

Happiness

Reading 16 – Epicurus & Epicureanism

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"He who lives well is blessed and happy." —Socrates

"Long is the path that leads to happiness through words alone. But the path that leads to happiness through the practice of daily deeds is short." —Crates of Thebes

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Reading 16

Epicurus & Epicureanism

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This reading comes from the Cave's
Happiness—What the Ancient Greeks Thought and Said about Happiness.

As the title indicates, this reading, after a brief introduction, presents what Epicurus (and Epicureanism) thought and said about happiness.

"Regarding Epicurus, there is an abundance of witnesses who attest to his unsurpassed goodwill and kindness to all men. . . . His friends were so many in number that they could hardly be measured by whole cities. No one familiar with the siren charms of his teachings ever deserted him." —Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*

FOR WELL OVER half a millennium and beyond, Epicurus (c. 341-270 BC) greatly influenced the ancient world of Greece and Rome. His teachings provided the guiding light for a large number of human souls. For some, he was "the glory of the Greeks." For others, he was a "liberator" and "the very wisest of men."¹ The Roman statesman and philosopher

Seneca counseled his friend Lucilius Junior, who was the emperor Nero's chief financial officer in Sicily, to "act as if Epicurus were always observing you." Seneca issued the advice well over three hundred years after Epicurus died. And even though he generally aligned himself with Stoicism—as many educated Romans did in the middle of the first century AD—

Seneca nevertheless had a positive view of Epicurus and his philosophy, labeling Epicureanism “good and upright”—if, he cautioned, it was properly understood.²

Nearly four hundred years before Seneca, a young Epicurus was puzzled. Reading Hesiod’s *Theogony*, he wondered what the ancient poet had meant by “Chaos.”³ Later, he posed the question about Hesiod’s Chaos to his teachers. Apparently they could not answer him. And so, Diogenes Laertius reports, Epicurus “turned to philosophy” for answers, realizing that ancient myths or stories could not answer the questions he wanted to answer.⁴

Epicurus first learned from the Platonist Pamphilus. But he wasn’t what the young man was looking for. Instead, the atomist philosopher Nausiphanes had a far stronger impact on his views and the later formation of his teachings. Nausiphanes adhered to the ideas of the Presocratic philosopher Democritus, who believed that all of reality was reducible to atoms (tiny, literally “uncuttable” or *atomos* bits of stuff) and the void or emptiness. In short, this “atomism” is what Epicurus also came to believe.

Born some seven years after Plato died, Epicurus grew up on the Greek island of Samos, just off the

coast of modern Turkey. When he was eighteen, he sailed to Athens to register as an Athenian citizen and complete his military service. Over the next fifteen years or so, he taught and established his own following as a philosopher in several Greek cities before returning to Athens. There he bought some land and a house and established a school of philosophy in the house’s garden around 306 BC. Given its location, his school was called “the Garden.”

For the following nearly four decades, Epicurus taught and modeled his philosophy until his death. During those years, he inspired many to live well. He had found something—a simple practice of pleasure, a tranquility of mind, and a happiness of heart—that he wanted others to experience. He taught and wrote, therefore, in order to spread his wisdom and way of life. To offer one simple example: Whenever Epicurus wrote a letter, he replaced the usual greeting, which was “May you be glad” or “May you be delighted,” with “May you do well” and “May you live earnestly.”

It is to the content of this doing well and living earnestly—that is to say, the content of Epicurean happiness—that we now turn.⁵

Unless otherwise noted *in italics*, the following selections are all from Epicurus himself.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

We begin with selections revealing what Epicurus and his school generally believed about the nature of happiness. In short, happiness is closely connected to pleasure—but pleasure rightly understood. The most important aspect of happiness is mental tranquility (ataraxia)—mental freedom from any kind of disturbance.

