

# What is the good life philosophy essay

[Philosophy](#), [Life Philosophy](#)



In philosophy, the good life is the kind of life that an individual may dream of living. In the ancient times, the aspect of the good life was simple because it only entailed having enough food on the table, having a tribal affiliation, having a family, and shelter. It was basically the freedom one would acquire from the hardships in life (Colson and Harold p23). Socrates was one of the major philosophers that came up with the definition of the good life. Apart from Socrates, other influential philosophers of old times as well created their own arguments on the issue of the good life. In their arguments regarding the good life and how to achieve it, some of the philosophers tend to have similar sentiments on the aspect while others differ in their sentiments. The below essay seeks to address the philosophical aspect of the good life and how individuals in the society can achieve the good life.

In philosophy, there have been a number of arguments based on the good life and how one can achieve the good life. One of the philosophers that contributed to the argument of the good life and how to achieve it is Aristotle. In the Nichomachean ethics, it is established that the philosopher Aristotle came up with the good life theory for human beings. According to his theory of the good life. Aristotle points out that the good life is that one which flourishes and that individuals live well (Hallman, p45). He argues that the good life is a happy life, with one not just being amused or having a happy feeling but rather having a fulfilled life. The philosopher equates the good life to a good thing that tends to function well hence meeting the expectation of the one who uses that thing. The philosopher believes that the good life entails the life of ethical virtue, hence for one to live such a life, he or she must portray a certain expertise or wisdom about the ethical

matters in life. He argues that the life of ethical virtue tends to stand in the way of the good life and that of happiness (Vanier, p64).

As stated in the earlier paragraph, according to Aristotle the good life could be considered as a function of individuals in the society fulfilling their human functions with excellence. In pursuit of the excellence needed for the good life, there are three main kinds of human virtue that the philosopher identified. The three kinds of human virtue are as well known as paths of excellence. The three human virtues include personal, intellectual, and interpersonal excellence (Hallman, p35).

According to the philosopher, the personal excellence in the good life falls under the moral virtue. The idea of character development is involved in the moral virtue. The intellectual excellence on the other hand falls under the intellectual virtue. According to Aristotle, intellectual virtue can be compared to wisdom because is the excellence in thought. This particular virtue is necessary when it comes to reasoning and making decisions in life.

Reasoning and making a decision in one's life is crucial in achieving the good life (Colson and Harold, p46). The third kind of excellence is the interpersonal excellence, which falls under the virtuous friendship virtue. Under this particular virtue, Aristotle points out that individuals should learn to interact with other people in the society so that they can achieve the good life. The interaction with other people in the society creates the togetherness in the society hence enhancing happiness in such a society. The philosopher argues out that happiness is the key to the good life (Vanier, p75).

In his arguments on what the good life is Aristotle bases his sentiments on the popular conceptions of the good life in the society. One of the conceptions is pleasure. Many people in the society have the assumption that the good life is all about pleasure. Though Aristotle argues that the good life is pleasurable, those who seek pleasures in life do not lead the good life. This is because they tend to seek pleasure in the wrong ways and places. In their search of pleasure, they end up being distracted from living the good life. Another conception of the good life is virtue. According to Aristotle, virtue is regarded as a vital component of the good life. Although it is essential to the good life, Aristotle points out that being virtuous does not identify with the good life because it may entail living with great suffering (Hallman, p72).

According to Aristotle, the good life can be achieved by happiness. This is because the good life is dependent on the internal factors in the life of an individual. He points out that suppose the good life could be dependent on the external factors in life, then it could not be self-sufficient. He argues that happiness is considered to be self-sufficient. Happiness is something that could not be improved by adding anything further to it since the life of a person who is happy is a complete life. In his arguments, happiness can be achieved suppose a person carries out activities that would bring them happiness. The activities may be physical or mindful. According to Aristotle, for one to achieve happiness in his or her life, they must engage in proper activities that lead to the good life. Proper things in life have to be enjoyed for an individual to obtain happiness for the good life. He argues that the proper activities that may lead to happiness tend to represent the purpose of

the human kind in the society. The purpose of the human kind in the society in that particular quality tends to separate humans from other species of beings. He continued pointing out that reason is that particular quality that ends up separating humans from other species beings in the society. Therefore, in leading the good life, Aristotle concludes that those activities that help humans express their reasoning abilities are vital in allowing individuals to live the good life in the society (Vanier, p89).

In addition to that, the philosopher as well put across that the good life could be achieved if one is able to make his or her decisions in life. This is based on the definition that the good life entails living an accomplished and flourishing life. In his arguments, Aristotle identified that in the ancient times, many people could not lead the good life because they were dying in slavery. These individuals included those in the lower social class and women since their masters decided majority of things in their lives. They were not given any chance of making their own decisions in activities that oppressed them in life. This indicates that these individuals were not happy in their life hence they could not lead the good life as Aristotle points out (Colson and Harold, p63).

