

“The God Delusion”  
by Richard Dawkins

Analysis

**1. Why do people continue to believe in God? If people weren't allowed to be taught about religion until they were an adult would we see a different pattern?**

This is a very big question. There is no one right answer.

It is easy to understand how such a medieval idea has been so successfully passed down over and over throughout the years. Humans have been evolved and programmed to obey their parents or adult figures in order to survive. As kids are growing up, their parents tell them everything they need to know to be safe. “Don't touch the stove. It'll burn you.” Okay. “Put your seatbelt on in case there's an accident.” Okay. “There is a god, and if you're bad you go to hell.” Okay. Why should young kids question this more than any of the other commands?

People should make the decision on whether or not they want to be a religious person when they are an adult. Being a theist or an atheist are two different lifestyles. People spend their time (and money) differently depending on these lifestyles. Forcing your children into a religion that they will most likely spend the rest of their life following would be like forcing them to have a part-time job of your choosing for the rest of their life. Except with this part time job, they are actually not receiving any money, they are *giving theirs away to be there* (and getting nothing in return)!

We're all born atheists, and I believe if people waited until their brains stopped developing (mid-20s) to learn about religion or atheism, we would see a lot more atheists and a lot less theists.

This still doesn't answer why people first began to believe in gods. There are some obvious reasons why people would want to and do believe in God.

1. To “understand” what they don't understand (like how the earth and life got started). -This does not work for me; I like evidence and think ideas like the big bang theory and evolution seem more plausible. And even if we didn't have the two before mentioned ideas, I honestly wouldn't care that I didn't know how this all got started. I have no idea why this would be a reason to make up an invisible man who lives in the sky.

2. To give comfort for death. - This is a big one and one that drives a lot of people in my opinion. Even if people don't admit it I think this is usually the biggest reason why people want to be religious, or why people say they are religious. Who wants to be just gone, not conscious, forever and ever when they die? It is a scary thought. I wasn't brought up religious, but my mom believes in God and my grandmother took us to church a couple times when we were little. I

thought church was extremely boring and never wanted to go, but I still told myself I believed in God because I didn't want to be dead, dead after I died. Not believing that I'm going to have an afterlife just makes me have even more reason to make sure I have the best life I can. And I also think that being conscious for eternity sounds exhausting. I think my mind might get tired and after a while I might not want to be in the whole heaven thing anymore.

3. To have a meaning for life. - Why does one need a god to have meaning in their life? Why can't life itself in this wonderful planet be all the meaning they need? We are so amazingly lucky to be able to be alive and be the the intelligent, self-aware humans that we are. Why can't people just live for this life that they have? I think it might have to do with number two above.

4. To have something to base your morals. - I'll start this one off by quoting the HBO show *True Detective*: "If the only thing keeping a person decent is the expectation of divine reward, then brother that person is a piece of shit, and I'd like to get as many of them out in the open as possible." That's actually all I have to say on that.

## **2. Does religion make people better people? Would people "go crazy" if there was no religion? Would the world be better or worse if people didn't believe in god?**

Yes and no.

There are many, many people who use their religion to love and be happy and better people. There are religious people who don't judge how others live their lives and worry about themselves. I don't have any problem with these people.

Then there are the religious people who tell people they are going to hell if they don't believe in their god. And the ones that tell gay people they're going to hell and try to convert them. These are the religious people who are usually filled with guilt about their own life. I have a problem with these people. I don't think you should be considered a good person if you tell someone they're going to hell because they were raised to believe in a different god than you were. But, while this is annoying, it isn't really harmful to anyone.

Then there are the religious people who think their god wants them to help him take other people to hell. These are the people who will kill or torture for their god. (But as Ricky Gervais once pointed out: He's all powerful, he doesn't need your help. Chill out.) I have a problem with these people.

If it was proven tomorrow that there was without a doubt no god, I honestly don't know how people would react. But the mass majority of people throughout history have believed in God, and there has always been lots of murder and rape, so maybe it's time to try something new. So I don't know if the world be be a better or worse place if no one believed in God.

## **3. Should science be allowed to be in the discussion of if there is a god or not?**

This is an argument that atheists will sadly never win. The definition of science is “the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment.” Everything in the universe can be broken down into how much we know about it through science. So far there is no evidence of a god, just like there is no evidence of fairies, witches, and Tinkerbell. And I bet almost all believers of modern religion would think someone was absolutely crazy if they told them that they believed that Tinkerbell was watching over them and could hear their every thought. “Faith” allows people to say they believe in something even though they don’t have any proof, which is fine, but then I feel they have to not believe in any science.

#### **4. Why do religious people seem to get special treatment?**

Here’s a personal story as an example: my brother has a friend who has a gay brother. Let’s say his name is Tom. My brother and I are also friends with a devout Christian. Let’s say his name is Sam. Sam actually tried the whole “pray the gay away” thing with Tom. He told Tom he was praying for him and told Tom if he prayed he could not be gay. Tom just pretty much politely ignored Sam. Tom would probably still talk to though Sam though if they saw each other. But if I were to tell Sam that there is no God and he’s not going to heaven, he would probably never talk to me again and his family would hate me. If I told him in front of other people that I had my own god who told me all Christians are going to hell, I would be looked at as an arrogant punk, and he would most likely stop talking to me.

Religious people get a pass on being homophobes for some reason, when I think they should be looked at with as much disgust as racists in our society are.

Devout religious people talk about God quite often. Atheists don’t think of this as a mean or rude thing to do. But that’s what religious people would think if atheists frequently talked about how no one was getting to heaven. Why? Because it affects their afterlife. They are worried about themselves. But if they truly *know* there is a god and heaven, why would they care?

Dawkins mentions more serious cases of special treatment. There was a case where a religious group in America was legally allowed to use banned hallucinogenic drugs because they said it helped them get closer to God. Have an artist in America try and get a court to allow him to smoke marijuana because it makes him more creative and see what they say.

#### **5. Atheism is so bleak. There’s no reason for anything then. Why would you want to believe that?**

I talked about how I think the fear of dying is a major role in the belief of a greater power, but that doesn’t mean I’m not scared of dying, *right now*. I would never want to die at a young age. I want to live a long, healthy life. But I think if I get up to 75-85 years of age I probably won’t be scared of dying anymore. I hope I’ll be ready, but I won’t know until I get there.

I think that being an atheist gives me all the more reason to live. I think if I believed that I was going to go to an immensely better place than the world we live in and not have any problems forever after I died, I would probably not care too much about this life. I don't know why religious people don't congratulate each other when their loved ones die. Religion was very smart in saying that you can't get to heaven if you kill yourself.

This doesn't mean I don't think heaven sounds like a great thing. It would be amazing if there was a god (although the Christian god in the first testament is a despicable character). There is just no evidence.

## **6. Why do people think that the Christian god is a loving and good god?**

One only has to read the first ten pages of the bible to question this. If any human did the things God does they would be considered a psychotic, jealous, insecure, sexist, mass murdering asshole. He drowned the entire human population, except Noah and his family! Why? Because the people were being violent with one another and had evil thoughts in their heads. This is an all-powerful god we're talking about here, why didn't he maybe try and talk to them first, or teach them right from wrong? He had no problem teaching other people right from wrong throughout the bible. If one had not ever heard anything about religion or god, and then read the bible, they would probably think that God was "the bad guy."

I don't know how people could say they love this God based on what he's done, besides being told that they have to or they will go to hell. They are really just scared. As Sonny in *A Bronx Tale* says, "Fear last longer than love." It's fear that keeps people loyal to God.