

The Wisdom of Hypatia

The First Degree of Wisdom

Ch. 4: Seeking Tranquility in the Garden

Learning Outcomes:

- You will analyze your desires so you can decide which are worth pursuing
- You will determine how much is enough of anything you desire
- You will eliminate your fear of death and the gods
- You will understand the Epicurean ways of dealing with ambition, justice, and friendship

Key Ideas:

- The goal of Epicureanism is tranquility through moderating your desires, not indulging them
- Of desires, some are *natural* (part of human nature), others are *non-natural*
- Of natural desires, some are *necessary*, others are *unnecessary*
- Necessary natural desires are generally easy to satisfy, and the unnecessary ones can be satisfied in moderation
- *Active pleasures* require some effort to maintain, but *passive* ones do not
- The greatest pleasure is an absence of pain, a state of *tranquility*
- Moderating desire leads to *self-sufficiency*, which leads to *freedom*
- Replace pain with an active pleasure
- According to Epicureanism, the gods are tranquil and bear us no ill will
- According to Epicureanism, when we die we cease to exist and cannot suffer
- *The Fourfold Cure*: God presents no fear, death no worry. The good is easy to obtain, but evil easy to endure
- Live hidden
- Everyone has a right to live in peace and we should avoid causing pain for others
- Friendship is a supreme pleasure, and friends help one another

Exercises:

Check off the following exercises as you do them and be sure to record the results in your journal. You might find it worthwhile to repeat some of them. You can record the dates on this sheet.

- Classifying Desires (p. 47)
- Classify Your Desires (p. 50)
- Modern Conveniences (p. 51)
- Passive and Active Pleasures (p. 52)
- Satisfying Your Desires (p. 55)
- Simple Pleasures (p. 55)
- Dealing with Pain (p. 56)
- Replacing Pain with Pleasure (p. 56)
- Fear of God(s) (p. 58)
- Fear of Death (p. 61)
- Ambition Assessment (p. 63)
- Epicurean Justice (p. 66)
- Philosophical Friends (p. 68)

