

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

Post by “Godfrey” of October 29, 2021 at 7:03 PM

## DESIRES

### Quote

[PD29](#) Among desires, some are natural and necessary, some are natural and unnecessary, and some are unnatural and unnecessary (arising instead from groundless opinion).

[PD26](#) The desires that do not bring pain when they go unfulfilled are not necessary; indeed they are easy to reject if they are hard to achieve or if they seem to produce harm.

[PD30](#) Among natural desires, those that do not bring pain when unfulfilled and that require intense exertion arise from groundless opinion; and such desires fail to be stamped out not by nature but because of the groundless opinions of humankind.

(LM127ff) One should keep in mind that among desires, some are natural and some are vain. Of those that are natural, some are necessary and some unnecessary. Of those that are necessary, some are necessary for happiness, some for health, and some for life itself. A correct view of these matters enables one to base every choice and avoidance upon whether it secures or upsets bodily comfort and peace of mind – the goal of a happy life.

(LMxxx) Third, keep in mind that some desires are natural whereas others are groundless [note]; that among the natural desires some are natural and necessary whereas others are merely natural; and that among the necessary desires some are necessary for happiness, some for physical health [note], and some for life itself. The steady contemplation of these facts enables you to understand everything that you accept or reject in terms of the 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.

(LMxxx) Fourth, we hold that self-reliance is a great good — not so that we will always have only a few things but so that if we do not have much we will rejoice in the few

things we have, firmly persuaded that those who need luxury the least enjoy it the most, and that everything natural is easily obtained whereas everything groundless is hard to get. So simple flavors bring just as much pleasure as a fancy diet if all pain from true need has been removed, and bread and water give the highest pleasure when someone in need partakes of them. Training yourself to live simply and without luxury brings you complete health, gives you endless energy to face the necessities of life, better prepares you for the occasional luxury, and makes you fearless no matter your fortune in life.

Display More