



# Introductory Lesson: Ideas Have Consequences



**QUESTION:** What two groups of thinkers exist today that a disciple needs to understand?

**ANSWER:** The same two groups that Paul met in Athens hundreds of years ago. Athens was a great city, a center of these two groups of thinkers.

When Paul looked over the great city of Athens he saw the spiritual condition of the people. He ended up in a city court called Mars Hill where he defended the truths of Christianity. (Please read Acts 17)

## Pastor John MacArthur comments on the thinkers in Athens:

*“Our nation it like the great city of Athens. We still worship Atheni, the deification of the mental. We worship Demiter, the earth mother, we call it ecology. We worship Zeus the god of force and power. We worship Bacchus and Remor the gods of lust. And we've got shrines to those gods everyplace. We still have our Epicureans, existentialists, materialists, heathenists. We have our Stoics. They're in ethical society talking about brotherhood and helping the poor and God is in you and you're God, they're everywhere. Friends, your “Athens” awaits you to make claims on it.”*

## The two groups that existed then still exist today with new names

### First...the Epicureans, we call Humanists.

They were the followers of Epicurus who was a philosopher in Athens 400 years before Paul.

#### The Epicureans believed:

- That everything happened by chance. There was no real reason or rhyme for anything and nobody was running the show. They were the **rationalists**.
- That death was the end of everything. You died and that was it.
- That “gods” were remote and didn't get involved and didn't care.
- Therefore, pleasure is the main purpose in life. Grab it here, grab it now, do your own thing, live it up. This is ancient **existentialism**.

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## Second...the Stoics, we call Mystics.

### The Stoics believed:

- That everything was God. The trees were God, the dirt was God, they were God, everything was God, the buildings were God, every body, the birds were God, the snakes were God, the fish were God, and the water was God. In other words....**pantheism**
- That everything is the will of God. No matter what happens, the will of God wills it. They were **fatalists**.
- That every so often the world disintegrates and then starts all over again. It goes through that cycle every so many years. And, of course, for them believing that every-thing was God, everything was sort of divine and they were Gods and they had to act like Gods and they had to treat everybody else like Gods. So they were a real humanitarian bunch.

Today, the ideas of the Epicureans (Humanists) and Stoics (Mystics) often merge together

Leading Humanists (like the old Epicureans)	Leading Mystics (like the old Stoics)
 <b>Charles Darwin (1809-1882)</b> Father of Evolutionary Theory	 <b>Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)</b> Father of the New Age Movement
 <b>Karl Marx (1818-1883)</b> Father of Socialism	 <b>L Ron Hubbard (1911-1986)</b> Father of "Unlock Your Mind"
 <b>Sigmund Freud (1883-1892)</b> Father of Psychology	 <b>Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1918 - 2008)</b> Father of Transcendental Meditation
 <b>Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918)</b> Father of Liberal Theology	 <b>Eckart Tolle (1948 - )</b> Father of "Present Moment Stillness"
 <b>John Dewey (1859-1952)</b> Father of Progressive Education	 <b>John Edwards (1969 - )</b> Father of "Talking to the Other Side"
 <b>Soren' Kierkegaard (1813-1855)</b> Father of Existentialism	 <b>Oprah Winfrey (1954 - )</b> Oprah says "There can not be just one way to God"
 <b>John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946)</b> Father of Modern Economics	 <b>Deepak Chopra (1946 - )</b> Father of The Inner Self Movement

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Millions have followed the ideas of these people.

## What has been the result?

**Many Americans** embrace a culture of death. Abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, and assisted suicide are no longer thoughts dwelling on the lunatic fringe but are accepted and proudly held by most pseudo-intellectuals and the unthinking masses of the popular culture.

**Many Americans** are drifting into a post-modern worldview that denies the reality of absolute truth.

**Many Americans** are being attacked and overwhelmed by radical single issue groups who have united under one banner to end everything this nation was built upon. Groups such as radical feminists, black extremists, animal rights groups, radical environmentalists, activist homosexual groups, multiculturalists, People for the American Way, Planned Parenthood, and the American Civil Liberties Union, to name just a few.

**Many Americans** have become paralyzed by the philosophy of political correctness that enables our enemies' free reign to attack our institutions and denigrate our religious values.

**Many Americans** have unwittingly become enamored with the spirit of pluralism that tolerates all world religions but has become intensely hostile to the Christian faith which is the worldview of the vast majority of Americans. Moral relativism, which holds that competing claims to right and wrong cannot be judged objectively, is making America a godless culture in which to raise a family.

**Many Americans** have lost the cultural foundation of the old Work Ethic, an ethic based on capitalism, free enterprise, and old-fashioned hard work.

**Many Americans** have become a nation of victims and beggars as we feel entitled to the good life without having to work, struggle, or produce results that give us the right to a good life.

**Many Americans** are losing their ability to think and reason for themselves. They have become a people who are molded and shaped by the pop-culture.

**Many Americans** are intoxicated with the dream of "Social Justice" which is merely code for socialism, redistribution of wealth, and the taxation of the rich.

**Many Americans** have allowed a false doctrine of separation of church and state to make this nation a secular state where the Christian faith is removed from the public square.

**We live in sober times. We need serious thinking disciples who have a clear plan to make disciples.**

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