

# Would You Rather Live For A Week As (1) Epicurus During the Last Week of His Life or (2) An Anonymous Shepherd Laying In The Grass In The Summertime With No Pain At All?

Post by "Don" of September 8, 2023 at 6:03 AM

Now we're getting somewhere!

Your Menoikeus quote is an interesting one. I went back to see how I translated it:

Quote from Menoikeus, Don translation

Just as the most food is not chosen but that which brings the greatest pleasure; choose as well not the longest time but that in which one enjoys the fruits of that which bring the greatest pleasure (ἀλλὰ τὸν ἥδιστον καρπίζεται.).

The key word that gets skimmed over by a lot of translations is καρπίζεται (karpizetai) "enjoy the fruits (of that which brings the greatest pleasure (ἥδιστον hēdiston))" which is related to Latin carpo as in carpe diem "pluck/harvest the day". There's a literal sense of reaping the benefits, enjoying the fruits, of the most pleasurable experience, the sweetest choice.

By consciously choosing the hypothetical - for me! someone else's mileage may vary - that involves living in severe pain for a week then dying, whether or not I'm imbued with the knowledge of Epicurus or surrounded by his friends, doesn't sound "fruitful" to me, to riff on καρπίζεται. One, by definition of the hypothetical, couldn't "come back" and share that knowledge. But do I know I'm me living as Epicurus, or am I just Epicurus living his life with no memory of me?

This seems akin to the choice of "Would you choose to be given "god-like" knowledge for a day then die?" What good would it serve to know everything and not be able to share it?

Epicurus didn't choose to experience the severe pains of his final acute illness. That was a part of his life that wasn't up to him. How he dealt with it is admirable, maybe even inspirational. So I don't see the fruitfulness in choosing that final week. It's still the shepherd for me if I am required to choose.