

unsung HEROES

Part # 3:

Abel: First and Best

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An unsung hero defined is, “a person who makes a substantive yet **unrecognized** or unacknowledged contribution to a cause.”

God provides us with unsung heroes to inspire us to allow Him the **opportunity** to do seemingly impossible things **through** our lives.

Central Point . . .

Heroic Giving

The story of Cain and Abel is one of the earliest depictions of worship ever. The sons of Adam and Eve worshipped God through giving a portion of the fruits of their labor. Although their **methods** were similar, their **attitudes** toward giving were very different. This difference would cost Abel his life, and drastically change the life of His brother Cain...

Genesis 4:1-16 Adam and Eve had a son. Then Eve said, “I’ll name him Cain because I got him with the help of the LORD. Later she had another son and named him Abel. Abel became a sheep farmer, but Cain farmed the land. One day, Cain gave part of his harvest to the LORD, and Abel also gave an offering to the LORD. He killed the first-born lamb from one of his sheep and gave the LORD the best parts of it. The LORD was pleased with Abel and his offering, but not with Cain and his offering. This made Cain so angry that he could not hide his feelings. The LORD said to Cain:

What’s wrong with you? Why do you have such an angry look on your face? If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling. But you did the wrong thing, and now sin is waiting to attack you like a lion. Sin wants to destroy you, but don’t let it!

Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go for a walk.” And when they were out in a field, Cain killed him.

God found little value in the **offering** given by Abel; He instead found tremendous value in the **priority** Abel placed on it.

Abel’s heroic giving inspires us by his personal **example** and **accountability**.

Focal Point . . .

Giving and Living

Believers must learn to **balance** their personal freedom in Christ with their personal responsibility to set the right example for others.

Every aspect of a believer’s life – every attitude and action, every opportunity to be an example - should be governed by a desire to **honor** God.

Romans 12:1-2 So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.

Temptations that limit our giving:

1. **holding** something back.
2. **trivializing** our gift.
3. pleasing **people** more than God.
4. **systematic** giving.
5. expecting **rapid** returns.

And as a result:

- our **perspective** gets distorted.
- we are given to **stubborn** resistance.

Without the proper perspective, giving becomes more of an **activity** and less of a **lifestyle**.

Lifestyle giving becomes an expression of **worship**.

Mark 12:41-44 *Jesus sat near the Temple money box and watched the people put in their money. Many rich people gave large sums of money.⁴² Then a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which were only worth a few cents. ⁴³ Calling his followers to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow gave more than all those rich people. ⁴⁴ They gave only what they did not need. This woman is very poor, but she gave all she had; she gave all she had to live on."*

Worshipful Giving...

Worshiping God through giving helps us to...

...**image** God to others.

1 Chronicles 29:14 *"But me—who am I, and who are these my people, that we should presume to be giving something to you? Everything comes from you; all we're doing is giving back what we've been given from your generous hand..."*

...**draw closer** to God.

Matthew 6:21 *It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.*

...**break the grip of greed**.

Matthew 6:24 *"No one can serve two masters. The person will hate one master and love the other, or will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. You cannot serve both God and worldly riches."*

...**increase our reliance** on God.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 *Warn the rich people of this world not to be proud or to trust in wealth that is easily lost. Tell them to have faith in God, who is rich and blesses us with everything we need to enjoy life. ¹⁸Instruct them to do as many good deeds as they can and to help everyone. Remind the rich to be generous and share what they have. ¹⁹This will lay a solid foundation for the future, so that they will know what true life is like.*

...**express** our faith.

2 Corinthians 9:13 *It is a proof of your faith. Many people will praise God because you obey the Good News of Christ—the gospel you say you believe—and because you freely share with them and with all others.*

Turning Point...

God desires every request of our lives from Him to result in drawing us **closer** to Him.

Giving our best to God helps to ensure our worship is one of **lifestyle**, not simple acts.

Our challenge:

Believers – simply ask, *"Father God – Is my worship a representation of my lifestyle?"*

Seekers –To invite Christ into your heart, simply pray,

Father God, I come before you today, asking you to save me. I invite your Son Jesus Christ into my heart to be my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me of sin in my life; cleanse my heart and my spirit. Father, I want to trust in your promises and accept that they are totally true. And with your help, guide me toward being the person you created me to be.

In Jesus' name -- Amen