

# Episode Ninety-Three: Torquatus Leads Us Forward Into Conflict Over Epicurean Ethics

Post by “Don” of October 28, 2021 at 4:20 AM

## [Quote from Cassius](#)

How do you interpret the "this" in "And because this is the primary and inborn good, we do not choose every pleasure...?"

If we substitute "pleasure" there we get "And because pleasure is the primary and inborn good we do not choose every pleasure...."

Right. This = pleasure (overall).

The Epicurus Wiki does a good job of providing commentary on this section, as well as the Letter as a whole:

[http://wiki.epicurism.info/Menoceus\\_130-131/](http://wiki.epicurism.info/Menoceus_130-131/)

Epicurus defined pleasure (after a fashion) in the section directly previous to those I quoted before:

## Quote

health of the body and the serenity of the soul — since that is the goal of a completely happy life. Our every action is done so that we will not be in pain or fear. As soon as we achieve this, the soul is released from every storm, since an animal has no other need and must seek nothing else to complete the goodness of body and soul. Thus we need pleasure only when we are in pain caused by its absence; but when we are not in pain then we have no need of pleasure.

To provide some inline commentary of my own in ( ) below:

*Because pleasure (writ large) is the primary and inborn good, we do not choose every (activity that provides the feeling of) pleasure. Instead, we pass up many pleasures when we will gain more of what we need (i.e., pleasure) from doing so. And we consider many pains to be better than pleasures, if we experience a greater pleasure for a long time from having endured those pains.*

*So every pleasure is a good thing because its nature is favorable to us, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen — just as every pain is a bad thing, yet not every pain is always to be shunned.*

<http://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2231-episode-ninety-three-torquatus-leads-us-forward-into-conflict-over-epicurean-eth/?postID=14452#post14452>

*It is proper to make all these decisions through measuring things side by side and looking at both the advantages and disadvantages, for sometimes we treat a good thing as bad and a bad thing as good.*

The underlined section again reinforces why pleasure is the standard. We use it to make decisions, measuring our options side by side, looking at advantages and disadvantages between them, in relation to whether they will bring pleasure now or in the future.