PLUTARCH’S LIFE OF PERICLES
PLENARY ANNOTATED STUDY GUIDE

THE PLENARY PLUTARCH SERIES
VOLUME 2
A Charlotte Mason Plenary Presents
The Plenary Plutarch Series

Plutarch’s Life of Pericles
Annotated Study Guide

Translated from the Greek by Aubrey Stewart and George Long
Annotated and Expanded by Rachel Lebowitz
# PERICLES

## Table of Contents

**Plenary Preface** - pg iii

**Plenary Introduction** - pg v
  - Who was Plutarch

**Plenary Who’s Who** - pg ix
  - In the Life of Pericles

**Lesson 1** - pg 1
  - Plenary Prologue: The Golden Age of Athens

**Lesson 2** - pg 5
  - Plutarch’s Introduction

**Lesson 3** - pg 7
  - Who was Pericles?

**Lesson 4** - pg 9
  - Pericles the Orator

**Lesson 5** - pg 11
  - The Great Buildings of Athens

**Lesson 6** - pg 14
  - Pericles Takes Over

**Lesson 7** - pg 17
  - The First Peloponnesian War

**Lesson 8** - pg 20
  - The Second Peloponnesian War

**Lesson 9** - pg 22
  - Pericles’ Funeral Speech

**Lesson 10** - pg 23
  - The Plague

**Lesson 11** - pg 26
  - The Age of Pericles Comes to an End

**Lesson 12** - pg 29
  - Plenary Epilogue: Pericles Today

**Appendix**
  - Pericles’ Funeral Oration - pg 33
  - Map of the Peloponnesian War - pg 39

**Bibliography** - pg 41
PLENARY PREFACE

TO PLUTARCH’S LIFE OF PERICLES

Thank you for reading Plutarch with The Plenary!

Plutarch was a Greek historian who lived c. 45-120 C.E. He is said to be the very first “biographer” and he wrote biographies of Greek and Roman men in his book Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans. But he didn’t just write about the accomplishments of these men, he also wrote about the smaller happenings of their lives in order to give us a glimpse into their characters. This is why Charlotte Mason included Plutarch in her curriculum. It is about evaluating character.

What makes a person great? What makes a person weak? What makes a tyrant? Plutarch shows us that it is the small decisions in a man’s life that make up his character. We then get to see the consequences of those decisions. Plutarch does not judge for us. He lays the man’s life before us and we are left to judge. It truly is a remarkable way to study character and morality.

Charlotte started her students in Citizenship Studies in Form 2B, or about 4th grade. The student spent a whole year reading Stories from the History of Rome by Beesly. This prepared the student for Plutarch by providing the context of Ancient Roman society. Then in Form 2A, or 5th grade, the student started reading one of Plutarch’s Lives every term. This is the foundation of her character/citizenship teaching. It is not to be missed.

HOW TO USE THIS PLENARY GUIDE

This Study Guide comes with the original text translated from the Greek. You do not need to purchase anything else to study Plutarch.

We have included several sections written by The Plenary to help the student:

• The Introduction gives you biographical information about Plutarch himself.
• A “Who’s Who” is included to help you understand the key players in Pericles.
• A Prologue sets the scene in Lesson 1 and will give you essential background information to begin your study of Pericles.
• The Epilogue in Lesson 12 wraps up the Study Guide, connects it to more modern events, and gives the student some important ideas to think about.

Lessons 2-11 include the original text by Plutarch as translated by Stewart and Long. The text has been edited to remove anything unsuitable for students. You can feel comfortable about handing over this Study Guide to your student for independent use.

For ease of reading, we put the text in the inner column and The Plenary annotations in the outer column. The annotations define vocabulary and phrases and includes pronunciations. The annotations also provide context to allow you to fully understand Plutarch’s frequent references to the people, places, and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. All annotated words are in bold type. My goal is to highlight the text so that readers may gain a deeper understanding of it for themselves.

