

# Epicurus' Hierarchy of Needs

Post by "Cassius" of June 3, 2025 at 10:42 AM

This is probably a good time for a reminder that the only authoritative explanation (so far as I recall at the moment - are there others?) of the natural/necessary classification (aside from the scholium in DL which is of uncertain source) is that of Torquatus in On Ends (Reid translation).

If this is accurate, and I believe it is, then the focus is simply that as to the "neither natural nor necessary" it is not possible to discover any boundary or limit."

So those that have no boundary or limit to them (live forever; world domination) are particularly dangerous and inadvisable.

But more generally, unless someone aspires to be world dictator, are not virtually all of the pleasures we are debating in the "natural but not necessary" category, and all of those questions are resolved by balancing the pleasure and pain that we can expect to follow from particular choices?

## Quote

[45] I ask what classification is either more profitable or more suited to the life of happiness than that adopted by Epicurus? He affirmed that there is one class of passions which are both natural and needful; another class which are natural without being needful ; a third class which are neither natural nor needful; and such are the conditions of these passions that the needful class are satisfied without much trouble or expenditure ; nor is it much that the natural passions crave, since nature herself makes such wealth as will satisfy her both easy of access and moderate in amount; and it is not possible to discover any boundary or limit to false passions.