

Current Series - Summarizing Epicurean Answers to Academic Questions

Post by “DaveT” of January 31, 2026 at 9:26 AM

[Cassius Kalosyni](#) I'm glad for the questions since it helps me clarify my own thinking.

[Quote from Cassius](#)

could you restate your ultimate conclusion or question?

I guess it is my inclination to look for clarity for modernity's application of the ancient wisdoms that engendered my post. My tentative conclusion/question is: Why can't we clearly state and attribute Epicurus' teaching to his synthesis of the Greek culture he was raised in with his process of taking that culture of the ancient Virtues to the next level of WHY and HOW we attain happiness via minimizing pain and maximizing pleasure?

As Kalosyni pointed out in the Principal Doctrine she cited, there is no conflict in recognizing the Virtues of the ancients (and any virtues recognized by ourselves) and adhering to the Epicurean WHYS and HOWs to be happy.

You both do a wonderful job of clarifying the distinctions between the schools, full stop! Your work on the podcasts with [Joshua](#) illuminates so much for me and most likely many others. There's so much there to learn about.

It bothers me somewhat to hear criticism of the other schools with a broad brush in response to their attacks on Epicurean thought. It might sound odd coming from a retired lawyer, but resolving one dispute needn't solely focus on the misstatements and accusations of the opponents. That leads to arguments that never end (except in courtrooms where judgements can be final!)

So, my conclusion/question is the hope that we can sharpen the incorporation of virtues as described by the ancient Greeks with Epicurus' concepts; how he took their ideas to the next step in the universally shared search for happiness for mankind. This, I hope, can happen by acknowledging how we simply can't fully pursue pleasure unless we learn and incorporate the virtues of the society we choose to live in (or adapt for ourselves).

Wisdom (Prudence), Courage, Temperance, and Justice are ESSENTIAL root-tools for us to regulate our desires. We can recognize this and reject that they are eternal forms existing outside of the material world. That recognition is the genius of Epicurus, as he synthesized the earlier schools, taking what he agreed with and discarding the rest.