

"Virtues to Live by"

Before You Begin – An overview for teachers

Generosity

"You should give what you have decided to give, not grudgingly or because you are made to, for God loves a cheerful giver."

(2 Corinthians 9:7)

Definition

You give what you have by sharing it with others or helping someone who is in need. You give and do not expect a gift in return or any attention, praise or reward for giving and you do it cheerfully. To share what you have teaches you not to be selfish. Generosity helps you to treat other people as your neighbour. You are not afraid of losing what you give. You are generous because you know there is enough for everyone.

Biblical sources:

"Freely you have received, freely give." (Matthew 10:8)

"When you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:2-4)

"If anyone is poor among you ... be openhanded and freely lend them what they need." (Deuteronomy 15:7-8)

"Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice." (Psalm 111:5)

"The generous will be blessed, for they share their food with the poor." (Proverbs 22:9)

"The generous person will prosper, those who water will be refreshed." (Proverbs 11:25)

"If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?" (1 John 3:17)

Why Practice Generosity?

When we give freely of ourselves, our spirit grows strong. Being generous shows our love for others and helps us live our faith. When one person is generous, other people want to be generous too. We should give selflessly. Generous people are personally more fulfilled, happier and more at peace with themselves. Acts of generosity are good for our health. They make the world a better place.

How do we show generosity?

We notice others' needs and so we give of our time, gifts and talents. We regularly practise acts of generosity. We are quick to praise, we seek opportunities to give what we can. We give without expectation of reward.

Key Words:

Generosity, generous, giving, sharing, kindness, selfless, recognising, helping, community, freely, sacrifice, neighbour, social justice, fairness

Signs you are generous:

You notice when someone needs help.

You think of others before yourself.

You give freely without need of reward.

You give more than what is expected.

You are willing to make sacrifices for others.

Reflection Questions:

How do I share what I have?

How does being generous bring you closer to God?

Am I willing to make sacrifices for others?

Am I afraid of losing what I give?

Am I attentive to the needs of others?

Quotes:

"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."
(Kahlil Gibran)

"If beings knew, as I know, the fruit of sharing gifts, they would not enjoy their use without sharing them, nor would the taint of stinginess obsess the heart and stay there." (Buddhism: Itivuttaka 18)

"He who gives alms in secret is greater than Moses." (Talmud, Judaism)

"Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as you ever can." (attributed to John Wesley)