

The Early Stoics

The Good, the Bad & the Indifferent

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"No kind of philosophy is more profitable ... than the philosophy of the Stoics." —Thomas James

"Stoicism is the greatest system of organized thought which the mind of man had built up for itself in the Greco-Roman world. ... It represents a way of looking at the world and the practical problems of life which possesses still a permanent interest for humankind, and a permanent power of inspiration." —Gilbert Murray

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This item comes from the Cave's
The Best of the Early Stoics: The Lives, Writings & Teachings of the Early Stoics.

The Early Stoics

The Good, the Bad & the Indifferent

The good is that which is beneficial. The bad is that which is harmful. The good both produces and is happiness, whereas the bad both produces and is unhappiness. As virtue, the good is in step with nature and reason; as vice, the bad is not.

Indifferent things neither contribute to happiness nor to unhappiness (such as good and bad things do). Some do no more benefit than harm; some can be used both well and badly.

GOOD THINGS (the **beneficial**)

Virtue or **virtues**, including the primary virtues (practical wisdom, courage, moderation, justice) and secondary or subordinate virtues (such as good counsel, patient endurance, magnanimity, self-control).

Things that **participate in virtue** or the virtues, such as virtuous acts, as well as wise friends and an excellent homeland (one governed well or wisely).

BAD THINGS (the harmful)

Vice or **vices**, including the primary vices (folly, cowardice, immoderation, injustice) and secondary or subordinate vices (such as a lack of self-control, slow-mindedness, bad counsel).

Things that **participate in vice** or the vices, such as vicious acts, as well as foolish friends and a non-excellent homeland (one governed poorly or foolishly).

INDIFFERENT THINGS

Indifferent things include bodily and external things, including life and death, health and disease, working senses and non-working senses, strength and weakness, pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness, wealth and poverty, noble birth and low birth, and a good and bad reputation.

VALUE: a thing has value if it is in accord with nature, or it produces something else that is so, and it is deserving of choice.

PREFERRED THINGS

(are in accord **with nature** and have **value**)

Life, health, working senses, bodily wholeness, strength, beauty, wealth, noble birth, a good reputation, natural ability, and moral progress.

REJECTED OR NOT PREFERRED THINGS

(are **not** in accord **with nature** and have **no value**)

Death, disease, non-working senses, disability, weakness, pleasure, pain, ugliness, poverty, low birth, a bad reputation, lethargy, lack of natural ability, and lack of skill.

THE DIVINE PERSPECTIVE REGARDING ALL THINGS

“For you, Zeus, what is unpleasant is pleasant. In this manner you have joined together all noble things with things ignoble, so that there is one everlasting rational principle in all things.”

—*Hymn to Zeus*, Cleanthes of Assos

So ends this item. See you in **another reading or item** from the Cave.



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