

Episode 285 - TD15 - The Significance Of The Limits Of Pain

Post by "Cassius" of June 7, 2025 at 3:12 PM

Welcome to Episode 285 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world.

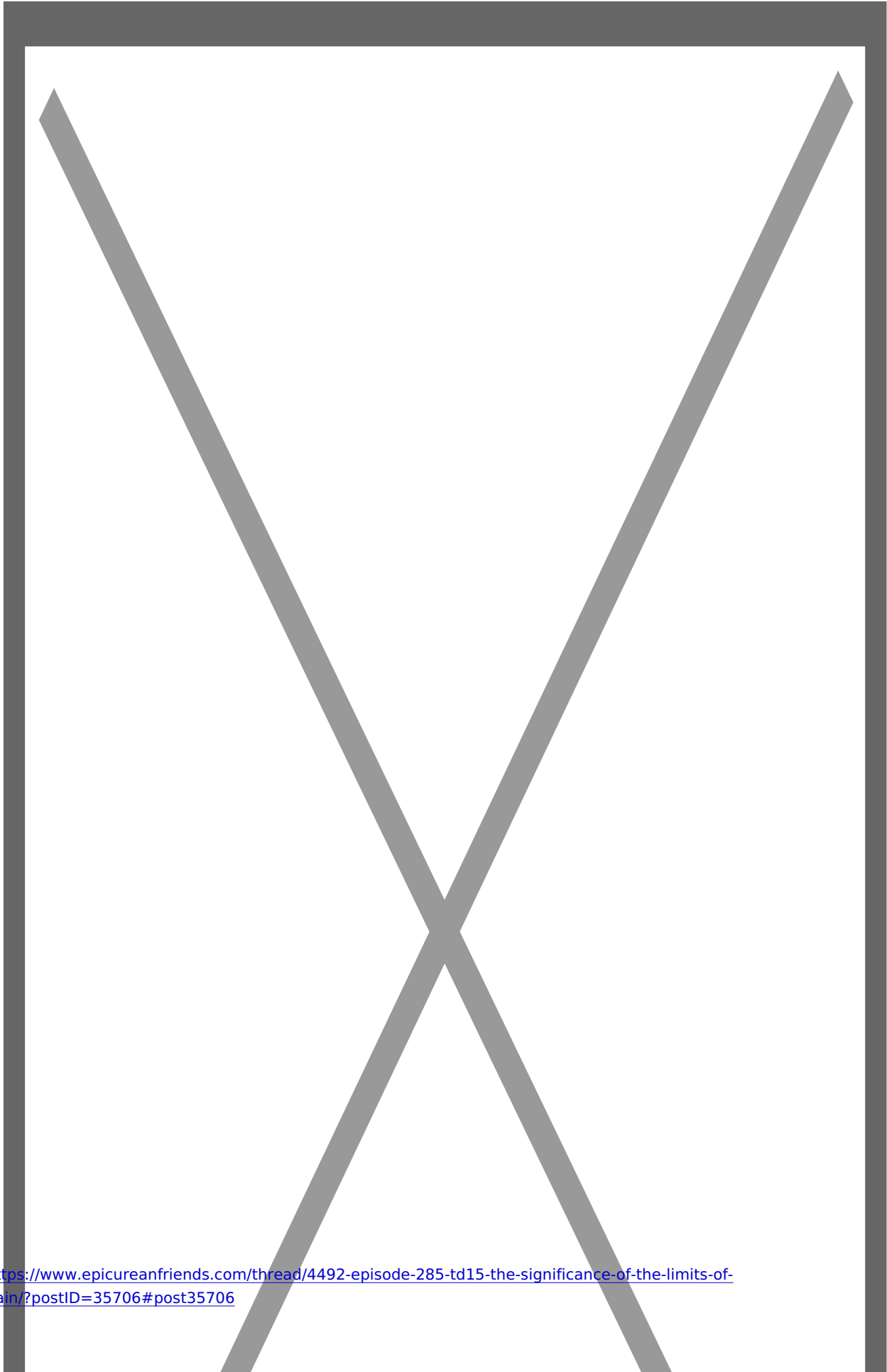
Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at EpicureanFriends.com, where we discuss this and all of our podcast episodes.

This week we continue our series covering Cicero's "Tusculan Disputations" from an Epicurean viewpoint. This series addresses five of the greatest questions in human life (Death, Pain, Grief/Fear, Joy/Desire, and Virtue) with Cicero speaking for the majority and Epicurus the main opponent:

Today we continue in Part 2 - "Is Pain An Evil?." Last week we focused on Cicero's observations that we can prepare ourselves for bodily pain through exercise and training, a point in which Cicero did not pick out Epicurus as an opponent, and on which the ancient Epicureans would likely have agreed, at least to an extent. This week, Cicero tells us that he is going to leave to the Stoics to argue that pain is not evil, and he himself is going to proceed to talk about his opinion on how to deal with bodily pain, whether you are a soldier or a philosopher. We'll be picking up today with [Section XVIII](#), and we'll see that Cicero focuses his attack on Epicurus' Principal Doctrine 4, and that will give us a great opportunity to explore that doctrine more closely.

Just as he was mentioned last week as an example of someone suffering great pain, *Philoctetes* is again mentioned by name as a point of reference, so we'll want to acquaint ourselves with his story:

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<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4492-episode-285-td15-the-significance-of-the-limits-of-pain/?postID=35706#post35706>

[Philoctetes - Wikipedia](#)

en.wikipedia.org

I don't see anything there that indicates that Philoctetes cried out over his pain in an embarrassing way, but thus Cicero seems to say at [XXIII](#):

But this should be principally regarded in pain, that we must not do anything timidly, or dastardly, or basely, or slavishly, or effeminately, and above all things we must dismiss and avoid that Philoctetean sort of outcry.

As might be expected, Cicero spends a lot of time talking about facing down pain in wartime, but at [XXV](#) he turns to the topic of dealing with pain in peacetime.

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