review

by Book Review

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Book Review: Written On the Heart Assignment Instructions Overview

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Budziszewski guides learners through the important figures in ethics and philosophy, successfully demonstrating how the law of nature aids us in resolving today's philosophical and moral concerns. Budziszewski divides the work into five parts, with the first four devoted to John Stuart Mill, John Locke, Thomas Aquinas, and Aristotle.[1] The last course focuses on justifying a Christian understanding of natural law and how current philosophers have adapted the deontological heritage to contemporary concerns.

Budziszewski jumps straight into unit one, where Aristotle discusses the character of humans and our position in politics. Much ground is addressed swiftly in the first chapter. Following a short discussion of the four reasons and how they apply to a city, a variety of criticisms and responses are presented[2]. Budziszewski then moves on to a study of pleasure, which Aristotle considers the ultimate human ideal. He emphasizes that this ultimate good has greatly contributed to the development: "other things will be desired for its purpose" and "it would be pursued for the sake of it."

But whatever key to happiness are we talking about here? Satisfaction, honor, integrity, and physical and outward pleasures are the four criteria that must be studied to discover the proper one. Budziszewski believes it is closer to pleasure being as far away as possible. Still, he defers judgment as he goes on to a consideration of virtue after the book.

Examining virtues, Aristotle's notion of the average and its applicability to communities and regimes takes up a large portion of chapter two. Budziszewski jumps right into chapter three, focusing on ethics and fairness in society due to this conversation. "Aristotle deems three major

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[1] Walker, Timothy W. How Shall we Then Engage? Assessing Alternatives to Natural Law in the Political Theologies of Carl FH Henry and Oliver O'Donovan. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020.
[2] Charles, J. Daryl. Natural Law and Religious Freedom: The Role of Moral First Things in Grounding and Protecting the First Freedom. Routledge, 2017.

sorts of justice," writes Budziszewski, "justice in the perfect sense, that is strict adherence to law, justice inside the incomplete context, that is justice in the disbursement of products, and political justice, and is the civil society configuration that exists between many individuals who are equal under the law under law."[3]

Budziszewski draws a link connecting Aristotle's idea of friendship and justice from this. In essence, by cultivating relationships in which "individuals are equal in quality or virtue" and "exercise justice," civilization would operate as a secret society with "no need for justice." For those intrigued by Aquinas' law of nature, Unit II is arguably the most sought-after book. Budziszewski opens the lesson by describing the structure of Aquinas' Compendium on Law. This is particularly useful for individuals who wish to learn natural law by going to the main source material and sifting through it. Budziszewski also devotes a few paragraphs to deciphering the language used by Aquinas in his Discourse. To mention a few, he defines notions like essence, morality, and habits[4]. "If you study the Discourse on Law numerous times, each times more attentively than the time previous, then little by little, like a light getting brighter and brighter until all is enlightened, that which is plain in itself becomes apparent to you," the author says, encouraging students not to worry.

With that in mind, Budziszewski takes the reader through a quick overview of the law of sin, human law, divine law, natural law, and eternal law. He also adds a few helpful graphics that show how the various laws are related to one another. According to Budziszewski, "the mirror of eternal law in the fundamental structure of the human mind, driving us to our inherent good" is a natural law. Budziszewski answers the most frequent arguments to natural law in Chapter 5. One

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[3] Alicea, J. Joel. "The Role of Emotion in Constitutional Theory." Notre Dame Law Review 97 (2021).

[4] Charles, J. Daryl. Natural Law and Religious Freedom: The Role of Moral First Things in Grounding and Protecting the First Freedom. Routledge, 2017.

argument is that there are various conceptions of natural law, and as a result, there does not seem to be an objective moral standard[5]. All-natural law concepts, according to Budziszewski, "agree regarding its core substance," and only vary on "secondary matters." The rest of the chapter concludes with a deeper examination of certain disturbing elements of Commentaries on Law issue 94, as well as a consideration of the human law's goal.

The next chapter examines legal morality and its place in political ideology. Budziszewski raises some significant points about how our government is run and how individuals interact with the law. What can one do, for instance, if a law is unjust? Is it acceptable for a person to violate the law? Both yes and no. Budziszewski describes Aquinas' approach to the problem. He begins by stating that a law might be unfair in two ways. "Bad laws may injure humans in one of two directions: it may undercut either their natural or divine good–their temporary or everlasting well-being," he argues. Budziszewski, following Aquinas, argues that one shouldn't have to accept burdensome regulations that violate our worldly well-being, "except maybe if defiance would produce either controversy or perturbation." The rationale for this exemption, according to Budziszewski, is that we should be conscious of our colleagues and the society to avoid causing others to sin by engaging in confusion, danger, disorder, or violence.[6]" Other queries include "Can the regulations be changed?" and "Can the laws be changed?" The chapter also discusses "What is the relationship between law or custom?" and "What is the relationship between customs and laws?"

Unit III differs from the prior two units in that Locke's contemporary perspective differs from the medieval and ancient perspectives that students are introduced to earlier in the book.

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[5] Wilkens, Steve, ed. Christian Ethics: Four Views. InterVarsity Press, 2017.
[6] Hammond, Jeffrey B., and Helen M. Alvare, eds. Christianity and the Laws of Conscience: An Introduction. Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Budziszewski begins by giving a short biographical and historical overview of Locke's beliefs and life[7]. When examining Locke's biography, Budziszewski offers an intriguing point on how some researchers would misrepresent a person's history by portraying their "belief systems as if they were solely the result of his events that took place[8]." Budziszewski closes by advising academics and readers to follow the ideas wherever they go, citing Luther, Augustine, and other authors as instances. The rest of the chapter is devoted to considering Locke's publications' intended audience, with the monarchist Robert Filmer as the primary focus. Of fact, this conversation is significant since Budziszewski is placing Locke's works into perspective, allowing one to obtain a sense of what Locke thought when he wrote.

[7] Charles, J. Daryl. Natural Law and Religious Freedom: The Role of Moral First Things in Grounding and Protecting the First Freedom. Routledge, 2017.
[8] Wilkens, Steve, ed. Christian Ethics: Four Views. InterVarsity Press, 2017

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