

# Why Minimizing All Desire Is Incorrect (And What To Do Instead)

Post by “Cassius” of December 6, 2024 at 5:45 AM

This is a very interesting discussion. I can't think of a lot more to add at the moment as I type this other than to emphasize that we need to explore it a lot further.

Perhaps too this is a place for discussion of the implication of some of what the Epicureans had to say about divinity. Even if (or especially if!) gods are considered to be thought constructs, what do our expectations of the life of a god tell us about what we should extrapolate to be the best life for ourselves. Would gods have no desires, or simply no "unmeetable" desires, or no lusts that intoxicate them, or what?

I am concerned that we may be mixing our monotheistic modern Judeo-Christian views of omnipotence into thinking that Epicurus would have thought that gods have no desires because they can magically create anything they want. I doubt that is something that Epicurus would have thought, so I think we need to be sure to steer clear of any implication that gods are supernaturally "above" things like desire.

So the germ of a thought here is that perhaps "desire" as a general category is something that is part and parcel of even our best extrapolation of the best life. If so, "desire" as a general category of human activity would by no means be inherently painful either in practice or in theory.

It is certainly tempting to take the position that if you have "desire" then that means you are "lacking" something, and that therefore all "lack" is felt as pain. However the implications of that position seem so far-reachingly negative (or are they?) as to be irreconcilable with Epicurus' approach that continuing to be alive is a fundamentally desirable thing.

But it's a position that we want to argue more confidently than our current discussion seems to allow. And I am not sure there is anything more important in Epicurean theory for us to address than the implications of this question. It wraps up a LOT of issues in a single package.