

# Happiness As Not Requiring Complete Absence of Pain

Post by “Cassius” of December 4, 2025 at 11:30 AM

Also from section 14 of the same chapter:

Quote

## XIV.¶

To me such are the only men who appear completely happy; for what can he want to a complete happy life who relies on his own good qualities, or how can he be happy who does not rely on them? But he who makes a threefold division of goods must necessarily be diffident, for how can he depend on having a sound body, or that his fortune shall continue? but no one can be happy without an immovable, fixed, and permanent good. What, then, is this opinion of theirs? So that I think that saying of the Spartan may be applied to them, who, on some merchant's boasting before him, that he had despatched ships to every maritime coast, replied, that a fortune which depended on ropes was not very desirable. Can there be any doubt that whatever may be lost, cannot be properly classed in the number of those things which complete a happy life? for of all that constitutes a happy life, nothing will admit of withering, or growing old, or wearing out, or decaying; for whoever is apprehensive of any loss of these things cannot be happy; the happy man should be safe, well fenced, well fortified, out of the reach of all annoyance, not like a man under trifling apprehensions, but free from all such. As he is not called innocent who but slightly offends, but he who offends not at all; so it is he alone who is to be considered without fear who is free from all fear, not he who is but in little fear. For what else is courage but an affection of mind, that is ready to undergo perils, and patient in the endurance of pain and labour without any alloy of fear? Now this certainly could not be the case, if there were anything else good but what depended on honesty alone. But how can any one be in possession of that desirable and much-coveted security (for I now call a freedom from anxiety a security, on which freedom a happy life depends) who has, or may have, a multitude of evils attending him? How can he be brave and undaunted, and hold everything as trifles which can befall a man, for so a wise man should do, unless he be one who thinks that everything depends on himself? Could the Lacedæmonians without this, when Philip threatened to prevent all their attempts, have asked him, if he could prevent their killing themselves? Is it not easier, then, to find one man of such a spirit as we are inquiring after, than to meet with a whole city of such men? Now, if to this courage I am speaking of we add temperance, that it may govern all our feelings and agitations, what can be wanting to complete his happiness who is secured by his

courage from uneasiness and fear; and is prevented from immoderate desires and immoderate insolence of joy, by temperance? I could easily show that virtue is able to produce these effects, but that I have explained on the foregoing days.