and the human will distinguish his eudaemonist conception of morality from its classical antecedents. These concepts, along with Augustine's use of Scripture and his notion of pride, provide a critical role for humility in his moral structure that is absent in the thought of his Greek and Roman predecessors. Third, having described the moral structure of Augustine's thought, I will depict the role humility plays within that thought. As a primary effect of God's grace, humility is indispensable to Augustine's account of the manner in which a person pursues her high calling as the image and likeness of God. Lastly, I will describe the way Augustine's view of humility affects his understanding of the elements that comprise his moral thought. Faith, charity, the will, virtue, and wisdom are all interpreted and understood by Augustine in the light shed by his understanding of humility.

***Humilitas* in Augustine's Discussion of Humility**

Augustine's training as a rhetorician and his voluminous writing gave him a facility with words matched by few. Despite his exceptional command of language, however, he was remarkably consistent in his use of the word *humilitas* when approaching the idea of humility. An examination of the manner in which he addresses humility in his sermons reveals his almost repetitive use of the word to represent the idea of humility. A query of *humilitas* and its cognates in the *Library of Latin Texts Series A* database reveals Augustine uses the word in excess of 1,600 times throughout his literary corpus.³ Confining the query to Augustine's sermons, including his reflections on the psalms and Johannine writings, one finds *humilitas* used more than 1,100 times. It most frequently appears in connection with Christ (over 250 instances), *superbia* (more than one hundred times), and with various terms representing human greatness (just under ninety references).⁴ Despite Augustine's consistent use of *humilitas*, he does make use of other synonyms when discussing humility. When he does use synonyms for *humilitas* they are usually drawn from scriptural sources. *Cor* (sixty-five references), *mitis* (fifty-two references), *pauper/paupertas* (twen-

3. Library of Latin Texts—Series A, <http://clt.brepolis.net.proxycu.wrlc.org/>.

4. *Ibid.*

ty-two references), *pius* (sixteen references), *infirmitas* (twelve references), and *paruuli* (six references) are all words Augustine uses in conjunction with *humilitas* to help fill out the meaning of particular arguments.⁵ For example, Augustine typically combines the ideas of meekness and humility of heart in reference to Christ's admonition to be meek and humble of heart (Matt 11:29).⁶ A similar example is his use of *paruuli*, or little ones, as the humble to whom God reveals the truth, as opposed to the wise from whom truth is hidden (Luke 10:21, Matt 11:25).⁷ A last example of a frequently used term in relation to *humilitas* is *infirmitas*. The context of Augustine's use is again scriptural (2 Cor 12:9–10), and marks one of the more frequent ways in which Augustine links humility to greatness.⁸ Despite Augustine's use of these related terms, *humilitas* is the dominant word he uses when discussing humility, particularly when discussing the humility of Christ (*humilitas Christi*).⁹

Augustine's Moral Structure as the Context for His Understanding of Humility

Augustine's view of morality is founded upon his understanding of the relationship between God and the human person revealed in sacred Scripture. Within this context, Augustine (like his classical forebears) is profoundly affected by the eudaemonist moral tradition of ancient Greek philosophy; that is to say, Augustine's ethical positions are structured around the question of the ultimate human good, which he identifies with human happiness.¹⁰ Yet if Augustine can be classified as a eudaemonist, we must distinguish him from his Stoic and neo-Platonic predecessors and characterize him as a eudaemonist with a difference. That difference, of course, was rooted in his application of Christian Scripture to the moral framework he adopts from the Greek philosophers.

5. Ibid.

6. Augustine, S. 45.7 (WSA III/2:256).

7. Augustine, S.67.8 (WSA III/3:219).

8. See Augustine, S. 163.8 for Augustine's discussion of Paul's temptation to pride and the weakening God provides him to fight the temptation. See Augustine, *Trin.* 4.1.2 for an example of the link between *infirmitas* and *humilitas*.

