

# Episode 216 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 23 - Why Does Epicurus Say Length Of Time Does Not Contribute To Pleasure?

Post by "Cassius" of February 28, 2024 at 4:27 PM

## [Quote from Godfrey](#)

So one's goal is to prudently maximize one's pleasure, which is limited by one's lifespan. Cicero's argument is about the larger issue of materialism v idealism.

I think this is a helpful direction, Godfrey, but I think it will need further explanation to be clearly understandable.

Is Epicurus in fact saying that a longer life is not more pleasant than a shorter life, or is he only comparing the limited human span (whatever it is ) to an unlimited span? Cicero is arguing that Epicurus said that length of time adds nothing to pleasure. Did Epicurus in fact say that? If that is the case, then the position applies to no matter how long or short that the human life is, not just that it is "limited." If complete pleasure can be experienced the first day we are born, and nothing more is needed and we are indifferent to living longer, than we should say so explicitly. I do not think that is what Epicurus meant.

As to materialism vs idealism, I suppose I am not sure that materialism is the opposite of idealism. Maybe it's the opposite of spiritualism or supernaturalism, but is "idealism" the same thing as those two? Were the Stoics really that obtuse as to think that there is something called "virtue" that if grasped only for a moment is all that one needs to be satisfied? It seems they said so, but I don't think we can clearly discuss what they were saying without more reference material / citations that establish what they were thinking.

As we asked in the episode, is it not clear to anyone that it would be "better" to be virtuous for a year than for a day? Maybe the question is defining "better," but if some limited or special definition of "better" is the issue, then we need to know what that is so that we can see if Epicurus was applying that same definition to pleasure.

This is a good time to try to hash through some of these questions so we can add a substantive entry to the FAQ and/or other places on the website, because I don't think we are anywhere close to a persuasive explanation of what Epicurus was really saying.

Of course I invite anyone to propose a full statement reconciling these issues including the contrast with the Stoics! 😊