

# Episode 208 - Cicero's On Ends - Book Two - Part 16 - Epicurus Stands For the Truth Rather than Make-Believe

Post by "Cassius" of December 30, 2023 at 7:55 PM

Welcome to Episode 208 of Lucretius Today. This is a podcast dedicated to the poet Lucretius, who wrote "On The Nature of Things," the most complete presentation of Epicurean philosophy left to us from the ancient world. Each week we walk you through the Epicurean texts, and we discuss how Epicurean philosophy can apply to you today. If you find the Epicurean worldview attractive, we invite you to join us in the study of Epicurus at [EpicureanFriends.com](http://EpicureanFriends.com), where you will find a discussion thread for each of our podcast episodes and many other topics.

This week we continue our discussion of Book Two of Cicero's On Ends, which is largely devoted Cicero's attack on Epicurean Philosophy. Going through this book gives us the opportunity to review those attacks, take them apart, and respond to them as an ancient Epicurean might have done, and much more fully than Cicero allowed Torquatus, his Epicurean spokesman, to do.

Follow along with us here: [Cicero's On Ends - Complete Reid Edition](#). Check any typos or other questions against the original PDF which can be found [here](#).

This week we move continue in Section XVII as Cicero begins a series of illustrations which he holds up as examples of moral worthiness (as if Epicurus' views do not embrace this conduct as well!)

VII. We are inquiring then not merely about an unprincipled man but about one who is both crafty and unprincipled, as Quintus Pompeius shewed himself when he disowned the treaty with Numantia, one moreover who is not afraid of everything, but, to begin with, sets at nought the consciousness that is within him, which it costs him no effort to suppress. The man whom we call secret and deep, so far from informing against himself, will actually produce the impression that he is grieved by another person's unprincipled action; for what does shrewdness mean, if not this? I recollect acting as adviser to Publius Sextilius Rufus when he laid before his friends this difficulty, that he was heir to Quintus Fadius Gallus, in whose will there was a statement that he had requested Rufus to see that the whole property passed to the daughter. This statement Sextilius said was untrue, and he might say so without fear, for who was to refute him? None of us believed him, and it was more probable that the falsehood lay with the man to whom it brought advantage than with him who had written that he had made the very request which it was his duty to make. The man said further that having sworn to observe the Voconian

law he could not venture, unless his friends thought otherwise, to contravene it.

