

BIG QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE YOUR ESSENTIAL GOODS?

OVERVIEW:

One way of figuring out what makes a life good is to ask about the elements of good lives, individual things that are good, and ask what role such things should play in our life. Philosophers unimaginatively call these individual things "goods." In what follows, you'll list as many goods as you can think of. Then you'll be prompted to think about which of these goods are essential and how these essential goods should figure into the way you actually live your life.

YOUR LIST (15 - 20 THINGS)



1 On the right, make a list of as many goods as you can. You can use the examples listed to get started, but make this your own. Make sure you include different kinds of goods, and goods at every level.

Examples (feel free to be even more specific):

- Excellent wine
- Gourmet food
- Friends
- Money
- Family
- Exercise
- Literature
- Watching sports
- Worship
- Community service
- Education
- Volunteering
- Travel

2

Go back through this list of goods, circling goods you think are essential. A good is essential if you can't imagine living a good life without it. For example: coffee is an important, but non-essential good since you could live a good life without ever drinking coffee again. Friends, however, are arguably essential to a good life; without close relationships, something in life would be lacking.

3

Now consider the following prompts. Pick one or two and write your responses in the space below.

What is the purpose or function of human life?	How do you spend your time on an average day?	Who do you look up to? What do they value, and how do they spend their time?

In light of these answers to (3), revisit your list of essential goods. Revise this list if necessary, and reflect on the following questions. In one or two sentences, what makes a life good?

Does the way I live my life reflect my answer to this question?