

Episode 295 - Plutarch's Absurd Interpretation of Epicurean Absence of Pain

Post by "Cassius" of August 21, 2025 at 9:53 AM

[Quote from Rolf](#)

Why do we seek variation of pleasure? Why should we seek variation of pleasure?

Because nature tells us that all pleasure is pleasing and that is why it is called pleasure.

[Quote from Rolf](#)

How would you respond to confusion about absence of pain in a single clear and concise paragraph?

Epicurus considered "absence of pain" to be a philosophical term which describes the condition of any part of the body or mind, or of one's life as a whole, from which pain is absent. We need this general term because everyone's circumstances are different, but we still need a logical and understandable objective. Once you identify that all of life resolves into two feelings (pleasure and pain), and you choose to view your experience as a whole as a jar to be filled, it becomes logically obvious that the most desirable life possible is that in which the jar is filled with pleasures. Stating that your goal is "absence of pain" is the same as stating that your goal is "pleasure." Neither term implies that you are limiting your choice of pleasures to a particular physical or mental activity, and you are certainly not going to limit it to a subsistence minimum when more desirable pleasures are available. All pleasures are desirable, but some pleasures are more desirable than others. The proper goal is to set out to fill your experience (your jar of life) with the most pleasant combination of pleasures possible for you. Consideration of "natural and necessary" desires does not undermine this viewpoint, but supports it. Every step along the way of pursuing a jar full of pleasures, this consideration provides a rule of thumb that is not absolute but provides guidance as to which choices are most likely to lead to more pain than pleasure.