

PD21 - Commentary and Interpretation

Post by “DaveT” of February 3, 2026 at 11:02 AM

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

people do not face the mental stresses and agitation that that kind of competition can bring on.

[Quote from Kalosyni](#)

[PD 21]"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."

The PD 21 speaks to me somewhat. As a small-town lawyer and then a writer and author, I understand you weren't excluding any professions when you cited stockbrokers, etc. etc. as being the only ones subject to competition. I can add that in my Bar Association, there was an intense level of competition from the highest to the lowest for clients, fame, and community admiration. And in publishing, the competition among writers is a constant source of stress while trying to find a publisher and an audience.

And although I have no data to back me up, I think the population of the USA is acculturated to capitalism's competition. And we are subject to the pressure of "keeping up with the Joneses" by measuring ourselves against the apparent material attainments of friends and neighbors, as well as depictions in advertising in the media. We can reduce stress to a degree by having the wisdom to understand necessary/unnecessary, natural/unnatural desires and their limitations to attain pleasure/happiness. But there are limits, stress causing limits on what we can actually do about it.

Unfortunately, given modern life, we can't survive unless we compete for necessary things like jobs, better wages, more customers, which allow us to have decent food, clean water, secure housing and healthcare for ourselves and our aged family members.

I don't see how we have a choice to reduce that competition given the economics of modern life. This is not to belittle the wisdom of PD 21 as applied to the ancient Greeks, but perhaps it was easier for them to make the "whole of life complete" than it is for all the people who work for a living to attain the same ends. Perhaps the family structure of Athens was also a factor, but I do not know how it compared to our modern world.