In addition, as you read through the Plutarch Study Guide, you will find references to other resources that connect to the story of Pericles. These include classic paintings, poems, and other items that help further illustrate the text. It is our intent to provide you with these additional resources to bring your Plutarch study alive. All of the additional resources are free and can be found on the Plutarch Resources
PLenary Preface

page of our website under the heading of PERICLES RESOURCES. We encourage you and your student to take advantage of these additional resources.

Plutarch Picture Study

If you would like high resolution images or printed copies of the paintings included in the resources for Pericles, we offer a Pericles Picture Study product as well. The Picture Study comes with detailed information about each painting and includes study questions to connect the artwork to Plutarch’s text.

Translation

The Plenary has chosen to use the translation by George Long and Aubrey Stewart for all of our Plutarch Curriculum Guides. We believe that this translation is easier and more accessible for today’s students, which will make the subject of Plutarch easier for you to implement in your home.

Long was a professor of Greek and Latin at University College in London. He was a major contributor to Smith’s Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities, and also wrote for the companion Biography edition. Stewart was a Fellow at Trinity College in Cambridge, England.

Together, they translated Plutarch’s Lives from the original Greek into several English volumes from 1880-1882.

A Thank You

I hope you will find this Plenary Study Guide helpful in better understanding Plutarch and implementing it in your home. For more resources, please visit The Plenary website at cmplenary.com.

Thank you for choosing The Plenary,

Rachel Lebowitz
A Charlotte Mason Plenary
LESSON 1

The Golden Age of Athens

“The period which intervened between the birth of Pericles and the death of Aristotle is ... the most memorable in the history of the world.”
- Percy Bysshe Shelley

“Freedom was a Greek discovery” says Edith Hamilton in her book The Echo of Greece. She continues with this story:

Once an Athenian army far from home, and surrounded by greatly superior forces, had to try to break through them as a last chance. Their leader made a short speech before they started.

‘You live,’ he told them, ‘in the only free city in the world. In Athens alone the state does not interfere with a man’s daily life.’ [pg 12]

So said Pericles to his soldiers.

In the fifth century B.C.E., Athens rose to power under the leadership of one man: Pericles. This small span of one-hundred years of the city’s prosperity is still known to us today by two interchangeable phrases: “The Golden Age of Athens” is also “The Age of Pericles.”

But the story of Athens begins centuries before the birth of Pericles. This is a city whose influence can still be seen and felt in our modern world. What made this ancient city so special?

To know Athens is to know the Greek goddess Athena. According to legend, the city was first ruled by a king named Cecrops, who made the city so beautiful that it caught the attention of the Greek gods on Mount Olympus. Both Poseidon and Athena fought over the honor of being the city’s protector, as described in The Story of Athens by Howard Butler:

Their struggle took the form of a contest before a jury of the gods of Olympus, in which each strove to produce the gift which should be most useful to mortals. The scene of the contest was the Acropolis.

Poseidon, having the first turn, struck the rock with his mighty trident, causing a spring of salt water to gush forth, and leaving three marks which are still to be seen in the Acropolis rock. At the blow, forth leaped the first horse, Athena was the Greek goddess of wisdom and war, as well as arts and crafts. She was the daughter of Zeus. Athena plays a key role in both the Iliad and the Odyssey by Homer. She is referred to as Minerva in Roman mythology.

