

We Get To Give

Big Idea: While some would encourage us to “give to get”, the Bible says we “get to give” - it really is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). We can learn from Abraham that God gives to us so that we have something to give back to Him and to others.

Giving is not a spiritual strategy for getting more. While it's true that God does bless those who sow liberally (Matthew 13 suggests returns of 300%, 600%, and even 1000%), He only gives us more so we can in turn give away more. The joy of giving is its own reward! That's the very nature of God! As it turns out, it's in our nature too as we are transformed into His image. This is another theme of Scripture, closely related to the theme of fruitfulness and multiplication we looked at a few weeks ago. We see this theme being reinforced as Abraham walked out His faith.

1. By Faith We Receive

By faith Abraham, even though he was past age--and Sarah herself was barren--was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. Hebrews 11:11

Abraham lost his grip at times in holding on to the promise of God. He even tried to help God out when it seemed like He wasn't coming through as planned (Eliezer and Ishmael – Gen. 15 & 16). Can you think of an occasion when you became impatient with God's promises to you and either tried to make it happen or settled for something less?

Ultimately though, Abraham hung in there long enough to let God come through. God had the last laugh when baby Isaac (his name means “laughter”) was born to 100 year old Abraham and 90 year old Sarah! That moment made every sacrifice they had endured to this point well worth it. They had moved away from their hometown, lived like desert nomads, and experienced famine, kidnapping, warfare, fire, brimstone, and (yikes!) adult circumcision. But 25 years later, God was true to His word and they held their long-awaited baby boy in their arms – the greatest gift imaginable! What promised gift from God are you still waiting for?

2. By Faith We Give Back

By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son. Hebrews 11:17

Can you imagine what Abraham thought when he heard God say, “*Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering*” (Gen. 22:2). We'd probably be looking for the hidden cameras. How is God going to fulfill the promise to Abraham of many nations when his only heir is about to be sacrificed before reaching manhood? But this was just a test and only a test (Gen. 22:1,12) – a reminder that Abraham's source is God. He owns it all and we are only stewards of His gifts. We need to be ready, when He asks, to give back or give away anything He has given to us. Practicing spiritual disciplines will help shape in us God's giving nature (see the back page). What has He asked you to give back to Him or give away to others?

3. By Faith We Just Trust and Obey

He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. Hebrews 11:19

Abraham's faith in God's trustworthiness and miracle-working power helped him obey an impossible request. Really believing that God owns everything, including us and our children, and that He is always good, should lift us out of all worry and doubt. Trust and obey – there's no other way.