

# Sunday November 2, 2025 - Zoom Discussion 12:30 PM EST - Continuation of Discussion of Nature of Pleasure

Post by “DaveT” of October 27, 2025 at 5:23 PM

@Eikadistes Thank you for taking the time to respond to the above questions. I think your explanations were instructive to me and also they solidified my instincts. Additionally, (and however) I think the point of this thread is not explaining Epicurus to the masses.

## [Quote from Eikadistes](#)

He also says, "Never did I reach to please the masses, for truly what pleases them, I did not understand, but what I understood was far away from their perception" (Usener 187).

On the contrary, the focus at least for me, is to address the newcomer to EpicureanFriends, as well as when I'm explaining my beliefs to a friend in casual conversation.

The Pleasure/Pain focus, rather than the absolute truth of his belief, is not the most pressing issue for the modern day understanding of Epicurus' brilliant analytic methods. And I thought when @Cassius was asking for feedback at the Zoom meeting for ways to give clear and concise explanations of Epicureanism to newcomers, it was an important topic.

I think understanding of Pleasure/Pain motivations for living happily should depend less on a reliance on defining Pleasure over and over with one caveat after another and which every reader may interpret in their own way depending on their life experiences and depend more on the overall truth Epicurus discovered.

De Witt, in [Philosophy for the Millions](#), says: "In spite of this teaching it was not the doctrine of Epicurus that pleasure was the greatest good. To his thinking the *greatest good was life itself*. (Italics added) This was a logical deduction from the denial of immortality. Without the afterlife this present life becomes the concentration of all values...."

My guesstimate is that the newcomer to Epicureanism is seeking clarity of purpose. And therefore they may be best served by a response focused on an overall belief that the "greatest good" is "life itself". Phrased that way, that avoiding suffering and finding happiness are the tools to the greatest good, seems a far better approach to me.

Final note: When you want to win an argument with detractors, and we understand there have been over two thousand years of detractors who (still) have won over the western world culture, you don't repeat the very word they demean when you respond to attack. The

ingrained inference that pursuing pleasure is shameful in a world where sacrifice to attain the next life is simply too strong a current to swim against by giving deeper and deeper explanations of the meaning of the word. Sometimes you need to cede the battle of "well pleasure does not mean..." and move on to building a better understanding of Epicureanism with alternate words like Life Itself is the Greatest Good.