Meaning, Happiness and the Good Life • Cathal Woods
Reading Questions on Stoicism

Reading: Epictetus's *Handbook* sections 1-5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 26, 28, 34, 42, 45, 48, 52.

Note: only one of the questions below refers to a specific section; answer the others after reading all of the sections noted.

1. Explain what Epictetus means when he says that the only way to be free is to be in contempt of things not in your control.

2. In section 26, Epictetus advises that we view what happens to our own family as though it were happening to someone else's family. Would viewing your family in this way affect your relationship to them? If so, how? If not, why not?

3. Based on your reading of these sections, do Stoics feel emotions but control what they think about them or do they not even feel the emotions? Or some third possibility? Quote and cite the sections which justify your answer.

4. Throughout the *Handbook,* Epictetus gives a variety of suggestions for practicing to be stoical. Which (apart from 26) do you find to be the most striking piece of advice, and why?

5. Stoicism might be useful for people in desperate situations — soldiers in battle, prisoners of war, and so on. (To what extent) Is it applicable to ordinary life?