

Why pursue unnecessary desires?

Post by "Cassius" of May 3, 2025 at 8:48 AM

I think these two statements are important, and I could probably find one from Godfrey and Kalosyni and others to the same effect. There are legitimately several approaches to Epicurus - including at least (1) clinician and another (2) as a "philosopher."

[Quote from Don](#)

At the risk of muddying waters, I'm not sure looking for the "logical" reasons behind Epicurus' categorization of desires is as fruitful as it may sound. My perspective veers more toward seeing Epicurus as an observational researcher of the natural world and synthesizing those observations into workable practical applications for real people.

[Quote from Titus](#)

I would like to say yes, but this is just a theoretical yes as I consider the classification of desires as a guidance tool for choosing priorities. In this sense, the category of natural and necessary desires is something that has to be of number one priority to us.

Again I think both are valid approaches and they are a large part of what we need to continue to do here at the forum. At the moment I'm thinking that it's important to emphasize both and not leave either unappreciated, similar to how both Menoecus AND Herodotus are important.

Clearly Epicurus thought enough of the natural and necessary distinction to refer to it in both the letter to Menoecus and the Principle Doctrines. If one wanted to debate priorities, one side could note that this formula comes before even the detailed discussion of pleasure in the letter to Menoecus, but on the other hand it comes rather late (29) in the [Principal Doctrines](#).

One could also argue that he who focuses only on the logic misses some of the practical usage, while he who focuses only on the practical uses is powerless against the forces of the world which deny him the practice of pleasure.

I think everyone here at the forum does a good job of keeping both in perspective, but I am equally confident that outside the forum, the elevation of the practical application to the preeminent role is a major problem that needs to be tackled. So I'll admit much of what I write tends to be aimed at preparing arguments for external audiences, or those who aren't familiar with Epicurus and who need to know what to prioritize in their initial reading. But in the end, both the focus on practice and the focus on theory are needed as they depend on each other.