

What would Epicurus have thought of going to the moon?

Post by "Cassius" of April 12, 2026 at 6:06 AM

One thing I'd add is that if we go by the list in the [principal doctrines](#), only the concept of there being no supernatural gods comes before the doctrine that "you only live once." (And even the absence of supernatural gods is directly related to living only once and for a short period.)

In my first answer I focused on everyone having different personal tastes and preferences in life. We have a limited amount of time to pursue what we find to be most pleasurable, and I don't see how it makes sense to do anything other than pursue our greatest pleasures in as intelligent a manner as we can.

All that is to say that some people doubtless have zero interest in flying into space. If they have no desire to do that and find no pleasure in it, then of course they won't choose to do so. Far be it for me to tell them that they are wrong about their feelings - everyone has to make those decisions for themselves.

But for me, and I see this compelled by *life is short and then it's over*, I am drawn to the conclusion that I need to use my time as productively as possible to do things that bring me the greatest pleasure. For me, "tranquility" in the sense of detachment from all emotion -- which is what some people seem to think that "absence of pain" means - is not my goal.

To me, writers who focus on talking about "absence of pain" do not see that Epicurus was using that term as the exact equivalent of the word "pleasure." They are ignoring the very logical reasons why he did so, and the very detailed explanation of those reasons found in Cicero and Diogenes Laertius.

So philosophically I think Epicurus would say people who think going into space would bring them pleasure than pain under their own circumstances should do it. Those who think it would bring more pain to them than pleasure should not do it.

But in my own case I apply that rule this way: I know that knowledge and new experiences are not necessarily pleasurable in themselves. It makes no sense to pursue knowledge or experiences which do not lead to greater pleasure. But if I could do so safely -- and at some point that will be possible - I can think of few if any experiences that would bring more pleasure than space travel.