



BOOK VIII: Augustine's Tolle Lege Moment

Confessions 8.12.28 - 8.12.29; Boulding Translation, pp. 156-157



Passage Summary

Augustine recalls his experience in a garden in Milan overhearing a children's game as he wept over his sins, and how it led him to open the Bible once again.



App Integrations

- Digital Highlighting & Annotation
- Synchronized Audio



Learning Objectives

- Analyze and understand difficult and important classical texts
- Equip students to read a text using annotation
- Work well with class members in a climate of mutual respect



Out-Of-Class Assignment Suggestions

- Read closely the two segments of the scene in the Milanese garden (12.28-29)
- Using the *App Highlight feature*, highlight the moments that mark a turning point in the passage. Try to identify at least three.
- Using the *App Annotation feature*, provide brief summaries of these turning-point moments, identifying the cause(s) and effect.



In-Class Assignment Suggestions

- Invite students to put their books away and listen to the first audio segment (12.28). Have them jot down what stands out as they listen.
- After listening, have the students share their "turning-point" moment(s). Invite them to explain why they selected these moments. Put moments on the board (or have them put them on the board), linking cause to effect.
- Continue with the second audio segment (12.29) and have students again jot down what they hear.
- Invite students to share "turning-point" moment(s); add them to the board.
- Open discussion on the various components of Augustine's conversion. Explore how the different "causes" contribute to his state of mind. Invite students to talk about which cause was ultimately decisive (if any!).
- If you wish, discuss the merits of calling this a "conversion" at all. What do we mean by this term? Is that what Augustine meant?



Further Connections

Confessions: Augustine's conversion here has several precedents, including his so-called "first conversion" to philosophy recorded in Book III (and mentioned again in Book VIII), and his encounter with the famous "books of the Platonists" in Book VII. The encounter with books is especially important in *Confessions*; Augustine read books as a matter of salvation.

Augustine and Culture: Augustine's conversion finds a parallel in Saul of Tarsus' conversion in *Acts of the Apostles*; Paul and Augustine become templates for later writers, for example Teresa of Ávila; see also John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* and C.S. Lewis' *Surprised by Joy*