

What makes people happy?



Although many studies have been done on this subject, happiness is a complex concept and difficult to measure. However, evidence has shown that men are no happier than women; people in sunny areas are no happier than people in chillier climates; young people are no happier than older people; rich not happier than poor and so on.

Jonathan Haidt, Professor of Psychology, notes that one thing that can make a lasting difference to your contentment is to work with others on a cause larger than yourself. And researchers who encouraged people to think of giving money to a charity, found that parts of the brain lit up. Some 'busy' people who reluctantly undertook some good cause because it was the 'right thing to do' found it became a huge source of fulfillment and satisfaction.

The implication is that we are hard-wired to be concerned for others. To put it another way, it's difficult for humans to be truly selfless, for generosity feels so good.

So at a time of vast needs, from Haiti to our own cities, we have a great opportunity to help so many afflicted people. Giving will bring a wealth of personal satisfaction, social respect, happiness and divine blessing.

All of this may register a collective "duh" to those who have already taken the leap of faith to tithe, volunteer regularly and give in many other ways. These folks and others like them have discovered the truth behind their Savior's teaching, quoted by Paul in Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

What has been your experience of generosity?

Gleaned from Stewardship of Life, Ron Blezard



Contact your Synod office for more on stewardship.

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