

# Confessions - Book IV - Chapter Iii

by St. Augustine

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## Transcript

4. And yet, without scruple, I consulted those other impostors, whom they call "astrologers" [mathematicos], because they used no sacrifices and invoked the aid of no spirit for their divinations. Still, true Christian piety must necessarily reject and condemn their art.

It is good to confess to thee and to say, "Have mercy on me; heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee"[88]--not to abuse thy goodness as a license to sin, but to remember the words of the Lord, "Behold, you are made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall you." [89] All this wholesome advice [the astrologers] labor to destroy when they say, "The cause of your sin is inevitably fixed in the heavens," and, "This is the doing of Venus, or of Saturn, or of Mars"--all this in order that a man, who is only flesh and blood and proud corruption, may regard himself as blameless, while the Creator and Ordainer of heaven and the stars must bear the blame of our ills and misfortunes. But who is this Creator but thou, our God, the sweetness and wellspring of righteousness, who renderest to every man according to his works and despisest not "a broken and a contrite heart"[90]?

5. There was at that time a wise man, very skillful and quite famous in medicine.[91] He was proconsul then, and with his own hand he placed on my distempered head the crown I had won in a rhetorical contest. He did not do this as a physician, however; and for this distemper "only thou canst heal who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." [92] But didst thou fail me in that old man, or forbear from healing my soul? Actually when I became better acquainted with him, I used to listen, rapt and eager, to his words; for, though he spoke in simple language, his conversation was replete with vivacity, life, and earnestness. He recognized from my own talk that I was given to books of the horoscope-casters, but he, in a kind and fatherly way, advised me to throw them away and not to spend idly on these vanities care and labor that might otherwise go into useful things. He said that he himself in his earlier years had studied the astrologers\\

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