



## The Problem of Evil with Dr. David Schenk

### Lesson 13: Three Theories of Love

#### Outline:

##### The Virtue of Love

- Augustine spells out in his Confessions how disordered loves can deform our lives, and lead us away from God and into sin.
- How can loves become disordered in the first place?
  - Love is the highest of the virtues.

##### Three theories of love and why they are unsatisfying

- **The value response theory:** This conceives love as a response to some perceived objective value sitting there in the beloved.
  - Love is a reaction to something that is objectively good and beautiful perceived to be there in the beloved.
  - It had better not be arbitrary, because then it is empty.
- **The volitional theory:** This conceives love as a free choice of the will, something that one does without any motive compelling you to do it. It is a choice that you make, not something that you cannot help doing.
  - Love is first and foremost an act of the will, rather than recognizing an objective value.
  - Love is a matter of willingly held commitment.
  - If the only reason to love were exemplified virtues, then it would not be the person loved, but the exemplified virtues (the wife would be emotionally interchangeable).
  - This function as a foil to the value response theory.
- **The relational theory:** This conceives love as maintaining an ongoing relationship of trust and affection with the beloved.
  - This is a solution to the dilemma that the first two present.
  - Here the idea is that the specific commitment to the beloved is a function of the relationship maintained with and through them.
  - The relationship is larger than the two summed up together. The whole greater than the sum of its parts.
  - The relational theory faces worse problems than the other two.
  - The dilemma is that either the additional value in question is a function of having that particular relationship of love or it is a function of having some any relationship of the same kind. Either option will destroy the theory.
  - My real love would be for our relationship.
  - This reiterates the value response theory, just for relations instead of for particular entities.



- *Only insofar as we require it be this woman exemplifying all these virtues, can my love be for her, and not just for any woman of those virtues satisfying that role.*
- Unrequited love is still love, even though there is no relationship. A possible rebuttal is that these are not genuine loves (without a mutual relationship).
- If genuine love has to be requited, then no genuine loves can ever form in the first place.
- *Before love can ever be shared, it has to be given, risked.*
- Jesus really did and does love us even when we don't reciprocate it. In which case, not all love is relational in the way that the relational theory supposes.