9. See Augustine, S. 123.1 (WSA III/4:244) for a typical formulation concerning Christ's humility.

10. O'Donovan, *Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 16.

Scripture plays an enormous role in Augustine's understanding and articulation of the moral categories he adopts from classical philosophy. Examples of Scripture's influence on Augustine's morality are numerous and significant. Augustine moves beyond the Aristotelian notion of the highest good as an activity of the human person (i.e., the activity of contemplation) to the objective end of the transcendent Christian God.¹¹ Under the influence of Scripture's twofold command to love God and neighbor, Augustine integrates a Christian understanding of love with a characteristically eudaemonistic structure of happiness achieved through the cultivation of virtue.¹² In addition, submission to the commands of Scripture introduces an element concerned with obedience into Augustine's moral thought that was lacking in classical sources.¹³ Through his anthropological confrontation with Pelagius and his followers, Augustine honed his view on the relation between nature and grace and its implications for the moral life on the basis of Scripture. The Pelagian controversy reinforces the most significant distinction between Augustine's approach to morality and that of Greek philosophy: the human person's inability to choose the good without the help of God's grace.¹⁴ Lastly, Augustine's focus on pride as the original source of the human person's fall into sinfulness provides an important role for the virtue of humility that was quite foreign to classical morality.¹⁵

As a thinker who viewed true philosophy in distinctly theological terms, it is not surprising to find Augustine's morality to be an integration of both philosophical and theological principles. In tracing the broad outlines of his moral thought, one must begin with the foundation of that thought in Augustine's conception of the human person as created in the image and likeness of God (Gen1:26–27), which for Augustine, is the person's highest honor:

For man's true honor is God's image and likeness in him, but it can only be preserved when facing him from whom its impression is received . . . And thus, since his honor consists in being like God and his disgrace in being like an animal, man established in

11. *Ibid.*, 17.

12. Cf. Augustine, *Mor.* 15.25 for his assertion that virtue is the highest form of love for God.

13. Cf. Augustine, *Div. Qu.* 35.2 for an example of Augustine's emphasis on the importance of the great commandment to love God with one's whole strength.

14. Augustine, *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* 4.7.

15. Cf. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 14.13 for Augustine's assertion that pride is the beginning of all sin.

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honor did not understand; he was matched with senseless cattle and became like them (Ps 49:12).¹⁶

The image, as the above citation implies, has been deformed through sin,¹⁷ which finds its root in pride.¹⁸ Following the teaching of Paul (Rom 5:12), Augustine asserts that as descendants of Adam all people have sinned¹⁹ and are thus heir to the sin of pride, which causes each person to turn to herself to satisfy the desire of love rather than choosing God to be the object of that love.²⁰ Augustine identifies the human will as the mechanism through which a person succumbs to *superbia*, or love of self. It is through free will that a person turns from the fire and light of God's love to the lower goods of earthly existence. In its darkness, the will directs its affection to temporal and material goods.²¹ Such goods, however, cannot render a person happy due to the fear of their loss, which Augustine asserts is incompatible with true happiness.²² The result of this fear is a life of moral evil in which the human person resorts to sin and crime in the effort to protect and secure material goods from the threat posed by others seeking those same goods.²³ Moral evil, according to Augustine, is the product of pride's initial turn from God, which culminates in the sin, sorrow, and death that mark the human condition.

The will, as the source of a person's moral evil²⁴ and the foundation of pride, is the faculty of the soul that must be healed to prevent the disastrous consequences of sin. In Augustine's view, such healing is not a work that can be done on the basis of human nature alone. The human will deforms itself in its fall by turning away from God as the source of goodness, and only grace can restore the will to its proper orientation toward God.²⁵ Indeed, God's grace is of such fundamental importance to the human moral

16. Augustine, *Trin.* 12.3.16.

17. *Ibid.*, 14.5.22.

18. Augustine, *Gn. Adv. Man.* 2.15.22. Cf. MacQueen "Contemptus Dei," 252–53.

19. Augustine, *Nat. et Gr.* 41.48. Cf. Augustine, *Trin.* 13.4.16.

20. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 14.13.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Augustine, *B. Vita* 2.11. Cf. Babcock, "Early Augustine on Love," 42.

23. Augustine, *Lib. Arb.* 1.4.10.

24. *Ibid.*, 2.19.52–53.

