

# An Epicurean Understanding of Pleasure

Post by "Don" of October 7, 2021 at 5:04 PM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

My initial reaction to splitting the discussion of desires and their results is to be wary of that, because just like virtue, what does it gain anything to talk about desires apart from the results of pursuing those desires? In the end there is nothing given by nature for the decision of what to choose and to avoid other than pleasure and pain. A science of desires separated from their consequences, would be no more helpful or useful than a science of virtue, apart from the results of pursuing those virtues.

I think we're talking about the exact opposite of this. There should be no talk of desires without talk of their results for the individual. That's what distinguishes them from talk of pleasures. Is my desire to pursue the pleasure of intoxicating beverages prudent? Depends. If I have no commitments later and don't "act the fool" to preserve my reputation, that desire could be pursued.

I think talk of a "science of desires" is a slippery slope again possibly devolves into adding up Utilitarian dolors and hedons. Epicurus endorsed simply pointing to the pursuit of pleasure of children and animals as proof of pleasure's being the good to which all other instrumental goods points. Why do we practice wisdom? Because it brings us pleasure.

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

we still have to deal with the question: "Are all pleasures the same in all respects so that we should consider the choice of any pleasure to be equivalent to the choice of any other?"

I don't think all pleasures are identical. They are varied. And choices are definitely not equivalent. It's all about the consequences stemming from the desires for different pleasures. And desires for the same pleasure at different times. One time it may be prudent. Another time, not.