December Meeting Primer

An optional read-ahead and quick reference, about 10 minutes

On Stoic Living Discussion Series · Guide 12 of 12

Guiding Question: What deserves a lasting place in the way I live?

At the Meeting

- **Today's reading: Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.2.1–5**. We'll bring it into discussion question 4.
- **The shared case:** A working-group invitation competes with existing commitments and nightly bedtime reading. Everyone can reason from these facts, whether or not they have done the weekly practice.

A Life You Can Sustain

Someone asks you to take on another useful task. You enjoy being asked. The answer begins to form before you have considered the preparation, time, and people the commitment would affect.

December asks how we can carry out what each situation requires. We examine what we believe, identify what we want, and choose a response we can actually perform. A yes, a no, and a smaller offer each need a reason and follow-through.

Stoic practice is itself a commitment. We can take on more than we can sustain, or use its standards at work while setting them aside at home. Temperance asks how our commitments fit together and whether we can give each the care it deserves. Living Stoicism brings the same ethical concern into the ordinary choices that make up a life.

If this is your first meeting, the shared case gives you a place to begin. The readings connect the fields of training with choosing what deserves attention and using principles in the occasions that arrive. *For ancient texts, use any translation you like.*

Optional Reading (about 8 minutes)

1. **Epictetus, *Discourses* 3.2.1–5** (3 minutes) This is the passage we'll read together. What does each field of training address, and how does appropriate conduct involve relationships?
2. **Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 4.24** (2 minutes) What does Marcus ask us to do rather than simply reducing the number of activities? What gives something a justified place in a social life?
3. **Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 51** (3 minutes) What use of principles is the student postponing? How can someone begin now while recognizing how much they still have to learn?

Think About

The shared case is enough to participate. We explore reasons and alternatives before using the application steps.

- What are you assuming about what this commitment requires?
- What does one ethical standard require across these responsibilities?
- What does temperance ask of us when we live Stoicism as a way of life?

Application at the Meeting

Application after discussion: Bring It All Together. Use the steps once to test the understanding developed together.

```
1. **Examine.** What am I accepting, and what grounds support it?
2. **Aim.** What am I trying to secure, and what virtue should govern it?
3. **Carry out.** What fits now, and how will I perform and follow through?
```

Compare a clear decline, a question before commitment, or a bounded contribution. Use Examine → Aim → Carry out once to test one response aloud. Introduce the draft-review offer later and reassess its demands before assuming it solves the conflict.

Keep temperance in action central: reasons, priorities, and conduct should agree across commitments. Preserve the broader Q5 inquiry without cues, recurring practice occasions, or review-point planning.

Key Terms

For reference during the meeting. No need to memorize these.

Assent (*synkatathesis*). Accepting what an impression presents as true or warranted. A request may arrive with assumptions that deserve examination.

Desire (*orexis*). Movement toward what appears good. Notice whether approval or a useful result has begun to govern your choice.

Appropriate action (*kathēkon*). Conduct for which a reasonable account can be given in its circumstances. Carrying it out includes its manner and needed follow-through.

Two Missions. A modern formulation giving character priority while an external undertaking is pursued as circumstances permit.

Temperance. Letting sound judgment govern what we take on and how much weight we give each pursuit.

One character across roles. Applying the same ethical standards to different people while allowing relevant differences to justify different answers.

Step-Wise Policy. Considering what an undertaking requires and what it displaces before committing. A smaller offer or a refusal can also be a fitting act.

Sustainable commitment. An undertaking whose demands have been weighed alongside capacity, relationships, and other responsibilities. What is worth keeping still needs thoughtful adjustment as circumstances change.

Moral progress. Becoming better able to judge, want, and act well. A useful practice is assessed through the occasions on which it was actually tried.

The Discipline of Action. Training fitting conduct and execution. December's question is *How can I carry out what each situation requires?*