

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

Post by "Cassius" of February 23, 2025 at 6:51 AM

I just noticed the abstract to the Sedley article: a very good summary especially the first sentence:

**Eudaimonia, happiness, is a property of a whole life, not of some portion of it.**

What can this mean for hedonists? For Epicurus, it is made possible by the mind's capacity to enjoy one's whole life from any temporal viewpoint: to relive past pleasures and enjoy future ones in anticipation, importantly including confidence in a serene closure. Enjoying your life is like enjoying a day as a whole, not least its sunset. Although pleasure is increased by greater duration (contrary to a more favoured reading), and premature death therefore better avoided, the finitude of human life as such does not lessen its value, and even a premature death need not prevent a life's being enjoyed as 'complete'. In this chapter, the above interpretation is documented, explained, and contextualized in terms of Epicurus' diametrical opposition to his contemporaries, the Cyrenaics.

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Brilliant summary. Flies in the face of much prominent academic orthodoxy. Prompts me again to say that David Sedley is at or near the top of greatest living writers on Epicurus. Without him and a few others we'd have a largely stoicized Epicurean academic world taking the position that duration has no relationship to pleasure.