

PD21 - Commentary and Interpretation

Post by “Kalosyni” of February 2, 2026 at 1:35 PM

[PD21](#). "He who has learned the limits of life knows that that which removes the pain due to want, and makes the whole of life complete, is easy to obtain, so that there is no need of actions which involve competition."

I was curious what was meant by the word "competition" and so I did a search and found...

...this article:

[Agonistic Orientation and Cultural Dynamics in Ancient Greece](#)

Quote

This essay centers on the cultural experience that the Greeks had to face again and again in ever-new circumstances: agonistic orientation. Ancient Greek culture was highly competitive. There was hardly an area of life that wasn't shaped by competitive thinking. On the one hand, the ethos of competition united all of Greece and separated it from other cultures. On the other hand, this ethos also divided them as individuals from each other within their own culture, being under the persistent pressure to distinguish themselves. The Greek word "*agon*" covers all the dimensions of competition: it refers to the warlike conflict of life and death as well as political rivalries. It also denotes the competition between professions and ways of life as well as the competition between athletes and artists.

Knowing the role of competition within ancient Greek society (among male citizens) really sheds some light on understanding [PD21](#).

Since in modern times non-stop competition only exists with certain professions (such as stockbrokers in the stock market, etc, etc.) and competitive sports (such as football, etc.) and is only taken on by the few who engage in those activities, and so most people do not face the mental stresses and agitation that that kind of competition can bring on.