

Episode 270 - Life Is Desirable, But Unlimited Time Contains No Greater Pleasure Than Limited Time

Post by "Cassius" of February 22, 2025 at 3:41 PM

In other words, the reason we're having this discussion is not because Epicurus wanted to argue that there's no difference between a long pleasant life and a short pleasant life.

We're having the discussion because Epicurus wanted to show how pleasure can be viewed as having a limit - an utmost point that can be reached. In the case of virtue they've defined their utmost point as "pure virtue" -- virtue with no mixture of sin; good with no mixture of evil.

In the case of Epicurus's argument he has defined the utmost point as "pure pleasure." Pure Pleasure with no mixture of pain.

In both cases the utmost point is theoretical. It's a description using generalized words that tells you nothing about what specific activities the person being considered is actually doing with their time to reach the point of pure virtue or pure pleasure. The only thing you can say about whatever activities the "Virtuous" person is engaged in is that they are virtuous. The only thing you can say about whatever activities the "Pleasurable" person is engaged in is that those activities are pleasurable.

There's nothing wrong with this analysis as long as you admit that it's a purely logical and philosophical perspective. The real person in the real world still has to make specific decisions about what virtues to pursue and what pleasures to pursue. But this kind of analysis does give you a logical framework to organize your thoughts, and that is very valuable.