

Episode 267 - Virtue Is Not Absolute Or An End In Itself - All Good And Evil Consists In Sensation.

Post by "Cassius" of February 12, 2025 at 1:57 PM

You know in listening to this episode and particularly our discussion of [PD05](#) as compared with Torquatus' statements about how his own family's exploits can be reconciled with pleasure as the goal:

I think sometimes it might be tempting to think that every moment of living prudently, honorably, and justly can somehow be a kind of pleasure in itself. Just as some people see "absence of pain" as a special kind of pleasure, it might be tempting to say that every moment of "living justly" is somehow pleasurable.

But I think Torquatus' examples make very clear is that while the *end result* is more pleasure or less pain, there are certainly times when you are acting virtuously that those experiences are in themselves painful.

Certainly the Torquatus ancestor who executed his own son for disobeying orders was not experiencing some kind of transcendent pleasure at the moment of watching his son's execution.

I make these comments because it seems very clear that pursuing pleasure as the goal of life is a "NET / ON BALANCE" affair -- we can't expect that every moment of physical and mental experience is to be pleasurable, but what we can expect is that "on balance" the pleasures of life (both stimulative and non-stimulative) will outweigh the pains.

So anyone who thinks that there it makes sense to calculate every mental and physical action - for example by living as minimally and ascetically as possible so that you never experience even the briefest moments of pain -- is not on the right track. To pursue such a path ignores how it is right and proper that we sometimes choose pain to live the most pleasant life possible to us.