We say that pleasure is the beginning point and goal of living happily.⁶

Bodily health and mental tranquility . . . is the goal of a blessedly happy life.⁷

Mental tranquility means being released from all these troubles (fear and mental disturbance resulting from the imagined activities of the divine heavenly bodies,

thoughts about the nature of death, and “anticipation of some everlasting evil”) and keeping in mind the general and most important points (of Epicurean philosophy).⁸

Practical troubles and anxieties and feelings of anger and the granting of favors do not accord with bliss but always imply weakness and fear and dependence upon one’s neighbors.⁹

Diogenes Laertius (presenting Epicurus’ distinction between katastematic and kinetic pleasures) In his work On Choice, Epicurus says, “Freedom from trouble and freedom from pain are katastematic pleasures—that is, they imply a state of rest. Joy and good cheer are viewed as kinetic and active.”¹⁰

Diogenes Laertius (reporting the Epicurean position regarding the kinds of happiness) There are two kinds of happiness. There is the happiness of the god, the highest kind, which cannot be increased. The other kind may increase or decrease in terms of pleasures.¹¹

It is not the young man that we consider most happy, but the old man who has lived well. Even though the young man is in his prime, he drifts, confused and many-minded thanks to the fortunes of happenstance, whereas the old man has passed into old age even as a ship sails into a harbor, secure in gratitude for the good things that earlier he did not even hope for.¹²

Diogenes Laertius In his letters Epicurus replaces the usual greeting, “May you be glad” or “May you be delighted,” with “May you do well” and “May you live earnestly.”¹³

We continue with a bit of cheerleading by Epicurus, and general advice, regarding how to move toward happiness. Significantly, we must act now—today—no matter where we are along life’s trajectory. This acting centers on the study of philosophy and the practice of its conclusions. The big point: happiness is something actively done.

We must practice those things that produce happiness since if happiness is present, we possess everything, and if it is not, we do everything to acquire it.¹⁴

Do and practice those things that I have continually recommended to you, taking them to be the basic elements of living well.¹⁵

Let no one put off studying philosophy when he is young, nor become weary of it when he is old, for no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. To suggest that the time for studying philosophy has not yet come or that it is long gone is like saying that it is too early or too late for happiness.¹⁶

We come into being only once and will not be born a second time. Rather, we necessarily will never exist

again—forever. And though you have no power over tomorrow, you put off feeling joy today. Life is consumed by such indecision and procrastination! And so, each one of us is dying without engaging in life today.¹⁷

At one and the same time, we must laugh and do philosophy and manage our households and the rest of our private affairs, always proclaiming the sayings of the true philosophy.¹⁸

Take thought of and practice these matters and related precepts day and night, both by yourself and with others who are like-minded. If you do, then you will never be disturbed by confusion, whether you are awake or dreaming. Instead, you will live like a god among human beings. For the man who lives among immortal blessings loses every likeness to mortal beings.¹⁹

Next, Epicurus argues that we are free to choose and practice happiness. There is no Fate, he says, only necessity, chance, and human agency. In this way, he liberates the Greek mind from its long belief in the dominance of Fate and destiny. He also frees us to act apart from the approval or praise of others.

The man who has considered the natural goal of life and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how the limit of bad things is either short in its duration or slight in its distress. He scorns the notion of destiny that some introduce as the master of all things, affirming rather that some things happen by necessity, others by chance, and others through our own agency. This is because he sees that necessity promotes irresponsibility and that chance or fortune is unstable, whereas our own actions are free, and it is to them that praise and blame are attached.²⁰

The wise man does not hold chance (or luck or fortune) to be a god as the many do, assuming as he does that, with a god, nothing is done in a disorderly fashion. Nor does he hold that chance is even an unreliable cause,

for he believes that chance delivers nothing good or bad to humans toward living happily—though, to be sure, chance furnishes the beginning point of the excessive goods of fortune and misfortune.²¹

Necessity is something bad, but there is no necessity to live by means of necessity.²²

The approval of others is necessarily their own business. As for us, we must get on with our own healing.²³

Moving on, Epicurus teaches that we must actively pursue the study of philosophy for the sake of happiness. For him, philosophy is divided into three parts: canonic (the means by which we may know things), physics or natural philosophy (the study of the nature of reality), and ethics (the pursuit of the good life). He stresses that the point of philosophy or knowledge is peace of mind, happiness—it is not merely to collect facts or build up a philosophical system. For Epicurus, knowledge without happiness is somewhat, if not wholly, pointless.