25. Augustine, *Trin.* 14.5.22.

life that Augustine asserts a person is completely unable to choose any good without the help of that grace.²⁶

Through the healing action of grace, and specifically the healing action of humility, the human will is re-oriented toward God and empowered to love that which is truly good. The re-orientation that is God's initial gift of grace yields the further grace of faith in God. It is in the knowledge conferred by faith that a person can begin to love the good of God above the temporal goods of sensible reality.²⁷ The love of God that finds its source in faith, however, is not something that spontaneously uproots the evil customs built over the course of a person's life through the operation of *superbia* and *cupiditas*. He sees such uprooting as a process of renewal in which grace and free will collaborate together to overcome carnal habit and restore the image of God in a particular person.²⁸

To be sure, this renewal does not happen in one moment of conversion The first stage of the cure is to remove the cause of debility, and this is done by pardoning all sins; the second stage is curing the debility itself, and this is done gradually by making steady progress in the renewal of this image So then the man who is being renewed in the recognition of God and in justice and holiness of truth by making progress day by day, is transferring his love from temporal things to eternal, from visible to intelligible, from carnal to spiritual things; he is industriously applying himself to checking and lessening his greed for the one sort and binding himself with charity to the other. But his success in this depends on divine assistance; it is after all God who declares, *Without me you can do nothing* (John 15:5).²⁹

The gradual process of moral renewal that restores the image of God in the human person reaches its zenith in the establishment of virtue. Virtue, for Augustine, is the perfect love of God.³⁰ Virtue replaces the vice built by *superbia* and *cupiditas* when the will, through the love of God developed on the basis of faith, submits itself to “. . . the immutable rules and lights of those virtues which dwell incorruptible in truth.”³¹ Augustine sees

26. Augustine, *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* 4.7.

27. Augustine, *Trin.* 8.5.13.

28. Augustine, *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* 4.7.

29. Augustine, *Trin.* 14.5.23.

30. Augustine, *Mor.* 15.25.

31. Augustine, *Lib. Arb.* 2.19.52–53.

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the foundation of true virtue in the will's choice to submit itself in love to God alone. Virtue then becomes the mechanism through which the human person is purified and empowered to achieve his or her greatest happiness, which is the possession of God through the function of the soul's intellect. The purification achieved through virtue and the perfection of love it makes possible yield the knowledge of God, or wisdom, which fulfills every desire of the human heart.³² The end of the moral life, for Augustine, is achieved through virtue but resides in the intellectual possession of God in the Beatific Vision.

The challenge of the moral life, for Augustine, is the reversal of the evil brought on by the sin of pride. Humility is the gift of God's grace that begins the process of moral renewal in which pride is overcome. Humility's importance to overcoming pride and sin stems from this initial role, as well as its importance to the human person throughout the various stages of moral renewal. The process through which a person develops the love that will enable the possession of God's eternal goodness is, in Augustine's view, inescapably tied to humility.

Humility: God's Initial Gift of Grace to the Human Person

One of the primary outcomes of the Pelagian controversy is Augustine's development and refinement of his doctrine of grace. In that teaching, Augustine repeatedly and emphatically asserts that the human person is incapable of good action without the assistance of God's grace.³³ The human person, according to Augustine, is only able to choose that which is good through the interaction of grace and the will.³⁴ The initiative for that interaction lies on the side of God's grace. God prepares the will for the reception of grace and then subsequently assists the will to choose the good as well. In describing God's mercy in assisting the will, Augustine declares, "God . . . makes the good will ready to help and helps it when it has been made ready."³⁵ Grace precedes even the gift of faith (which is also a gift of

32. Babcock, "Early Augustine on Love," 54.

33. Augustine, *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* 4.7.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Augustine, *Ench.* 9.32.

grace) and is the result of God's mercy.³⁶ God offers grace to the human will, weighed down by sin, and through that offer a person is able to overcome the pride that separates him from God.³⁷