According to Aristotle, the good life can as well be achieved by having the ability to reason. This tends to differentiate the human kind in society from the brute animals in the society. The ability to reason in life situations comes across when people are intelligent in carrying out their daily activities. The philosopher argues that the human perfection, which would lead to the good life, would entail the perfection of the intellect. Since the good life according

to the argument of Aristotle involves the purpose of an individual, he further stated that the purpose of man entails perfecting his sense of knowing things in the society (Hallman, p33).

Socrates was another ancient philosophers that contributed in the argument on the good life and how it should be achieved. According the arguments made by Socrates, the good life was one that is not materialistic but rather about the mind of an individual. He argued that an individual with a healthy mind tends to live the good life as compared to that who is wealthy. This indicates that he perceived wealth as being immaterial and that it does not lead to the good life that people may want to live. According to Socrates, the good life is one that individual lives in truth (Hughes, p76).

In achieving the good life, one has to acquire happiness in life. This is a sentiment that Socrates pointed out in the argument of the good life.

According to this ancient philosopher, happiness cannot be acquired by the richness of an individual or by his or her material consumption. Happiness can be acquired from a rich and active mind. In Socrates sentiments, a state that is wealthy is probably not healthy because such a state lacks happiness that could lead to the good life. His arguments based on this conclusion that wealthy states lack happiness and that they may not achieve the good life is the fact that these states end up in war most of the time because of the scramble for the resources it has. Citizens in these countries fight for the resources so that they can make their ends to meet, hence such face injustices, and inequality. In his arguments, the philosopher uses the example of Athens. Athens, according to Socrates lack the happiness that is

required to achieve the good life since it has an empire that is full of troubles and is hated by many people (Hughes, p32).

According to Socrates, virtue was an essential aspect towards achieving the good life. For instance, those who possessed good virtues in a life lived the good life as compared to those who owned materialistic wealth in the society. The ancient philosopher argued that the best way in which people would live in the society was by putting much focus on self-development rather than acquiring wealth. In his arguments, it is indicated that people who concentrate on friendship and truth in the society end in establishing a society that has the good life. Virtues, according to Socrates are said to be important in the good life because they tend to represent the best qualities an individual should have in life. In his arguments on the good life, Socrates stressed that virtues are the most valuable possessions in an individual's life, hence leading to the good life. The philosopher as well identified virtue with knowledge and stated that since the two can lead to the good life, they can be learnt. With virtues and knowledge, an individual can be able to examine his or her life. The philosopher pointed out that the unexamined life is not the good life and hence it is not worth living (Colson and Harold, p98).

In comparison to the arguments presented by Aristotle, Socrates as well puts across that in order to achieve the good life; an individual must have reason in life. He argued that reason was a way to the good life. With regards to this argument, the philosopher stated that the true happiness of individuals in the society is enhanced by taking part in activities that are right.

Apart from Socrates and Aristotle, Plato is yet another ancient philosopher who contributed his arguments on the concept of the good life. According to Plato, every person in the society has an equal opportunity of acquiring the good life, hence it is not limited to few individuals in the society. Generally, Plato defines good life as a state in which an individual would be happy. He goes ahead in explaining the happiness is a state in which a person has everything that he or she needs and nothing more. According to the philosopher, one has to show virtue in the good life. A person can only exhibit virtue suppose his or her needs in life have been fulfilled. Just like the other philosophers, he based his arguments on virtues (Colson and Harold, p48).

In his argument concerning the good life, Plato argues that an individual in society who tends to live the good life is one who is truly happy in his life. For instance, it has been established that Plato's views on the achievement of the good life are somewhat similar to the views given by Aristotle. In his views regarding how the good life can be achieved, Plato indicated that happiness and a truly virtuous life could be useful in the quest to achieve the good life. The philosopher points out in his arguments that for one to lead a virtuous life, which would eventually contribute to the good life, they must achieve some virtues in life. The virtues include courage, self-discipline, justice, as well as wisdom. These sentiments based on achieving the good life are as well echoed by Aristotle in his argument on the achievement of the good life (Hallman, p92).

Conclusion



In conclusion, the good life entails the internal factors in a person's life such as virtues and happiness. The three main philosophers discussed in the essay concerning their arguments on the good life include Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato. As discussed in the above essay, the philosophers have pointed out that the good life is not about being wealthy but rather being happy and having the moral and intellectual virtues in life. It has been established that for an individual to achieve the good life, they must acquire happiness, and this can be achieved by taking part in the proper activities that lead to happiness. In addition to acquiring happiness in life, the good life can be achieved by one learning to make their own decisions in life and having the ability to reason.