

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

Post by "Don" of October 29, 2021 at 9:15 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

[Quote from Don](#)

My position is that the common denominator is simply that all things that result in pleasure is simply the fact that they bring pleasure. Sometimes for a short time, sometimes long, sometimes intense, sometimes subtle. But it's \*always\* pleasure

I have absolutely no problem with that statement so I wonder what you think is the best way to state what it appears to you we are disagreeing about(?)

Good question 😊

My interpretation of what you're saying (and PLEASE correct me if I'm misinterpreting!) is that your position is that some pleasures are "better"/"greater" than others: e g., Eating chocolate candies is "better" than eating coffee candies (for you). Pleasures can be "ranked."

My position is that ranking pleasures into a hierarchy is a pointless exercise. All things which give pleasure give pleasure, period, by definition. BUT, and this is Epicurus's innovation, they also differ from each other, including importantly the context within which the pleasure is experienced. Pleasure is a common characteristic of pleasurable experiences. We are attracted by pleasure. Pleasure is a good thing. But those who denigrate pleasure try to reduce it to a monolithic hornets nest of vice and something to be shunned and mistrusted. Epicurus says, "No, pleasure is pleasurable. Duh! Why would we reject it?" BUT just because all pleasure is pleasurable, doesn't mean you have to experience EVERY pleasurable thing.

The ONLY thing that matters is the pleasure-giving experience in front of you at any given moment - or that is planned for in the future - and the choice of whether or not to pursue or reject THAT pleasure using the criteria of whether or not THAT pleasure leads to a more pleasurable life experience or not. It's contextual. This pleasure may be indulged in now here, but at another time and place it should be rejected or delayed.

PS: In just reading the De Finibus sections you've laid out for Ep. 94, I think "Torquatus" is laying out this same argument.