As the perfection of love that enables one to turn from the self-love of pride and be opened to the love of God, humility is a critical aspect of the grace without which a person is incapable of choosing the good. The human person is able to love God and overcome the dominance of his self-love because God first loved the human person. Augustine addresses this fundamental aspect of humility in a number of different contexts. Using Paul's metaphor of grafting to the olive tree (Rom 11:19–23), he asserts that humility is the mechanism by which God joins the human person to himself. The power to be grafted onto the tree lies not with the human person, but with God.³⁸ As the branch now connected to the tree, the humble person is able to receive the nourishment God as the trunk offers in his grace. Augustine likewise maintains that it is through the gift of humility that a person is able to receive the Holy Spirit.³⁹ Humility is the cause that enables a person to be born of God's Spirit because it is when a person is humbled—when the person is crushed in heart—that the Lord will draw near to her (Ps 34:18). It is only through such lowliness of heart that a person can be born of the Spirit because it is in that lowliness that a person turns from herself and looks to God for fulfillment.⁴⁰ In still another sermon, Augustine contends that Jesus heals the person through humility since pride is the root sin to be confronted. As an experienced doctor, Christ knows the underlying cause of the human disorder. Rather than treating the symptoms, Jesus cures the human person with his own humility, which heals the initial sin of pride.⁴¹ Augustine even asserts that it was through humility that Jesus was able to reveal himself to people prior to his incarnation in the flesh. Augustine states that as the humble mediator Jesus had never failed anyone who had sought him in humility. He ascribes such humility to the great figures of the Old Testament, including persons such as Melchizedek and Job, who though not numbered among the Hebrews, were considered

36. Augustine, *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* 14.28.

37. Augustine, *Trin.* 8.3.7.

38. Augustine, *S.* 162A.9 (WSA III/5:161). Cf. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 16.6 (106).

39. Augustine, *S.* 270.6 (WSA III/7:294).

40. Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 12.6 (2).

41. Augustine, *S.* 159B.11 (WSA III/11:156–57).

to be righteous. Their righteousness, according to Augustine, was achieved through humility. God reveals himself only to the humble, and it is only the humble that are purified and saved by the Lord.⁴²

Augustine's position regarding the necessity of grace in the will's ability to choose good and his designation of pride as the source of sin lead to the conclusion that the grace of humility is at the foundation of salvation for the human person. Robert Dodaro asserts that ". . . for Augustine humility is fundamental to the gift of grace itself."⁴³ The supreme instance of this grace is the humility of Christ through which the love of God has drawn close to mortal human beings.⁴⁴ For Augustine, no one is excused from learning the humility of Christ,⁴⁵ which has been revealed as the way to eternal salvation.⁴⁶ As we'll see in the next section, it is in Christ's gift of humility that the faith through which a person is saved begins to grow.

The Importance of Faith to Augustine's Moral Thought

Augustine views the knowledge offered to the human person's intellect by faith as critical to a person's ability to love God, and as a result of that love, live a life of virtue. In the context of sin's devastating effect on the image of God in the human person, Augustine presents an understanding of morality in which faith plays an early and vital role in the pursuit of the good that leads to happiness. For Augustine, moral renewal and the reformation of God's image in the human person takes place as that person transfers his love from temporal objects to things eternal.⁴⁷ Since God is the human person's primary and final good, Augustine reasons that to live well is to love God, as Scripture tells us, with all of one's heart, soul, and mind.⁴⁸ Loving God in the present condition of the human race, however, raises difficulties for Augustine. Citing the testimony of St. Paul, Augustine reminds us that we do not yet see God face to face in this life (1 Cor 13:12), since we still walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7). Given that lack of vision

42. Augustine, S. 198.38 (WSA III/11:209).

43. Dodaro, "The Secret Justice of God," 90.

44. Schlabach, "Augustine's Hermeneutic of Humility," 316.

45. Augustine, S. 164.7 (WSA III/5:191).

46. Augustine, S. 123.3 (WSA III/4:245).

47. Augustine, *Trin.* 14.5.23.

48. Augustine, *Mor.* 25.46.

and the intellectual uncertainty brought on by sin, Augustine concludes that we initially do not know God in the sense of beholding and clearly grasping him with the human mind.⁴⁹ Yet he also asserts that one cannot love something of which he has no knowledge.⁵⁰ The two assertions present Augustine with the problem of how the human person can come to love God if that person does not know God. He solves the apparent contradiction through his understanding of faith.

