

Guilty conscience in Epicurean justice.

Post by “Eikadistes” of January 8, 2026 at 9:02 AM

[Quote from wbernys](#)

Agreed but with that said do you think a "feeling of guilt/disgust/shame" is something an Epicurean can hold as a genuine reason for virtuous activity

Absolutely.

We define *virtue* as a good used to achieve the goal of pleasure, and we recognize *virtuous behavior* as acting "*practically, properly, and peaceably*" (KD5). Practicing these virtues requires choice and avoidance, like avoiding things that lead to guilt, so avoiding guilt is **definitely** virtuous because it is a choice made to reduce pain and maximize pleasure, which is the goal of life. I'd put it right up there with avoiding doom-scrolling and yelling and political commentators on cable.

[Quote from wbernys](#)

moral progress often takes so long, disgust or shame at the idea of breaking tradition, race mixing, irreligiosity, or not being "patriotic enough", making it a real double edged sword.

I watched this documentary on Netflix last night about child abuse in Utah ... the bottom-line is that the perpetrators were controlling mothers and fathers by manipulating their religious guilt (*over **really** inconsequential things like masturbating and looking at adult porn*), and had those people surrender their children... AND THEY DID! Watching it, I couldn't decide if I was angrier at the vicious abusers, or their weak parents. Guilt was central in all of this, and a special kind of false, religious guilt, unjustified, but strongly felt, and it lead to **actual** crimes against children.

Even then, though, a proper analysis of guilt could have revealed that the religion is bunk. If you have guilt over an objectively non-harmful action, it's time for some therapy. Proper therapy would have revealed that the judgy messages from religion are harmful, not masturbating. Thorough analysis would also have questioned the methods of the abusers, rather than conform. I think the trick is in determining if your feeling of guilt is justified, or if you've been gaslit. That's tricky.