

Is Pleasure the Only Good?

Post by "Joshua" of September 15, 2019 at 2:05 PM

We often say as a kind of shorthand that pleasure is the only good. This isn't wrong, but like all shorthands, it may be open to misconstruction. What I think we mean by this is: "Pleasure is the only [intrinsic] good [in life]." This is merely a way of speaking about value; pleasure is good because it has intrinsic value. Pizza (like the slice of Sbarro I'm eating as I type this) seems to be good, but it's only good by virtue of utility; the value of pizza is extrinsic, deriving only from the net pleasure it can deliver. "But does it not have value as nourishment?" Yes, but the value of nourishment is likewise extrinsic. It provides the energy we need for life, and the end or goal of life is the only intrinsic good; pleasure.