

Daily life of ancient Epicureans / 21st Century Epicureans

Post by "Robert" of May 27, 2025 at 6:29 PM

[Quote from Don](#)

I'm late to the game here, but I'd offer that philosophy - as conceived of in the ancient schools - was always meant to be lived. One chose a school (or took a more eclectic approach as I'd argue Cicero does in certain ways), and lived one's life in accordance with what one learned from one's teacher and one's school: Stoic, Peripatetic, Platonic, Skeptic, Epicurean, etc. As time went on, "religion" moved into that sphere - I'm thinking especially of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism (although some call that a philosophy - depends on the flavor I suppose), especially when those major religions got the imprimatur of government authority... like when the Roman emperor decided it would behoove him to have one emperor, one religion, one empire kind of thing. Later, philosophy became (in the popular and academic mind) a "subject" one studied apart from living one's life. In more recent time, the ancient schools - I'd argue spearheaded by "Stoics" (and, yes, I'm putting it deliberately in quotes) - have seen a revival of sorts, including [philosophical counseling](#). Our little corner of the internet is one of the ways Epicurus' philosophy is part of that renewal, revival, and renaissance.

Yes, it's the applied aspect that's been on my mind. Perhaps because we most often encounter philosophy as an academic subject, the province of scholars and historians, it can seem more like intellectual entertainment than an approach to living. And, as you point out, when folks today are interested in the question "how should I live?," religion is the go-to.

Just curious--could you elaborate further on your view of modern-day Stoics? I haven't delved into that corner of the philosophical world too much, other than listening to a few podcasts, but I'm interested to know where you see the divergences (from actual Stoicism). How well do you think modern-day Epicureans navigate the relationship with tradition--given that Epicureanism in classical times was said to value orthodoxy (to the point of not disagreeing with or criticizing the Hegemon), and yet there are obviously a few areas where rethinking is necessary, as in some parts of the physics.

[Quote from Don](#)

As others have mentioned, Epicurus took part in commemorations (rituals) of his own birthday, his family's, his friends, and took part in the large city festivals regularly. I think you can also incorporate an Epicurean mindset when taking part in holidays -

even if you attend church services as pro forma with family. Epicurus and the early Epicureans took part in rituals and processions and other civic affairs that paid homage and sacrifice to the gods; but I'm convinced they were not (mentally) taking part the way most in the crowds were participating. They saw the gods differently, but could take pleasure in the festivities and even the sacrifices which were a part of every civic festival. So, enjoy our (American) secular festivities like Thanksgiving, or "religious/secular" events like Christmas.. but feel free to put your own Epicurean spin on things even its only to yourself.

I'm reminded of an interview I heard recently with a British actress who had grown up Catholic. She had lost her faith many years ago, but still loved the ceremonial aspects of Catholicism-- indeed, she said it was her first introduction to theater. 😊