November Meeting Primer

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

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Guiding Question: What would satisfy the need — and why do I still want more?

At the Meeting

- **Today's reading: Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 39**. We'll bring it into discussion question 2.
- **The shared case:** An upgrade offer makes a working phone feel inadequate. Everyone can reason from these facts, whether or not they have done the weekly practice.

How Much Is Enough?

Your phone served your needs yesterday. Then a friend shows you a newer model, and an upgrade offer makes the familiar one feel inadequate. Has its usefulness changed, or has comparison moved the measure?

November asks how we can want enough without continually needing more. A useful measure starts with what something serves: reliable communication, suitable clothing, rest, or another reasonable purpose. Include real needs and the people affected by the terms of a choice.

The measure helps loosen a demand, but desire needs a direction too. We can come to want wiser and fairer use more than novelty. We can also notice a benefit already present and appreciate it without claiming that it must continue. Keeping an old phone and replacing it can each express sound priorities in different circumstances.

The readings examine a stopping point for wants, receiving what comes, and appreciating what is available. *For ancient texts, use any translation you like.*

Optional Reading (about 8 minutes)

1. **Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 39** (2 minutes) This is the passage we'll read together. What supplies the measure in the shoe comparison, and what happens when that standard is replaced by embellishment?
2. **Seneca, *Letters* 16.7–9** (3 minutes) How does Seneca distinguish limited wants from those that continue indefinitely? What would count as reaching a destination?
3. **Epictetus, *Enchiridion* 15** (1 minute) What attitude does the banquet image ask for when something is offered, delayed, or passed to someone else?

4. **Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 7.27** (2 minutes) Why does Marcus join appreciation of present advantages with a warning against overvaluing them?

Think About

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

- What has changed about the phone, and what has comparison added?
- What happens to the measure if the offer passes to someone else?
- What would show desire shifting toward choosing and using well?

Application at the Meeting

Application after discussion: The Measure of Desire. Use the steps once to test the understanding developed together.

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1. **Notice.** What does having more seem to promise me?
2. **Measure.** Enough for what purpose, and on what terms?
3. **Re-aim.** What virtue do I want more than the next addition?
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Compare a measure based on being up to date with one based on actual uses and shared commitments. Use Notice → Measure → Re-aim once. Add the failing battery to test whether the measure can admit a real need without making novelty the governing aim.

The inquiry concerns sufficiency and desire for wise use, not product selection. Keeping, repairing, or replacing can each be defensible; possession counts and spending totals do not settle the valuation.

Key Terms

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

The Measure of Desire. A teaching exercise using sufficiency to loosen the demand for more and re-aim desire toward virtue.

Sufficiency. Enough for a reasonable purpose, with regard for needs, relationships, and circumstances.

Desire (*orexis*). Movement toward what appears good. The exercise asks what we most want from the choice.

Virtue (*aretē*). Excellence in reason and choice. Possessing a better object cannot supply the wisdom or fairness of using it well.

Indifferents (*adiaphora*). Externals are neither virtue nor vice in themselves. Their practical value still deserves care.

The Banquet. Epictetus's image for receiving, waiting, and letting an advantage pass without grasping.

Voluntary Simplicity. Testing a perceived need through a simpler arrangement while preserving actual requirements. The meeting uses discussion of that test, not a required trial.

Gratitude. Recognizing a benefit and responding fittingly. A grateful intention can be worthwhile without securing another benefit.

Stoic joy (*chara*). A rational good feeling directed toward present moral good. We practice appreciating good choice without demanding a cheerful mood.

The Discipline of Desire. Training what we seek and treat as necessary. November's question is *How can I want enough without continually needing more?*