Let no one put off studying philosophy, . . . for no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul.²⁴

We must hold that the function of the study of natural phenomena is to clearly understand the cause of the most important things. And we must hold that blessed happiness depends on this.²⁵

We would have never needed to investigate natural phenomena if we had not been disturbed by worry about things that happen in the sky or by the misgiving that death means something to us or by our failure to understand the boundary markers of suffering and desire.²⁶

Remember that, like everything else, knowledge of celestial phenomena—whether taken along with other things or in isolation—has no other purpose than tranquility of mind and resolute conviction and confidence.²⁷

In the study of nature, we must not accept empty assumptions and arbitrary laws. Rather, we should follow the promptings of the phenomena, the facts themselves. We have come to the point where our life has no need for non-rational and empty opinion. Our one need is to live undisturbed, without trouble.²⁸

The study of nature does not produce boastful men or bigmouths or those who show off the learning that the many argue about; rather, it produces fearless and self-sufficient men, who pride themselves on their own personal goods rather than on circumstances.²⁹

Next up, in the context of “the basic elements of living well,” Epicurus addresses how we can be happy relative to the gods, death, desire, and pleasure and pain, among other points.

First, the gods. Many in Epicurus’ time were afraid of the gods, including the heavenly bodies (the sun, moon, and stars) that were revered as gods by many. To combat such fear, Epicurus teaches that it is unnecessary to fear the gods since they are by nature happy and indestructible or immortal.

You should acknowledge that the god is an indestructible and blessed living being. This is the commonly held understanding of the god, the common epithet in writing. Accordingly, do not attribute to him anything that is contrary to his indestructibility or incongruous with his blessed happiness. Instead, think about the god whatever can defend and uphold his blessed happiness and his indestructibility.³⁰

There is yet one more point to grasp—namely, that the greatest disturbance arises in the human soul thanks to the belief that the heavenly bodies are blessed and indestructible, while these same bodies simultaneously wish and act and cause in ways that are incompatible with these attributes.³¹

We should acknowledge that revolutions and solstices and eclipses and risings and settings and the like take place without the administration or command, either now or in the future, of some being that

simultaneously enjoys perfect bliss as well as indestructibility. This is so because practical troubles and anxieties and feelings of anger and the granting of favors do not accord with bliss.³²

A blessed and indestructible being is not bothered by troublesome business, nor does this being trouble others. Therefore, such a being is free from anger and the feeling that he is obliged to grant favors since these feelings imply weakness.³³

Just as there is no need to fear the gods, so there is no need to fear death. "This is so," Epicurus says, "because every good and every evil is connected to sensation. And death is the loss of all sensation." Not only that, but "when we exist death is not present, and when death is present we do not exist."

You should get used to the idea that death means nothing to us. This is so because every good and every evil is connected to sensation. And death is the loss of all sensation. It follows that a right understanding of the fact that death means nothing to us makes the mortal nature of life beneficial to us—not by adding to life an unlimited amount of time, but by taking away the yearning for immortality.³⁴

As long as the soul is in the body, it never loses sensation through the removal of some other part. The container may be dislocated in whole or in part, and portions of the soul may thereby be lost. Despite this, the soul will nevertheless retain sensation if it manages to survive. But as soon as those atoms that make up the nature of the soul have departed—however few—the rest of the human organism no longer has sensation, whether the whole of it survives or only a part. Moreover, when the whole of the human organism is broken up, the soul is scattered and no longer has the same powers as before, nor the same motions. Therefore, the soul no longer possesses sensation.³⁵

