Aristotle Biography

Aristotle (384BC – 322BC)

“Time crumbles things; everything grows old under the power of Time and is forgotten through the lapse of Time. “

– Aristotle (Physics)

Living in the same time period as Plato and Alexander the Great, Aristotle helped lay the foundations for western civilisation through his wide range of intellectual and scientific studies.

Aristotle was one of the great polymaths of his time. He studied under Plato and therefore learnt much about the great philosophic traditions of Socrates. But, Aristotle was more than just a good student; he had an independent mind and was able to question many different things and sought to resolve difficult questions and previously unsolvable problems. He made studies in botany, physics, philosophy, logic, and was well known for being a powerful lecturer and debater. He was also regarded as a kindly man, compassionate to others.

In the field of physics, Aristotle’s ideas influenced much of the medieval period, and lasted into the European Renaissance. His ideas were later replaced by the physics of Isaac Newton.

Aristotle believed in the power of reason to illuminate the problems of man. He believed that man had the capacity for enlightenment through self inquiry and study. He believed that human goodness derived from rational thought. Aristotle was also a playwright and he described how the weakness of man – pride, anger, jealousy, could lead to his downfall.

Piety requires us to honor truth above our friends.

– Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics)

Aristotle was also the teacher of the future Macedonian King – Alexander the Great. Aristotle taught the future king, political philosophy, history and ethics. Alexander the Great was to ignore much of Aristotle’s teachings such as the desirability of oligarchic leadership, but, his education by Aristotle must have left an abiding impression on the young prince.

If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.

– Aristotle (Politics)

Aristotle’s work Politics, is an attempt at a practical philosophy to allow justice and freedom. He also saw politics as a method of ensuring man had the capacity to live harmoniously and allow him to pursue noble ideas.
“The political partnership must be regarded, therefore, as being for the sake of noble actions, not for the sake of living together.”

Aristotle had so many interests, that he had a very wide influence over the development of Western civilisation. In addition to the above interests, he pioneered the study of zoology, logic and helped in the development of medicine, optics, and ethics.

“One swallow does not make a summer, nor does one day; and so too one day, or a short time, does not make a man blessed and happy.”

– Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics)

Aristotle, was one of the few philosophers who strongly influenced later Christian writers such as Thomas Aquinas.