

5 Givers You Need to Know

I have been reading through the Bible this year and journaling about all things related to generosity. It has been an amazing journey as I have learned about the generous nature of God and how faithful He is. I have also watched business leaders rise up with extreme generosity, as well as seeing how life can easily distract us from a giving lifestyle. However, the variety of ways God leads people to be generous has been especially inspiring. Here are just a few:

The Spontaneous Giver can be seen in the young boy with his fishes and loaves (John 6:9). I do not think this young man woke up that day committed to giving away all he had. However, when the surprise opportunity arose he held loosely to his stuff. Jesus then took his meager stuff and blessed thousands. Live with an open hand seeking much fruit.

The Devoted Giver can be seen in Cornelius (Acts 10:2). The Bible says that he was devout, prayerful, and generous. He lived this way both privately and publicly. It was how he led his family and also how he led his career (see Acts 10:7). In this passage we learn that his consistent devotion was recognized by God and he was honored with a greater assignment.

The Faith-Filled Giver can be seen in the widow and her offering (Luke 21:2). This passage really interested me because of its level of description. This poor widow gave two small copper coins. Her gift just keeps getting smaller and smaller the more words the author uses. However, her result, as stated by Jesus, was she gave more than everyone else because she gave all she had to live on. Evidently Jesus does measure the faith amount. He makes small things big.

The Creative Giver can be seen in Barnabas (Acts 4:36-37). Barnabas had something valuable. A piece of property he owned. However, his eternal perspective and the needs around him caused a generous response. The property he owned was actually a gift from God to meet the needs of another. He sold the property and brought 100% of the proceeds to the apostles so they could meet the needs of the community. Ananias and Sapphira pretended to do the same in Acts 5. I love how these two stories are found back to back in the Bible.

The Crazy Giver can be seen in the lady with her alabaster jar of perfume (Mark 14:3). This extremely generous gift was given directly to and benefitting Jesus. The Bible tells us that this perfume was worth more than an entire year's wage! It was such a crazy-big gift it shocked those who were present. They actually rebuked her for being wasteful – instead Jesus applauded her. He says it is a clear reminder of how generous the gospel really is.

While each of these stories stands powerfully on its own, they are even more challenging when you consider the variety of ages, cultural backgrounds, religious upbringing, and financial capacities of the individuals. We have no excuses to avoid a generous life. I also love that the word "tithe" is never used. Instead we are challenged to give far beyond 10%. Why not pick out one of these givers and practice this week? If you are a church leader, make sure you are teaching and leading by example. **Generosity shouldn't be a sermon preached when we have a need, but a daily practice of a transformed life.**

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