There is no terror at all in living for the one who has thoroughly grasped that there is no terror at all in not living. Foolish, therefore, is the man who says that he fears death because it pains him to think about its

eventual coming rather than actually paining him when it comes. Whatever causes no trouble when it is present causes only groundless pain in its mere anticipation. So then, death—that evil which most causes us to shudder—means nothing to us since when we exist, death is not present, and when death is present, we do not exist.³⁶

As we've already noted, happiness for Epicurus is connected in some manner to pleasure. For this reason, it is tied to desire, which moves us toward pleasure. Since this is the case, these questions follow: what sort of pleasures should we desire? And what sort of desires should we seek to satisfy? In brief, Epicurus' answers are: not every pleasure and only some kinds of desire—in general, those that are natural and necessary. The pleasure that truly makes for happiness is easy to get and maintain.

A pleasant life is not produced by stringing together one drinking party after another, or by having sex with young boys or women, or by enjoying fish and other delicacies set on a luxurious table. Instead, it is produced by sober reasoning that examines what is responsible for every choice and avoidance, and expels those beliefs by which the greatest confusion lays hold of the soul.³⁷

We must present the following questions to all our desires. What will happen to me if the desire I wish to satisfy is fulfilled? What will happen if it is not?³⁸

Of the desires, some are natural and necessary, whereas some are natural but unnecessary. Others are neither natural nor necessary but arise thanks to groundless notions.³⁹

We must consider that of the desires, some are natural, and some are groundless. Of the natural desires, some are necessary, and some are merely natural. And of the necessary desires, some are necessary for happiness, some for freeing the body from disturbance, and some for living itself.⁴⁰

Unnecessary desires are those that lead to no pain if

they remain unsatisfied. They involve an appetite that is easily relieved whenever its satisfaction is hard to procure or when it seems likely to cause harm.⁴¹

He who understands the limits of life knows how easy it is to procure what it takes to remove the pain of need and make the whole of life complete. Therefore, there is no need for things that can only be procured by means of struggle and troublesome business.⁴²

The wise man is one who has considered the natural goal of life and understands how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained.⁴³

Natural wealth is both limited and easy to get. But wealth based on groundless opinion grows without limit.⁴⁴

We desire pleasure, which, Epicurus declares, “is our first good.” It is “the beginning point and goal of living happily.” Exploring its nature, Epicurus observes that pleasure “is an appropriate feeling, natural,” concluding that it is fundamentally “the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.” This “absence,” rather than some presence, is therefore the proper measure of pleasure. Any pleasure beyond this absence is simply variation.

We recognize that pleasure is our first good, present at birth.⁴⁵

Diogenes Laertius (giving the Epicurean view of pleasure and pain) Epicureans say that there are two feelings in every living being. They are pleasure and pain. They further say that pleasure is an appropriate feeling, natural. By contrast, pain is strange, unnatural.⁴⁶

We say that pleasure is the beginning point and goal of living happily. We recognize that pleasure is our first good.⁴⁷

When we say that pleasure is the beginning point and goal of life, we do not mean the pleasures of decadent men or the pleasures of sensuality, as some ignorant persons believe, or those who do not agree with us,

or those who have willfully misrepresented our position. Rather, by pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.⁴⁸

Diogenes Laertius (explaining the Epicurean position regarding soul pleasure and body pleasure) Epicurus recognizes both pleasure of the soul and of the body. . . . He believes that pleasures of the soul are greater than those of the body.⁴⁹

Diogenes Laertius When it comes to the nature of pleasure, Epicurus and the Cyrenaics differ. The Cyrenaics only accept kinetic pleasure, that is, pleasure in motion; they do not accept static, or katastematic, pleasure. By contrast, Epicurus accepts both. . . . In his work *On Choice*, Epicurus says, “Freedom from trouble and freedom from pain are katastematic pleasures. Joy and good cheer are viewed as kinetic and active.”⁵⁰

