

Generosity

“Generosity” is derived from Latin *generōsus* meaning “of noble birth”. Similar words from the same Latin root include kin, clan, stock, to beget, or lineage.

During the 17th century, the meaning began to change from a literal family heritage to a nobility of *spirit* thought to be associated with high birth. These characteristics represent gallantry, courage, strength, richness, gentleness, and fairness.

The meaning of generosity continued to evolve in the 18th century to the giving of money and possessions to others.



Today generosity is an ideal; one that the best may aspire to and calls us to a higher standard. We use the word generosity to refer to the virtue of giving good things to others freely and abundantly with no strings attached.

Generosity is:

- A learned character trait that involves both attitude and action.
- A basic, personal, moral orientation to life.
- Not simply giving anything in abundance but giving those things that are good for others.
- Intended to enhance the wellbeing of the receiver.
- Giving money, possessions, time, attention, aid, encouragement, emotional availability and more.

Generosity speaks to the fundamental religious questions concerning the nature of humanity, God, and the human-divine relationship.

Taken from University of Notre Dame “*What is Generosity*” at GenerosityResearch.nd.edu

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Generosity and Mental Health

The “warm glow of giving” is not only real, but happiness is also tied to volunteering. People with religious faith tend to be happier than those without. Happiness increased in those who focus on good works, religion or spirituality, friends, or family.

Neuroscientist research confirms with brain scans that when a person donates to a charity, parts of their brain light up that are normally associated with pleasures like eating or sex. “Our brains show we profit emotionally from giving, as in feeling joy when we do good things,” stated Jorge Moll from National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

“It’s mysterious that human beings among all mammals are so hypersocial that our brains are wired to help other people, even strangers,” said Paul Zak, director of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies at Claremont Graduate University. “Economists have always been shocked (by unselfish altruism), and now we have a reason for it; It feels good to do this.” Taken from The Kansas City Star June 17, 2007.



For Christians, to be generous is not only to be like Christ but also like God; *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life”* -John 3:16.

Provided by Community of Christ Health Ministries Association
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