

# From The "Golden Mean" to the "Summum Bonum" - Useful or Deceptive Frames of Reference?

Post by "Don" of February 13, 2022 at 1:15 PM

I'll need to go and read DeWitt's "summum bonum fallacy" (Where is that again?), but here's my take. I've ranted in similar themes before.

To my understanding, *summum bonum* is the Romans' way of translating Greek τέλος into Latin. They're both trying to get at the same thing. Pleasure is the "highest good", the goal, etc. because it is that to which everything else points. It's at the end of the road (τέλος/goal) to which all roads lead. It's the "highest good" because it's at the top of the mountain, Pleasure Point, and the Virtue Trail, the Wisdom Trail, the Name Your Path Trail, all end up trying to get you to pleasure. You are virtuous because it, in the final analysis, brings you pleasure whatever you'll admit it or not. Summum bonum doesn't seem to me to be a value judgment (as in "Pleasure is the *best among equals*"), it's a difference in kind from other things judged "good." It's the good thing to which all other "good things" point. All other "good things" are instrumental in achieving pleasure. Pleasure itself is not instrumental (other than being a necessary component of well-being/ευδαιμονία/happiness).