The standard measure for the greatest amount of pleasure is the removal of every pain. Whenever pleasure is present, as long as it lasts, there is neither pain nor distress nor both together.⁵¹

Pleasure in the flesh will not increase after need-based pain is removed. After that, pleasure may only be varied. And the limit of pleasure in the mind is reached in thinking about these and like things that used to cause the greatest fears in the mind.⁵²

Epicurus counsels us to choose those things that lead to happiness and avoid those that do not. This general advice once again brings up pleasure and pain—what they are and what our relation to them should be if we’re shooting for happiness. The answer? We should choose pleasure but not every pleasure. Similarly, we should avoid pain but not every pain.

Diogenes Laertius It is by means of these two feelings (pleasure and pain) that animals either choose or avoid something.⁵³

Pleasure is the beginning point of every choice and avoidance. We resort to pleasure when we use feeling as the measure for judging every good.⁵⁴

Even though pleasure is our first and inborn good, we nevertheless do not choose every pleasure. Rather, we oftentimes forgo many pleasures when a greater annoyance will follow from choosing them. And oftentimes we acknowledge that many pains are better than many pleasures when an even greater pleasure follows from patiently enduring these pains for a long period of time. And so, even though every pleasure is naturally good and fitting, not every pleasure is to be chosen. In the same way, even though every pain is bad, not every pain is always to be avoided. To be sure, we may aptly judge every case by measuring one feeling in comparison with the other and taking a look at the advantages and disadvantages of both sides. Sometimes we treat a good thing as though it is bad. On the other hand, sometimes we treat a bad thing as though it is good.⁵⁵

The same moment includes both the beginning of the greatest good and deliverance from what is bad.⁵⁶

Epicurus suggests that a simple, frugal life is more likely to be a happy life compared with a life full of luxury. Such simplicity amounts to self-sufficiency and freedom.

Claudius Aelianus (Aelian) Croaking like a frog, Epicurus said that nothing is enough for the man who is not satisfied with just a little. He further said that he was prepared to contend with Zeus himself for happiness if only he had some barley bread and water.⁵⁷

The flesh cries out, “No hunger! No thirst! No freezing cold!” Whoever confidently has what it takes to satisfy these desires may rival even Zeus for happiness.⁵⁸

Simple food gives just as much pleasure as rich food does as soon as the hunger pains are gone. A barley cake and water offer the highest possible pleasure when they are given to a hungry man. Getting used to simple and inexpensive food, therefore, aids the health of a man and enables him to perform the necessary requirements of life with resolution. Not only that, but such a habit better disposes us for when we

encounter extravagant fare now and again, and makes us fearless in the face of fortune.⁵⁹

Diogenes Laertius Diocles, in the third book of his *Epitome*, speaks of the Epicureans as living a quite simple and frugal life. Anyway, they were, he says, content with a cup of poor wine. Otherwise, they were water drinkers.⁶⁰

The greatest fruit of self-sufficiency is freedom.⁶¹

It is not possible for a man living a free life to amass a lot of money and possessions since this is no easy accomplishment without being servile to the masses or those in power. And yet such a free life has acquired everything in ongoing abundance.⁶²

When measured by the goals of nature, poverty is great wealth. And wealth is great poverty if it is not limited.⁶³

In the following selections, Epicurus explores the relationship between virtue, pleasure, and happiness.

