

Without the inventions of our ancestors, the world would be a much worse place today. There are those that would disagree, saying that technology is unnecessary, even evil at times, and that we should strive to lead simpler lives. The truth is though, that without the inventions of engineers and scientists like Louis Pasteur, many who live today would not be here. They, their parents, or their parent's parents might not have lived were it not for the marvels that Pasteur accomplished. While nay-sayers can point out hundreds of examples of where technology has brought death and destruction, to say that every discovery and invention intended to solve one of society's problems also has some unintended negative consequence is false. There are discoveries such as those of Louis Pasteur on germs and microbiology that have brought nothing but good things to the lives of innumerable people.

Due to Pasteur's work on the germ theory of disease and the resulting aseptic techniques that he put forth afterwards, literally millions of lives have been saved. In fact, out of LIFE magazine's top 100 events of the millennium, the development of the germ theory by Pasteur and Koch was rated as number six! Before the work of these scientists in the 1800s, diseases were something that just happened. No one knew why, and people resorted to inventing outlandish causes and even stranger cures. Hospitals were places that people went to die, not to be cured.

Rather than just proving the germ theory, Pasteur went on to say that by killing the disease-carrying microorganisms, the disease could be stopped. He suggested aseptic measures that seem commonplace by today's standard. Without his studies, Lister would

never have decided to wash his instruments with carbolic acid before and after operating. After this miraculous innovation, deaths after surgery weren't the expected result, but rare occurrences.

The last important life-saving part of Pasteur's work with microorganisms was the development of vaccines. First the chicken cholera vaccine, the anthrax vaccine, and finally the rabies vaccine were developed. These in turn have led to thousands more vaccines which have saved countless people. Vaccines are the basis for preventing most of the deadly infectious diseases in the world. Without vaccines, such horrible ailments as smallpox could still be ravaging countries as it did in the past.

Overall, Pasteur's research, discoveries, and innovations have saved millions of people. Sometimes, ideas of his didn't work and sometimes people still died. His discoveries never hurt anyone though. People may have tried to develop biological weapons designed specifically to combat methods invented by Pasteur, but imagine how easy it would be to spread a pathogen without his techniques. Inventions can be without negative consequences.