

New Religious Landscape Study from Pew Research

Post by "Kalosyni" of March 2, 2025 at 8:05 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

Has the idea that everyone pursues pleasure whether they admit it or not resulted in progress toward possible solutions to the problems listed in the bullet points?

The problem with religion is when people insist or force others into it (such as back in history when rulers insisted on forcing an official religion that everyone had to adhere to). So the idea that there is only one "right" way, the idea that God dictates "right and wrong", and the idea that everything in the world exists to please God, and the idea that there are the religious leaders (or priests) who alone know what God wants and how to please God -- these ideas (and behaviors that come out of them) are the problem.

[Quote from Don](#)

One may say virtue is their ultimate motivating factor, but why? Keep asking why? And it is going to be that it gives them a sense of satisfaction that they're doing what's right. And what is a sense of satisfaction? It is pleasure. One can dress up their motivation and their rationalizations and their justifications. They move toward the supreme good which is pleasure.

People lie all the time to themselves to get through the day and through their life. People can convince themselves of almost anything!

I am not saying we MUST convince everyone we come in contact with that "Pleasure is the supreme good and why you do what you." We pick our battles. But the more I look at the world and how people act, I can see them trying to comfort themselves, to mask their insecurities, to belittle others to aggrandize their own self-image. They are in pain and are trying to move toward pleasure.

The problem here is that people need to look at the big picture and the longterm consequences of their actions. Both Epicureans (those who seek pleasant living) **and** those that put virtue (or religion) as the deciding factor --- both sides can develop mistaken ideas and then take actions based on those mistaken ideas which result in bad consequences.

There are two areas of influence that our choices affect:

1) Our own sphere - your own body, your own household, and anything that only affects yourself

2) Our surrounding sphere affecting other people - family and friends, neighbors, community members, and the country in which we live.

The religious people may end up believing that "the end justifies the means" and so they do things such as hurt people physically, or take away or destroy resources or property, or change laws to remove freedoms, the safety, or the security of others --- all in the name of "religion" and because "God has laws" (or that there are "correct" or "virtuous" ways that must be adhered to).

But after a time, when people are hurt or trampled on, eventually they will rise up, are able to resist --- maybe it takes several generations but it is innate in humans to seek justice and to crave freedom and well-being.

This is why we need to understand that justice is a compact that must be agreed upon not to harm or be harmed. Because humanity is caught in an endless loop --- and until we understand this, then it will repeat forever. Endless war, endless suffering of oppression.

Unfortunately religion (and it's leaders) often interfere with the compacts that are made in order to live in peace with others.