

Generosity In Genesis: Four Names to Know

I get so inspired when I think about how the Bible leads with the generosity story right from the very beginning. It doesn't arrive after the law or when the Temple needs to be built. The Bible just starts with it from the very first family. Here are a few giving heroes that can inspire us today.

1. **Priority Giver**-Abel is such a story of pure generosity. It is told so early in the Bible before humanity, society, marketplace, and law really kick into high gear. It's just what you do as a part of God's creation. Genesis 4:2-5 states it purely and plainly. Abel humbly offers from the "first" of his labor. Not the second, not something that would be deemed good enough, nor from a measure of reasonableness. He offers what was "first" requiring faith (Hebrews 11:4) and was considered righteous (1 John 3:12). It is a powerful, pure, and simple response to the One who creates, owns, and blesses. The standard should be set.
2. **Imperfect Giver**-This is Cain in Genesis 4:6-7. He appears to make an offering willingly of something he owns. However, God clearly had other expectations based off of His instructions. God is gracious and offers a second chance to learn and grow in generosity. Cain obviously takes an alternate route missing out on God's blessings for himself and his family. What inspires me about Cain is how God led him. God first directs him on how and what to give. Then when he fails, God gives him another chance at it. We all need grace and growth when it comes to generosity. All of us!
3. **Tithing Giver**-Abraham is seen as the first tither in Scripture (Genesis 14:20), unless you view the first fruits as a tithe from Abel. The principle of the tithe is a pretty old practice predating the law and temple practices. A disciplined percentage giver doesn't give because he has to, but because it is the best way to live dependent and blessed. Abraham gave because he had promised to lean only upon God for his success (Genesis 1:23-24). This story repeats a pretty important principle in the Bible related to giving. A generous gift comes following hearing the voice of God clearly. Both Cain and Abraham heard God speak before their giving moment. Leading people to hear God is more important than tithing. God will tell us what He wants us to do. It will always be much more than a tithe.
4. **Trained Giver**-Jacob is the case of the apple not falling far from the tree. He is content to go at the speed of his grandfather. The blessings of financial surplus went from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. Jacob saw the pattern of faith-filled, disciplined, priority, percentage, first fruits giving as the true step forward, so he tithed too (Genesis 28:20-22). The story of family giving is incredible. It begins with Adam and Eve, then moves to Abraham and Jacob. Research tells us that kids raised by generous parents are more likely to be generous as adults. So train up children in the way they should go.

So these are just a few generous people in Genesis. You might want to read the first book of the Bible for yourself and see who else pops up. Several years ago I started highlighting with the color green in my Bible every time I saw a principle or person related to generosity. I was overwhelmed by how many times God gives us amazing gifts and how many giving heroes he has raised up over the centuries.

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