

Plato, Euthyphro

Reid Blackman

Socrates' basic goal: To learn about the nature of the pious [or the nature of rightness, goodness, *etc.*]

- "Tell me then, what is the pious, and what the impious, do you say" (9).

Euthyphro's proposed definition: "[T]he pious is to do what I am doing now, to prosecute the wrongdoer, be it about murder or temple robbery or anything else, whether the wrongdoer is your father or your mother or anyone else; not to prosecute is impious" (9).

S's reaction: But you told me some things that are pious, not what it is to *be* pious.

- **Questions:** What is it to be pious? What is piety itself? What do the things that are pious have in common that make them each pious?

E's answer: "[W]hat is dear to the gods is pious, what is not is impious" (11).

Socrates reply (and the core of the dialogue): "Is [a] the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it [b] pious because it is loved by the gods?" (14).

Euthyphro: The gods love the pious because it is pious (he affirms (a)).

Socrates: But then the pious and the god-beloved are distinct; god loves the pious, but that's not what makes it pious.

- "I'm afraid, Euthyphro, that when you were asked what piety is, you did not wish to make its nature clear to me, but you told me an affect or quality of it, that the pious has the quality of being loved by all the gods, but you have not yet told me what the pious is" (16).