Diogenes Laertius Epicurus declares that virtue is the only thing that is inseparable from pleasure.⁶⁴

The virtues have become one with living pleasantly. Living pleasantly is inseparable from the virtues.⁶⁵

Diogenes Laertius (reporting the Epicurean position on virtue and pleasure) We choose the virtues for the sake of pleasure and not on their own account, even as we take medicine for the sake of health.⁶⁶

It is impossible to live pleasantly without living wisely, nobly, and justly—just as it is impossible to live wisely, nobly, and justly without living pleasantly. The person who fails to inaugurate a wise, noble, and just life is the person who does not have a pleasant life.⁶⁷

Practical wisdom is the foundation of all of these things and the greatest good. For this reason, we value practical wisdom even more than philosophy. Every

other virtue is produced from practical wisdom, teaching us that we cannot live pleasantly without living wisely, nobly, and justly—just as we cannot live wisely, nobly, and justly without living pleasantly.⁶⁸

Finally, Epicurus suggests that we should cultivate friendship in order to “ensure blessed happiness.”

Of all the means that are procured by wisdom to ensure blessed happiness throughout the whole of life, by far the most important is the acquisition of friendship.⁶⁹

Friendship dances around the world of men calling out to all of us, “Rise up to happiness!”⁷⁰

Diogenes Laertius (reporting Epicurus’ views regarding “the wise man” about friendship and how to be a friend) The wise man holds that friendship arises because we are in need. That said, friendship involves sacrifice, just as we have to cast seed into the earth. Friendship is maintained by a partnership in the enjoyment of life’s pleasures. . . . The wise man never gives up a friend. . . . On occasion, the wise man will die for a friend.⁷¹

HAPPINESS FOR EPICURUS & EPICUREANISM

For Epicurus, happiness is fundamentally tied to the right sort of pleasure, which is the “absence of pain.” As far as the soul or mind goes, this pleasure is mental tranquility. That said, there is also bodily pleasure, which is health. So it is that “bodily health and mental tranquility . . . is the goal of a blessedly happy life.”

Rightly understood, happiness is something we freely choose and do, something we practice. Part of this practice is philosophy, which seeks to comprehend reality so that we may pacify some of the fears and anxieties we may have that have arisen from misunderstandings (that the gods are angry, for instance,

or that death is something horrible). Philosophy also strives to understand the nature of desire so that we may practice the satisfaction of certain desires—those that are necessary to satisfy in order to quiet pain—and leave the rest alone. The best, happiest life is the simple, frugal life.

A final few points. Since happiness is a practice, it requires the excellence of the virtues. Consequently, the virtuous life is equivalent to the pleasurable life. Lastly, friendship is an essential aspect of the happy life.

So ends Reading 16. **See you in Reading 17, “Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca & Later Stoicism.”**

NOTES

¹ For “the glory of the Greeks,” “liberator,” and “the very wisest of men,” see Lucretius (*On the Nature of Things*), Lucian of Samosata (*Alexander the False Prophet*), and Cosma Riamondi (*Letter to Ambrogio Tignosi*), respectively.

² See Seneca, *Letter to Lucilius* 25.5 and *On the Happy Life* 13. “I myself believe, though my Stoic comrades would be unwilling to hear me say so, that the teaching of Epicurus was good and upright, and even, if you examine it narrowly, stern.”

³ This was the same Hesiod who, along with Homer, had given the Greeks their general understanding of the gods—this according to the ancient Greek historian Herodotus: “Hesiod and Homer . . . are the ones who made for the Greeks the genealogy of the gods, and gave the gods their names, and delineated their honors and abilities, and declared their outward forms” (see Herodotus, *Histories* 2.53.2). For an exploration of the nature of Chaos in Hesiod, see the “Introduction” to the Cave’s *The Best of Hesiod’s Theogony & Works and Days*, 34–35.

⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.2.

⁵ For an extended introduction to Epicurus and his philosophy, and a collection of his own writings, see the Cave’s *The Best of Epicurus: The Life, Writings & Teachings of Epicurus the Greek Philosopher*.

⁶ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.128.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.128.