Augustine asserts that it is through the knowledge of faith that a person can come to love God.⁵¹ He makes this assertion in the context of placing the act of faith within the domain of temporal knowledge rather than that of eternal wisdom.⁵² Despite the fact that the object of faith is God, the foundation and pinnacle of eternal truth, Augustine maintains that God has become an object of temporal knowledge through the incarnation of Jesus. Christ, in Augustine's view, bridges the epistemological gap between knowledge and wisdom. As the eternal Word, Christ "is without time and without space, coeternal with the Father and wholly present everywhere; and if anyone can utter a true word about this, as far as he is able, it will be a word of wisdom."⁵³ As the Word made flesh, however, Augustine ascribes the actions taken and suffered by Jesus during his earthly life to knowledge rather than wisdom.⁵⁴ On the basis of this distinction, Augustine concludes that through faith in the earthly deeds and teaching of Christ, one can come to know God indirectly. Paul asserts that the knowledge of God gained through faith provides an indistinct vision of God. It is a vision of his image present in the earthly actions of the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. The incarnation provides initial knowledge of God that is true but falls short of wisdom because of the temporal and finite aspect of the Son's existence as a human being. In the person of Jesus, one sees the image of God as one could see a reflection in a mirror (1 Cor 13:12). For Augustine, such knowledge not only provides the basis upon which the human person can love God, but it is also the path through which one achieves true wisdom. Knowledge is inferior to wisdom but still allows for an authentic and true relationship between God and the human person. "Our knowledge there-

49. Augustine, *Trin.* 8.3.6.

50. *Ibid.*, 10.1.1.

51. *Ibid.*, 8.3.6.

52. *Ibid.*, 13.6.24.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*

fore is Christ, and our wisdom is the same Christ. It is he who plants faith in us about temporal things, he who presents us with the truth about eternal things. Through him we go straight toward him, through knowledge toward wisdom.”⁵⁵ Here we find a reformulation and manifestation of Augustine’s principle that one must first believe in order to understand.⁵⁶ By believing in the knowledge we have of the earthly Christ, we can begin our journey toward the knowledge of God’s eternal reality present in human wisdom. Faith, then, in Augustine’s view, provides the knowledge necessary for the human person to establish a loving relationship with God.

The Humility of Faith

In the introduction to Book Four of his translation of *The Trinity*, Edmund Hill describes Augustine’s view of faith as “. . . a hard form of intellectual humility, which . . . purifies us of pride and makes us morally fit for contemplation.”⁵⁷ The lack of understanding Augustine associates with pride of intellect is overcome through the humility of faith. Augustine asserts that it is humble to believe by authority what cannot be demonstrated to the mind.⁵⁸ The intellectual humility of faith becomes a crucial turning point in Augustine’s own conversion. As a result of Augustine’s failure to penetrate the mysteries of life through reason alone, faith in the authority of the church and Scripture becomes his path to understanding the truth about God and God’s relationship to the human person. Stepping down from the pride of his intellect, Augustine is able to understand God’s truth through the humility of belief.⁵⁹

Augustine also presents the establishment of the knowledge of faith in a person’s mind as a function of humility. The capacious aspect of humility, which I will develop further in my discussion of humility and the will, plays an important role in this establishment. Humility’s function of making space for God’s love and grace to enter the human will becomes the grounds and condition in which faith is made possible. We see this principle manifest in Augustine’s interpretation of the parable concerning the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:10–14). Faith, Augustine says,

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., 8.3.8.

