



Set a Goal

*“I can do all this
through him who
gives me strength.”*

Philippians 4:13

Today would be a good day to set a goal for giving to community charities throughout Lent for our 40 days of Generosity Challenge. It could be a dollar amount and/or a commitment to volunteer your time and talents. In the coming days you will be presented with opportunities for donations and volunteering at 30 + charities.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Studies Show Some of the Benefits of Giving Things Away

1. Activate the Reward Center in Your Brain

A study by a University of Oregon professor and his colleagues demonstrates that charitable contributions create a response in the brain that elicits a surge of dopamine and endorphins that are experienced as rewarding.

2. Improve Life Satisfaction

A German study provides ample evidence that people who give more to others – experience greater satisfaction in life than people who do not.

3. Feel Happier. In a study by professors at the University of Missouri people who gave to others tend to score much higher on feelings of joy and contentment than individuals who did not give to others.

4. Improve Key Measurements of Your Health

People who volunteer score better on key measurements in overall health, such as resilience during physical activity and blood pressure levels, than people who do not. Older adults who volunteer their time have improved cognitive function, increased walking speed, increased ability to climb stairs, and decreased rates of television watching than people who do not volunteer.

5. Reduce Rates of Stress

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Tennessee found that charitable givers experience reduced rates of stress and lower blood pressure compared to those who do not give.

PRAYER

Lord, teach our hearts **to give** freely without counting the cost. Let nothing in this world keep us from reflecting your generosity. Let us trust that when we are generous, you will ensure that our needs are taken care of, for you are our good shepherd. Amen.

Sharing the experience of donating to charity with your children shows them from a young age that they can make positive changes in the world. Children naturally Love to help others, so nurturing their innate generosity is likely to mean that they grow up with a greater appreciation of what they have, and will carry on supporting charity in years to come.