

What Do You Take From The "Golden Mean" of Aristotle?

Post by "Eikadistes" of February 9, 2022 at 12:20 PM

In general, Aristotle's *Golden Mean* privileges the space between the "extremes" of *pleasure* and *pain*.

Epicurus privileges *pleasure*.

Epicurus' *pursuit of pleasure* is distinguished from Aristotle's *pursuit of excellence*. Aristotle thought that an excellent person would necessarily enjoy happiness, whereas Epicurus recognized that an *excellent* person is *only* "happy" when enjoying the fruits of their excellence. *Excellence*, itself, is not the motivating goal. *Pleasure* is the goal.

The "Epicurean *Golden Mean*" (to use Aristotle's vocabulary) is always pleasure, **not** *courage*, or *temperance*, but *pleasure*.

Now, that's not to devalue the profitability of practicing moral virtue, it's simply a recognition that the *Golden Mean* is not really what motivates us, and that Aristotle is wrong in de-prioritizing pleasure. Both philosophers agreed on the importance of living moderately and avoiding excess. The issue of *pleasure* is where they disagree on ethics.