

Epicurean philosophy vs. Stoicism in public popularity

Post by "Cassius" of December 13, 2021 at 8:13 PM

I think you're on the right track and even before that -- welcome to active posting after lurking for quite a while! 😊

As I scan through your comments I think all of them are correct. It occurs to me to say that my experience is that there are very "practical" people for whom your observations are pretty much all they ever need to see. Given those observations, which are correct, they then go back to focusing on the practical side of life, where they are most comfortable, and that's all they need to know or care about. That's fine.

But there are others who really "get into" the logical arguments that divide the two schools, and those people don't find it satisfying to stop at the observation that "the virtues" and "pleasure" go hand in hand. And it's also my experience that many of those people who don't want to stop there are some of the most devoted Stoics, because they are focused on the "epistemological" issues, even maybe more so than the physics issues.

Maybe to better explain the point I am thinking about I would suggest you read sometime (if you haven't) the latter books of Cicero's ON ENDS where he attacks Stoicism from his own more standard "Academic" perspective. His attack is really vigorous and I think makes a lot of sense even from (or especially from) a non-Epicurean perspective, and Cicero probably helps draw into the open why people should be dissatisfied with Stoicism.

So my answer to your question is "yes I think you understand it right as far as you have gone so far." And the question of whether you want to go further to focus on the more abstract issues is entirely up to you and what makes you happy - since from our Epicurean perspective your goal is in fact happiness based on pleasure, rather than as the Stoics might say, "knowledge for the sake of knowledge." For some people it takes plowing into the more abstract issues, for others it doesn't.