

New Religious Landscape Study from Pew Research

Post by "Don" of March 2, 2025 at 8:20 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?

If so, how?

A valid question; however, my first reaction is going to respond to this a little sideways.

As I stated and from my perspective, "Pleasure is the telos" a fact of the natural world - [like gravity or evolution](#) - that Epicurus discovered and articulated through his philosophy. It's the way living beings work and how they interact with the world and each other.

Christians believe they've discovered the way the world works and how humans need to act to have salvation and eternal life.

Muslims believe they've discovered the way the world works and how humans need to act to serve Allah and to please him.

Buddhists believe they've discovered the way the world works and how humans need to act to be released from this world of dukkha, of suffering and dissatisfaction.

Stoics believe they've discovered the way the world works and how humans need to act to align their lives to Nature and to live virtuously.

And so on.

Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Stoics and the rest don't water down their underlying principles. They believe what they believe. If one sees value in their worldviews, that person accepts the "tenets of the faith" (so to speak) and is accepted into the community.

I don't see any difference with Epicurean philosophy.

"Here are the fundamental core principles of the philosophy. Do they resonate with you? Do they make sense to you? They do? Welcome! All are invited to explore the way of life the school offers."

I'm not saying we should be combative or be argumentative or should beat people over the head or even start conversations with "You're wrong!" or "You're lying to yourself!" That is certainly not the way to make friends and influence people, as the saying goes.

But I also don't advocate a watered-down, kumbaya, join hands, we're all one approach either. Epicurean philosophy has to stand for something, and the current round of podcast episodes has been doing a good job of staking out some turf on the fundamentals. "Pleasure is the telos" is a fundamental, and I would say a fundamental of human existence and not just one option among many equally-valid options.

Epicurus' Garden had a welcome sign posted, but once you were inside the walls, everyone got taught that "Pleasure is the goal."

"Go to his Garden and read the motto carved there: '**Stranger, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure.**'"

So, to respond directly to:

[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?

If so, how?

Not everyone is going to be attracted to Epicurean philosophy, and, in fact, many may be hostile to the philosophy. The only solution, from what I can see, is to be visible in the marketplace of ideas, to make the philosophy known, to welcome people who find themselves Epicurious.

I have a friend with whom I've raised my Epicurean leanings. He has shared some therapy methods like [ACT](#) and the [positive psychology concept of "savoring"](#) that he said remind him of what I've brought up about Epicurean philosophy. One thing I've mentioned is that there are a lot of Epicurean-adjacent ideas that don't get credited to Epicurus but that resonate with the philosophy. That has opened up a dialogue between us to explore some ideas. It's a way into the philosophy possibly for him. I didn't come out all barrels blazing with "Pleasure is the telos." But I'm not going to compromise. If at some point I bring it up and he pushes back (He's a very smart guy), I hope I can come up with cogent arguments, etc. for what I believe. If he comes up with better arguments, I remain open to exploring outside the school. For now, Epicurus makes the most sense and provides a guide for life that resonates with me.