

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

Post by "Cassius" of February 23, 2025 at 6:22 AM

## [Quote from Godfrey](#)

In a worldview where life is finite, infinite time does nobody any good.

Godfrey if I am reading this correctly then I think you are right in the same way as Don's point in several posts above. Pleasures differ from one another in terms of duration, intensity, and parts of the experience that are involved. For a being with a finite life span, infinite time before and after our lives is of only intellectual relevance. Those are correct and important points.

I also agree that this phrasing amounts to a "shibboleth" - a challenge to think more deeply about the problem analogous to "the sun is the size it appears to be."

But I think there is also more that is going on. While it is true that (1) our bodies have finite lifespans and (2) that pleasures differ (which means that we have to choose intelligently among those pleasures), there is still the question of "Is it better to live a longer time than a shorter time?" which needs to be answered.

Epicurus' wording of this section of the PDs can be read productively and be seen to address this, or the section can be read as ridiculous on its face and used to attack Epicurus, as Cicero is doing.

Appearing to assert that "infinite time contains no greater pleasure than finite time" (as if length of time has no bearing on our experience of pleasure), has very much the same effect as appearing to assert that "the sun is the size it appears to be" or that "by pleasure we mean the absence of pain."

These statements are either profoundly helpful if you understand that they are challenging you to reason about these issues properly, or they are ridiculous on their face if you think they mean what people who doesn't understand or accept the way nature really works think they mean.

See what you think when you've read the Sedley article that Don just linked to from Academia.