

# Eat Drink and be Merry!

**Post by “Godfrey” of September 29, 2023 at 9:53 AM**

This is all true as far as it goes. But, to my understanding, Epicurus didn't stop there. He realized that opponents would ridicule this for being too broad, and that adherents might need a more systematic approach to living a life of pleasure. This is one reason why he discussed the categories of desires. It's also why he didn't stop at [PD03](#), but continued with PDs 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25 and 27, as well as the extant letters and further writings which no longer exist.

Far from being a ranking of pleasures, these texts of Epicurus' are, to me, practical descriptions and instructions for living a pleasurable life. I'm currently interpreting [PD09](#) in particular in this way. Regardless of what words Cicero put into the mouth of Torquatus, as individuals we each need to find a more personal, targeted approach to the goal than "a life crammed full of pleasures" (or whatever the exact words were that Cicero used). (As an aside, this is one reason that so many people new to the forum ask about "exercises".) Epicurus gives us these tools, if we reason them out.

"A life crammed full of pleasures", while technically correct to some degree, smacks of snark and sarcasm, and is totally useless in refining an ethics of pleasure. Distinctions such as intensity, duration and location aren't categories of pleasure, but are components of pleasures. I understand that this may be a controversial interpretation, but I think that it's a correct one. Or at least one worth giving more thought to.

You don't learn to play the flute by producing the most sounds, but by understanding the components of the flute and reasoning out how to produce the sweetest and/or most expressive sounds. You don't live a life of pleasure by cramming in the most pleasures or pursuing illusory, infinite pleasures. You live a life of pleasure by pursuing what, for you, are the sweetest pleasures. To this end Epicurus gives us means to subtle understanding. To undermine this end, Cicero gives us snark that gets us to argue among ourselves.