

Charles' Personal Outline

Post by "Cassius" of September 3, 2019 at 6:24 PM

[Quote from Charles Edwins](#)

It is also worth noting that what is terrible in life is easy to endure.

And this formulation is why I am so careful not to overuse or apply the Tetracharmakon too broadly. On its face this statement would be perceived by many people to be ridiculous, uncaring of their suffering, etc. And since this statement does not come from Epicurus himself, but from an uncertain author in a Herculaneum papyrus without surrounding context, I would be very careful applying it too broadly.

My personal view is that the best way to deal with this issue is to cite the full PD4 -

"4. Continuous bodily pain does not last long; instead, pain, if extreme, is present a very short time, and even that degree of pain which slightly exceeds bodily pleasure does not last for many days at once. Diseases of long duration allow an excess of bodily pleasure over pain." -

...While at the same time remembering that this is part of a sequence of philosophical positions that are (IMHO) clearly intended to address anti-Epicurean talking points (Plato's [Philebus](#) in particular) that concerned the viability of pleasure as the theoretical highest goal.

I find it very difficult to believe that Epicurus ever looked at a suffering friend and said "What is terrible in life is easy to endure" or anything like that.

The Tetracharmakon is an easy to use formulation for those who understand the theory, but IMHO this formulation is the worst of the four, with "don't fear the gods" coming in second, "what's good is easy to get" third, and the least offensive (because it is most true to the sense of the PD from which it comes) being "don't fear death."