

# Pleasure, Desire and Limits

Post by “Godfrey” of July 18, 2022 at 4:10 PM

To drill further into desires....

To my understanding, and I think Philodemus supports this, desire was something that was dealt with in detail in Epicurean communities. Since it requires the setting of limits which are specific to each person and to each context, this would be the most effective, practical way to treat desires.

Theoretically, it would appear that one key to working with desires is to understand what Epicurus meant by "natural" and "unnatural". If I'm not mistaken, the unnatural desires are the only ones that he says have no limits.

[PD15](#) *The wealth demanded by nature is both limited and easily procured; that demanded by idle imaginings stretches on to infinity.*

[PD29](#) *Among desires some are natural (and necessary, some natural) but not necessary, and others neither natural nor necessary, but due to idle imagination.*

[PD30](#) *Natural desires that afford no pain if they are not indulged, though they are eagerly pursued, arise from groundless opinion; and when they are not dispelled it is not because of their own nature but because of the man's groundless opinion.*

[LM127](#) *...on the one hand, there are the natural desires; on the other, the 'empty, fruitless, or vain ones.' And of the natural ones, on the one hand, are the necessary ones; on the other, the ones which are only natural; then, of the necessary ones: on the one hand, those necessary for eudaimonia; then, those necessary for the freedom from disturbance for the body; then those necessary for life itself. [128] The steady contemplation of these things equips one to know how to decide all choice and rejection for the health of the body and for the tranquility of the mind, that is for our physical and our mental existence, since this is the goal of a blessed life. (Don's translation)*

[LM130](#) *Additionally, we believe αὐτάρκεια is a great good. Not so that we are furnished with the use of a few things; but, if we were to have many things, we would be content with few things. Those in need who are genuinely convinced of this find extravagance more pleasant, and that every natural desire is easily procured, and an empty desire difficult to get. (Don's translation)*

I've run out of time and will have to leave this for now. The bones are here, but they still need parsing 🤔