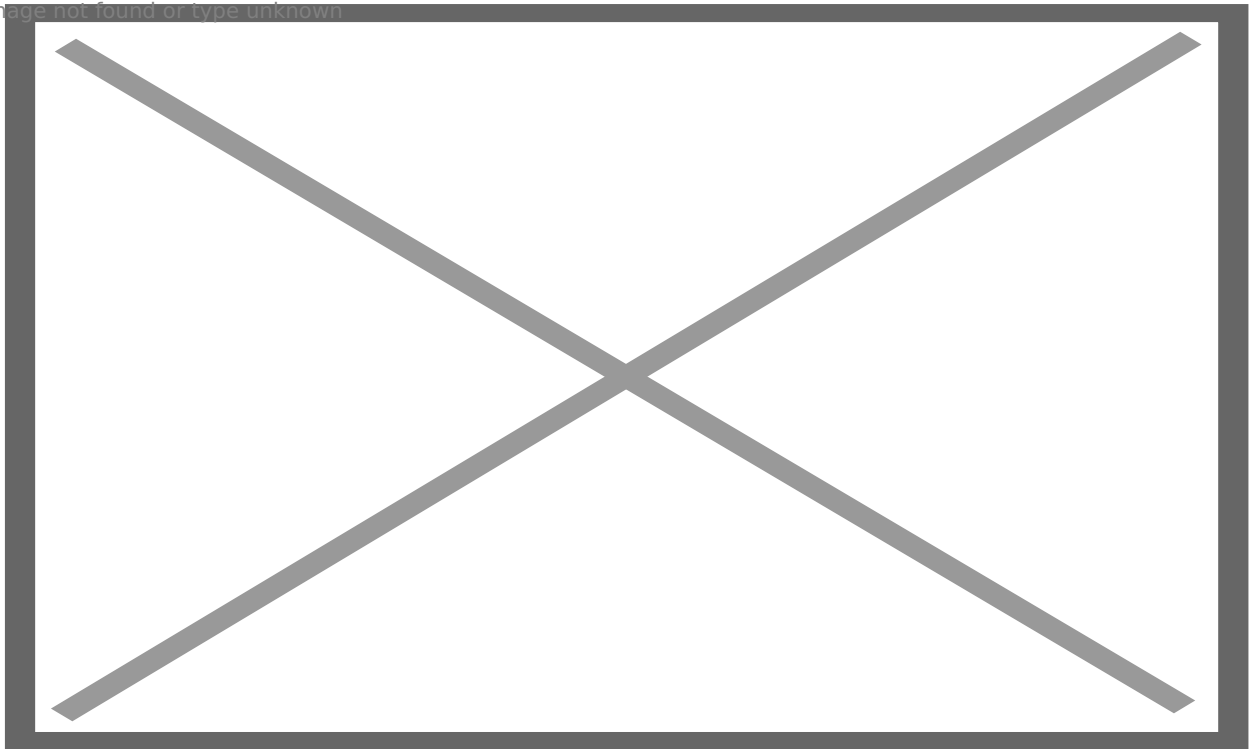
<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/58166573>

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## Post by “Cassius” of December 31, 2023 at 7:09 PM

Today's end-of-year episode continues our discussion of Cicero's assertion that it is impossible to be moral without bowing to "virtue." Cicero wraps up virtue pretty tightly with religion where much the same argument applies: that you can't be a good person without being religious. On that point today I came across this Nietzsche selection which I think provides a very relevant response to that. (Caution - i don't know anything about the website; just that it provides this quote in nicely-formatted style):

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[Nietzsche on morality without God and English flatheads](#)

They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality. That is an English consistency; we do not...

[www.danieljoachim.org](http://www.danieljoachim.org)

This is the first part:

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3617-episode-208-cicero-s-on-ends-book-two-part-16-epicurus-stands-for-the-truth-rath/>

### [Quote from Nietzsche - Twilight of the Idols](#)

They are rid of the Christian God and now believe all the more firmly that they must cling to Christian morality. That is an English consistency; we do not wish to hold it against little moralistic females a la Eliot. In England one must rehabilitate oneself after every little emancipation from theology by showing in a veritably awe-inspiring manner what a moral fanatic one is. That is the penance they pay there.

We others hold otherwise. When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality out from under one's feet. This morality is by no means self-evident: this point has to be exhibited again and again, despite the English flatheads. Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole: nothing necessary remains in one's hands. Christianity presupposes that man does not know, cannot know, what is good for him, what evil: he believes in God, who alone knows it. Christian morality is a command; its origin is transcendent; it is beyond all criticism, all right to criticism; it has truth only if God is the truth—it stands or falls with faith in God.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of January 1, 2024 at 12:58 PM**

Happy New Year! Episode 208 of the Lucretius Today Podcast is now available. This week we address Cicero's contention that only those who hold virtue to be the highest good can be truly good men, and we respond that Epicurus stands for truth rather than make-believe. An especially good closing statement by Joshua is included in this episode.

<https://www.spreaker.com/episode/58166573>

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of January 2, 2024 at 2:34 PM**

Well done, as always!

There was a lot of focus on the future pleasure of the utility of fair dealing, honesty, decency and acting justly. I just want to state the obvious, which is that acting in these ways often brings immediate pleasure, irrespective of possible future utility.

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3617-episode-208-cicero-s-on-ends-book-two-part-16-epicurus-stands-for-the-truth-rath/>