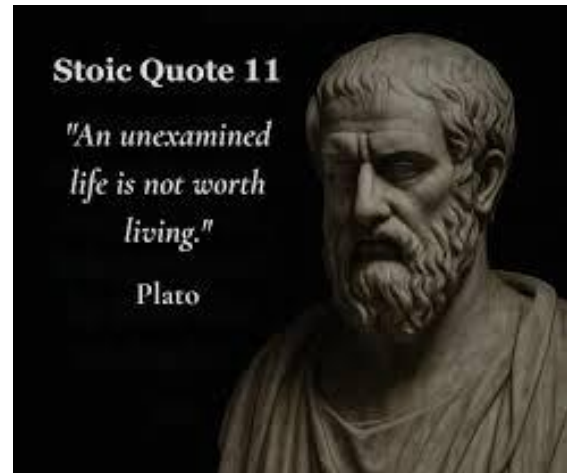


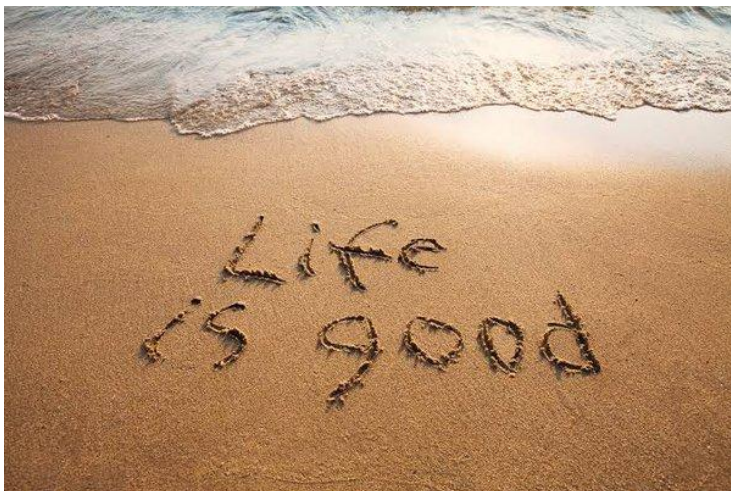
## Choosing the Good Life: Lessons from Philosophers and Faith

A lot of famous thinkers and I think everyone to some extent, have tried to figure out what it means to “live a good life”. Socrates said, “the unexamined life is not worth living,” which I think basically means we need to think about what we’re doing in our lives and why we are doing it like that. Plato took it one step further, saying we should try to be or do perfect “forms” or ideals, and that our reason and spirit should always be in control our desires at all time.

Aristotle’s though was that it is all about balance, like finding the “Golden Mean” between too much of one thing or too little of it, in everything we do, say, etc. Then the Stoics came into play and they had the opinion that, no matter what is happening around or what others are doing, we should try to focus on keeping our own virtue and goodness and staying strong and good inside ourselves. Later on, Augustine shifted his focus more to faith, saying the real “good life” is all about joining the “City of God”, not the “City of Man”. Aquinas kind of blended faith and reason together into its own thing, he kind of said that we should look for happiness and truth wherever we can find where it’s at church or outside of it, both in this life and beyond.



When I look at my life, there are definitely lots of times when I felt like I was really living well and a good life and everything was good. Those moments were when I felt like I was doing what I believed in, what I thought was good and right in every aspect I could, whether it was helping others, focusing on schooling, or just being able to enjoy talking



honestly and deeply with my friends and family. During all those times, I felt more balanced and like my life has a purpose. But there are definitely also times when I felt kind of lost in life, like I was just going through the motions or stressing over stuff and everything and nothing at once, and that it didn’t really matter. Like worrying about what other people thought, and trivial things. All these times felt kind of

empty and out of control, in comparison. I think these different times in my life are marked by different focus, when I was more focused on the gospel, and living with virtue and intention for myself now and in the future, or when I was more focused on monetary things and what the world and others wanted from me, rather than what I wanted from myself and what God's plan for me is.

Looking ahead, I think some of these ideas can help me and others live a better life. I liked Socrates ideas especially about actually stopping to think about what matters most instead of just rushing through everything, or just following the crowd. Aristotle and Aquinas remind me of the idea that perfection is not required or needed yet in this life, but I should keep trying to get close to it, with the help of God. The Stoics could be a good reminder



to people that you can't control every thing around you, but you can control how I handle it, and you react to the things life throws at you. I think that keeping an open mind you can find useful and good things everywhere if you look for them. I think this all these teaching, combined with deep thought and not just blind following, it should be able to help people stay focused on what's important and keep growing into a better version of you.