Poseidon was the Greek god of the sea, earthquakes, storms, and horses. He is very ill-tempered. He is also referred to as Neptune in Roman mythology.
One day in Rome, Caesar, seeing some rich foreigners nursing and petting young lapdogs and monkeys, enquired whether in their parts of the world the women bore no children: a truly imperial reproof to those who waste on animals the affection which they ought to bestow upon mankind. May we not equally blame those who waste the curiosity and love of knowledge which belongs to human nature, by directing it to worthless, not to useful objects? It is indeed unavoidable that external objects, whether good or bad, should produce some effect upon our senses; but every man is able, if he chooses, to concentrate his mind upon any subject he may please. For this reason we ought to seek virtue, not merely in order to contemplate it, but that we may ourselves derive some benefit from so doing. Just as those colors whose blooming and pleasant hues refresh our sight are grateful to the eyes, so we ought by our studies to delight in that which is useful for our own lives; and this is to be found in the acts of good men, which when narrated incite us to imitate them. The effect does not take place in other cases, for we frequently admire what we do not wish to produce; indeed we often are charmed with the work, but despise the workman, as in the case of dyes and perfumery which we take pleasure in, although we regard dyers and perfumers as vulgar artisans. A clever saying of Antisthenes, who answered, when he heard that [a certain man] was a capital flute player, “But he must be a worthless man, for if he were not, he would not be such a capital flute player!” And King Philip of Macedon, when his son played brilliantly and agreeably on the harp at an entertainment, said to him, “Are you not ashamed, to play so well?”

It is enough for a king, if he sometimes employs his leisure in listening to musicians, and it is quite a sufficient tribute from him to the Muses, if he is present at the performances of other persons.

If a man devotes himself to these trifling arts, the time which he wastes upon them proves that he is incapable of higher things. No well-nurtured youth, on seeing the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, wishes that he were a Phidias, for it does not necessarily follow that we esteem the workman because we are pleased with the work. For this reason men are not benefited

Caesar refers to Caesar Augustus (63 B.C.E. - 14 C.E.), born as Gaius Octavius Thurinus, who was the first Emperor of the Roman Empire.

Antisthenes /an-THISt-neeZ/ (445-365 B.C.E.) was a Greek philosopher. When he was young, he was so eager to be a student of Socrates that he walked more than 5 miles from his home to the city of Athens each day. He became such a beloved student of Socrates that he was even present at the Socrates’ death.

Philip of Macedon (382-336 B.C.E.) was king of the northern Greek region of Macedonia. His son was Alexander the Great.

The Muses were the Greek goddesses of the arts who inspire all poetry, song, and dance. There are nine Muses, all daughters of Zeus.

Phidias /FID-dee-us/ (490-430 B.C.E.) was a Greek sculptor, painter, and architect. His Statue of Zeus at Olympia was one of the seven wonders of the world.

Cmplenary.com See a rendering of what Phidias’ Statue of Zeus at Olympia might have looked like on The Plenary website.
by any spectacle which does not encourage them to imitation, and where reflection upon what they have observed does not make them also wish to do likewise; whereas we both admire the deeds to which virtue incites, and long to emulate the doers of them.

We enjoy the good things which we owe to fortune, but we admire virtuous actions; and while we wish to receive the former, we wish ourselves to benefit others by the latter. That which is in itself admirable kindles in us a desire of emulation, whether we see noble deeds presented before us, or read of them in history. It was with this purpose that I have engaged in writing biography, and have arranged this book to contain the lives of Pericles and of Fabius Maximus, men who especially resembled one another in the gentleness and justice of their disposition, and who were both of the greatest service to their native countries, because they were able to endure with patience the follies of their governments and colleagues.

Quintus Fabius Maximus (280-203 B.C.E.) was a Roman general who fought against Hannibal. He was one of the first to use the tactics now known as guerilla warfare. Plutarch always paired two Lives in order to compare and contrast their virtues and weaknesses. In this case, Pericles is paired with Fabius Maximus.

**Plenary Discussion Questions**

1. What do you think about the opening story of Caesar and his disdain for foreigners with pets?
2. Plutarch says “If a man devotes himself to trifling arts ... he is incapable of higher things”? Do you agree with him? Why or why not?
3. “Men are not benefitted by any spectacle which does not encourage them to imitation.” Do you agree? Why or why not? Can you think of any ‘spectacle’ which benefits mankind?
4. Why did Plutarch decide to write biographies rather than history?