

# “Happiness and Generosity”

Temple talk by Donna Renneke

Member of the Stewardship/Finance Team

November 5, 2017

Several years ago I gave a temple talk highlighting research showing that Gratitude improves a person's health.

This morning I am sharing news of medical research showing that happiness is directly related to Generosity.

Neurologists at the University of Zurich did a study which showed that being generous increases happiness. They recruited 50 men and women. They went through an assessment of their current mood. Then they were given an amount in our currency equal to \$25 every week for a month. Half of them were to give it away (to someone different each time) and the other half were to spend it on themselves. In other words, half the volunteers agreed to be generous and the other half to be selfish.

The volunteers were tested in different ways to assess their mood and what mental changes were occurring. The group who gave money away showed more happiness. Plus they showed signs of becoming more altruistic; they began looking for other opportunities where they could be generous.

Am I generous or am I selfish? I struggle with this at times. Maybe it is the result of growing up one of the middle children in a family of six. There was concern about getting my share and being fair.

However, I remind myself that all that we are and all that we have belongs to God. Gifts of our time, talents, possessions are ours, temporarily. God has entrusted us to use what we are given wisely. God wants us to be happy.

God loves a cheerful giver... should we be surprised that giving makes us happy people?

The Bible overflows with accounts of God's people being happy in him.

Members of St. James have a long history of being generous. We meet and greet happy, joyful people each Sunday and this spirit is contagious. There are times of sorrow and sadness but knowing that God is there to help us help each other makes a big difference.

Being generous with our support of each other by listening, giving a smile, giving our money, providing food and shelter are a few of the many ways that our church gives us opportunities to practice being generous.

Happiness and generosity. Generosity and happiness. There is a direct connection.

I will close with a scripture reading from 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.