

# Episode 191 - Cicero's On Ends - Book One - Part 02

Post by “waterholic” of September 16, 2023 at 9:07 AM

Great episode again, thank you all!

Sharing here some of the thoughts after finishing the episode, not yet sure if i am there yet.

As [Cassius](#) suggested, generally there are two camps: those who would prefer more evidence for pleasure as a guiding principle, and those who are fine with just accepting it as observation.

For some reason, this episode gave me another thought: we often compare pleasure and virtue (broadly - stoic or christian) as alternative "ends", with Epicurus suggesting that virtue is only one of many tools towards the end goal.

But I now think that virtue and pleasure are on entirely different planes. At heart Epicurus is not a moralist or a theologian. He is as close to today's scientists as one could have been in those days. He builds a convincing (my bias of course) line of thought:

1. Physics: "virtue" does not exist outside the natural world. If so, what's the point and can we know at all?
2. Canonics: it is possible to know by observing the nature and deducing from observation (nature as a guide). Broadly, there is no point, just the universe as an accidental development.
3. Ethics: observation shows that pleasure is the "natural switch" to induce us to do or skip doing things. Whether one likes it or not, pleasure is hhe mechanism. This is a biological argument. Beyond this, as very complex creatures we may use this knowledge to build a life altogether more enjoyable. Or we can live that life without that knowledge.
4. Philosophy comes handy, when we are naturally disadvantaged in attempting to live such a life due to platonic/stoic/religious ideas that take hold of the society (which is why it's never too early or too late to learn philosophy!)

Still unstructured thoughts, but the discussion helps to "peel thr onion".