57. Hill, “Introductory Essay,” 150.

58. Augustine, *Conf.* 6.5.7.

59. Augustine, *Trin.* 8.3.8.

“. . . belongs not to the proud, but to the humble.”⁶⁰ Augustine's notion of pride as a love of excelling is personified in the character of the Pharisee.⁶¹ Indeed, there are few who illustrate pride better. Augustine observes how the Pharisee goes up to pray to God and does nothing but praise himself. The Pharisee in his self-love requests nothing from God, placing faith in himself, the ultimate object of his love.⁶² The tax collector, on the other hand, is the personification of humility. He stands a long way off, beating his breast, without even the strength to raise his eyes.⁶³ His downcast vision contemplates his own emptiness.⁶⁴ It is in the acknowledgement of his emptiness that is the capaciousness of his humility that the tax collector finds God's grace. In admitting he is empty, the tax collector has something.⁶⁵ And it is on this foundation, the foundation of humility, that he can make his request to God. Humility, then, is the initial moment of grace where the love of pride is overturned,⁶⁶ making room for God's love. It is in the presence of this grace that the gift of faith begins to grow, which is the reason Augustine asserts that faith belongs to the humble.⁶⁷

Augustine uses the Gospel stories concerning the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:21–28) and the Roman centurion (Matt 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10) to demonstrate two further dimensions of the relationship between faith and humility. In both circumstances, Jesus recognizes the act of faith through the humility of the woman's and the centurion's actions. Jesus acknowledges the faith of the Canaanite woman and praises the strength of that faith on the basis of the radical humility she demonstrates in accepting her lower status relative to the children of Israel.⁶⁸ In similar fashion, Augustine observes how Jesus discerns the faith of the centurion through his humble

60. Augustine, S. 115:2 (WSA III/4:199).

61. Augustine, S. 354:6 (WSA III/10:159).

62. Augustine, S. 115:2 (WSA III/4:199).

63. Ibid.

64. Augustine, S. 36:11 (WSA III/2:181).

65. Ibid.

66. Augustine discusses the role of humility overturning pride in many passages including: Augustine, *Trin.* 13.5.21; 13.5.22; Augustine, S. 4A.1 (WSA III/1:214); S. 123.1 (WSA III/4:244); S. 398.6 (WSA III/10:448). Cf. Schlabach, “Hermeneutic of Humility,” 316 for a discussion of Christ's humility as the supreme instance of grace that serves as a first principle to heal the will maimed by sin.

67. Augustine, S. 115:2 (WSA III/4:199). Cf. Dodaro, “Gift of Humility,” 89 for a discussion of humility's role in conditioning faith.

68. Augustine, S. 77.11 (WSA III/3:322).

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assertion that he is not worthy for Christ to enter under his roof.⁶⁹ Faith and humility are linked in humility's ability to reveal an interior faith. Similar to the function of God's command revealing Adam's pride,⁷⁰ humility is able to shine light on the interior act of believing in God. In addition to this revelatory aspect, Augustine also asserts on the basis of these two stories that an already existing faith is made great by humility. In the case of the centurion, Augustine asserts that his faith is bolstered by his humility. It is through humility that Christ enters the door of the centurion's heart so he can reside there more fully. The faith of the centurion was not only made possible by humility but is further strengthened by it as well.⁷¹ Likewise, Augustine sees the Canaanite woman's faith made great by her profound humility.⁷² Again, using the metaphor of the olive tree, Augustine observes that Christ did not find such great faith in the people of Israel, who were broken off from the olive tree due to their pride. The greatness of faith these new believers possess, he asserts, finds its source in their humility.⁷³

Augustine sees the interaction of grace and humility as the foundation of the moral life. For Augustine, grace is the reward of grace.⁷⁴ Putting names on each of these graces, then, we can see that the grace of faith is the reward of the grace of humility. It is on the foundation of these two gifts that Augustine asserts the person can begin to do good works. This is the case because it is through humility and faith that a person can petition God for the grace to fulfill the dictates of the Law. The person's ability to fulfill the Law and be justified by grace is accomplished through humble faith (Eph 2:8).⁷⁵ In addition, not only are humility and faith the basis on which the person petitions God for help, they are also the interior principles through which the love for God grows. The humility of faith is the basis for Augustine's conception of love that drives his moral thought.

69. Augustine, S. 62:3 (WSA III/3:157).

70. Augustine, *Civ. Dei* 14.13.

71. Augustine, S. 62A.2 (WSA III/3:171).

72. Augustine, S. 203.2 (WSA III/6:96).

73. Augustine, S. 77.12 (WSA III/3:323).

74. Augustine, *Gr. et Lib. Arb.* 8.20.

75. *Ibid.*