

# Sunday November 9, 2025 - Zoom Discussion 12:30 PM EST - Epicurus on Good And Evil

Post by “Cassius” of November 11, 2025 at 4:42 PM

## [Quote from DaveT](#)

For me, as I learn more about Epicureanism, I identify with most of the tetrapharmikos.

There is nothing to fear from gods or natural phenomenon, yes.

There is no afterlife of which to be suspicious, yes.

And Pleasure is easy to obtain, yes, but it's hard to measure.

while Pain can be easily endured, no, I'm not willing to acknowledge that this is a universal truth.

The problem in my view is not with the germ of thought that apparently gave rise to the phrasing of the fourth of the statements, but that the formulation makes it look like a claim to being an oracular claim to revealed universal truth when the full wording of [PD04](#) is much more realistic and practical.

As bad or worse is that isolating it in this way strips the statement of its context. I'm convinced the context is the very stark question of "how can you be sure that you'll remain happy when the evils of the body and external evils are not within your complete control. That's the challenge that they were answering, such as in the way that Cicero framed it in Part 5 of Tusculan Disputations:

## Quote

And this very thing, too, Metrodorus has said, but in better language: “I have anticipated you, Fortune; I have caught you, and cut off every access, so that you cannot possibly reach me.” This would be excellent in the mouth of Aristo the Chian, or Zeno the Stoic, who held nothing to be an evil but what was base; but for you, Metrodorus, to anticipate the approaches of fortune, who confine all that is good to your bowels and marrow,—for you to say so, who define the chief good by a strong constitution of body, and a well assured hope of its continuance,—for you to cut off every access of fortune? Why, you may instantly be deprived of that good. Yet the simple are taken with these propositions, and a vast crowd is led away by such sentences to become their followers.

Cicero may deride this as simplistic snake-oil that takes in the unsophisticated, but [PD04](#) is very reasonable and unchallengable. Moderate pains can be lived with, and if pains get so bad we can't live with them and don't go away, we ourselves have the remedy in that we can terminate our lives. In no way does pain have the ability to hold us in its grip forever. We are in control, not pain. Metrodorus' formulation explains the calculation, especially when it is given in FULL:

#### Quote

VS47. I have anticipated thee, Fortune, and entrenched myself against all thy secret attacks. And I will not give myself up as captive to thee or to any other circumstance; but when it is time for me to go, spitting contempt on life and on those who vainly cling to it, I will leave life crying aloud a glorious triumph-song that I have lived well.

And that's why I see Dave's concern , which is so often shared by others, The Tetrpharmakon serves well as a memory device for educated Epicureans, but others who throw it around without knowing the full ideas that it outlines are often woefully misinterpreting it.

And to repeat for Dave and for lurkers, you NEVER hear the Tetrpharmakon formulation stated by Epicurus, or by Lucretius, or by Dlogenes of Oinoanda, or by anyone else whose text is expansive and fully-preserved and completely clear.

The hazard is exactly what we see Dave stating. Dave thinks he has to reject something that he believes to be a well established and core statement of Epicurean doctrine when it is not.