

Tranquility v Pleasure

Post by "Cassius" of February 24, 2020 at 11:43 PM

Godfrey and Mike, we three here in this conversation are wrestling with the same issue, I think.

One thing I can add to the conversation as a result of having been involved in discussing this for close to ten years now is this:

It never seems to get easier to confront this, but it does get HARDER. As time goes by, everyone who is initially drawn to the picture that Epicurus painted have to confront the issue of whether they are willing to charge forward under the real issue (the feeling of pleasure) or whether to water it down with "happiness" or "ataraxia."

What I can tell you is that so many people who confront this issue end up falling away. They get tired; they just can't face the implication of being clear on this issue -- because it means being almost alone against the multitudes in academia AND religion. They burn up or burn out, stop fighting, and drift away.

I don't think it is possible to move forward in Epicurean thinking without being "faithful" to Epicurus on this point. I think it explains the downfall of the ancient Epicureans (much more so than the rise of Christianity) that the later Epicureans weren't able to keep Epicurus' focus on this key central issue.

This ("the feeling of pleasure") is the hill to die on for anyone who is really convinced that Epicurean philosophy is something special.