

On the associations between Virtue and Pleasure and my Epicurean Write up

Post by "Cassius" of March 27, 2018 at 7:56 AM

Eoghan thank you for that post! First, as you'll probably see at the moment we have a much smaller subscriber base here than Facebook, so you might want to post both places. However this is the place where I intend to focus my activity and work to build a real community. As you are around longer in the Facebook group you will see what I mean. It is good for "advertising" but not so much for long-term closeness on the goal of Epicurean philosophy.

You seem very serious about this so let me repeat my recommendation of that Nikolskly and Wenham articles (which are posted here in the Files section) <https://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/filebase/> I have tried to place the main articles here, but for someone who is REALLY interested in the background, there's no substitute for the full Gosling & Taylor "Greeks On Pleasure." But the articles here are a good start.

One specific on your post: I think "Friendship" is an example of the cliché "hard cases make bad law." Yes, the doctrine means just what it says, that Friendship is among the most productive tools for pleasurable living, right at or near the top. But I think if you drill down in "On Ends" and in Diogenes Laertius you will see that Epicurus himself was always very rigorous to observe that tools are only TOOLS, and that tools should never be confused with pleasure itself. If one allows an exception to that rule then you do indeed fall into the trap of ranking tools AS IF they were pleasures themselves, and you end up with hard and fast rules about what TOOLS you should ALWAYS pursue, instead of keeping your eye on the ball that in an atomistic, undetermined, godless universe, there are never going to be 100% hard and fast choices that guarantee particular results. Sometimes even friendship will fall away if the goal of pleasurable living is to be honored. Sometimes we will even die for a friend, but if the friend is lost and tells us to walk away to save ourselves, it is not necessarily the "right" thing to do to die with the friend. A totality of circumstances, not an abstract principle that friendship is an end in itself, must dictate the result.

Thank you again for posting!