- ⁸ Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.82.
- ⁹ Ibid., 10.77. Although Epicurus makes the point relative to the gods (they are blissful and are, therefore, not full of worry and so on), it equally applies to human beings and human happiness.
- ¹⁰ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.136.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 10.121. Though “the god” here is singular, Epicurus doubtlessly means all the gods since, apparently, he did not believe in one highest God.
- ¹² Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 17.
- ¹³ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.14.
- ¹⁴ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.122.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 10.123.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 10.122.
- ¹⁷ Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 14.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 41.
- ¹⁹ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.135.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 10.133.
- ²¹ Ibid., 10.134.
- ²² Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 9.
- ²³ Ibid., 64.
- ²⁴ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.122.
- ²⁵ Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.78.
- ²⁶ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 11, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.142.
- ²⁷ Epicurus, *Letter to Pythocles*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.85.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 10.87.
- ²⁹ Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 45.
- ³⁰ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.123. By “common epithet in writing,” Epicurus is referring to the typical way the gods are described from Homer on. In particular, most ancient Greeks judged the gods to be immortal (or indestructible), ageless, and blessed.
- ³¹ Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.81.
- ³² Ibid., 10.76-77.
- ³³ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 1, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.139.
- ³⁴ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.124.
- ³⁵ Epicurus, *Letter to Herodotus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.65.
- ³⁶ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.125.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 10.132.
- ³⁸ Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 71.
- ³⁹ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 29, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.149. Added commentary: “Epicurus regards as natural and necessary desires that bring relief from pain, such as drink when we are thirsty. And by desires that are natural and unnecessary he means those that merely vary the pleasure without removing the pain, such as costly food. And by desires that are neither natural nor necessary he means those for crowns and the erection of statues in one’s honor.”
- ⁴⁰ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.127.
- ⁴¹ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 26, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.148.
- ⁴² Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 21, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.146.
- ⁴³ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.133.
- ⁴⁴ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 15, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.144.
- ⁴⁵ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.129.
- ⁴⁶ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.34.
- ⁴⁷ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.128-129.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 10.131.
- ⁴⁹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.136, 137.

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⁵⁰ Ibid., 10.136. For discussions on the nature of and differences between kinetic and katastematic pleasure, see A.A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1986), 64-65, and J.M. Rist, *Epicurus: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 170-172. In short, kinetic pleasure is that which accompanies the ongoing act of satisfying some desire, whereas katastematic pleasure is that of being satisfied after the act. For example, when one is thirsty, one drinks water. The ongoing act of quenching thirst is satisfying—pleasing (a kinetic pleasure). When one stops drinking, one is satisfied (no longer thirsty), which is also pleasing (a katastematic pleasure). We might call the former “acting” (or “active”) pleasure and the latter “standing” (or “static”) pleasure.

⁵¹ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 3, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.139.

⁵² Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 18, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.144.

⁵³ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.34.

⁵⁴ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.129.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 10.129-130.

⁵⁶ Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 42. The statement refers to the precise moment when pleasure appears and pain disappears.

⁵⁷ Aelian, *Various Histories* 4.13.

⁵⁸ Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 33.

⁵⁹ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.130-131.

⁶⁰ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.11. “Water drinkers” rather than wine drinkers. For more on the distinction, see Tim J. Young, *Drinking Wine with Homer & the Earliest Greeks: Cultivating, Serving & Delighting in Ancient Greek Wine*.

⁶¹ Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 77.

⁶² Ibid., 67.

⁶³ Ibid., 25.

⁶⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.138.

⁶⁵ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.132.

⁶⁶ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.138.

⁶⁷ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 5, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.140.

⁶⁸ Epicurus, *Letter to Menoeceus*, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.132. “These things” refers to a truly pleasant life and the “sober reasoning” that leads us thereto—to the “practice [of] those things that produce happiness,” which are “the basic elements of living well.”

⁶⁹ Epicurus, *Principal Teachings* 27, in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.148.

⁷⁰ Epicurus, *Vatican Sayings* 52.

⁷¹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.120.

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“He who lives well is blessed and happy.” —Socrates

“Long is the path that leads to happiness through words alone. But the path that leads to happiness through the practice of daily deeds is short.” —Crates of Thebes

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