

# 1 Samuel 25 - Samuel Dies; David's Request of Nabal; Abigail Intercedes with David; Nabal Dies; David Marries Abigail

IV. Transition from the house of Saul to the house of David (1 Samuel 16:1—31:13)

(3) David in exile from the pursuing Saul (21:1—29:11)

(J) David's exemplary character (24:1—26:25)

(b) David spares Nabal at Maon and marries Abigail at Carmel (25:1-44)

## 1 Samuel 25

(b) David spares Nabal at Maon and marries Abigail at Carmel (25:1-44)

**1** Then Samuel died; and all Israel assembled and mourned for him, and they buried him at his house in Ramah. And David set out and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

**1** Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

**1** Samuel died and all Israel assembled to mourn for him. They buried him at his home in Ramah.

David got up and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

**1** And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

- Samuel's tenure of being a blessing to all Israel came to an end with his death; his death marked the end of an era (the judges)

— Power and position did not make Samuel's life significant...his life was significant because he loved God, His Word, and His people

— David took his place as God's major channel of blessing to the nation

— David would probably have continued Samuel's ministry and become Israel's first king without the hiatus of Saul's tragic reign if Israel had not insisted on having a king prematurely

- All Israel sent delegates to the funeral service. And Samuel was laid to rest in the family estate at Ramah, the city of his birth, judgeship, and death.

— Paran was the desert that separated Palestine from the Sinai Peninsula, just southwest of Maon

2 Now *there was* a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel; and the man was very rich, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And it came about while he was shearing his sheep in Carmel

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2 Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel of Judah, and the man was very rich. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats, and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

3 (now the man's name was **Nabal**, and his wife's name was **Abigail**. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but the man was harsh and evil in *his* dealings, and he was a Calebite),

3 (now the man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but the man was harsh and evil in *his* dealings, and he was a Calebite),

3 The man's name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. The woman was intelligent and beautiful, while the man was harsh and wicked in his dealings. He was a descendant of Caleb.

3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

- "...Nabal" - "fool"; it must have been a nickname

— The OT prophets regarded those who are ungodly (those who do not take God into account) as fools (Ps 14:1; Prov 18:2,7; Is 32:6). God promised to punish the ungodly (Deut 28), and He will punish fools (v25-26).

- "...Abigail" - "[My] Father is Rejoicing" or "[My] Father was Delighted"

- The contrast between Nabal and Abigail could not be clearer:

- He was foolish; she was wise
- He was evil; she was good
- He was repulsive; she was attractive
- He was arrogant; she was humble
- He was ungodly; she was godly
- He was antagonistic; she was peacemaking

— They were one of the mismatched odd couples of the books of Samuel, along with Hannah and Elkanah, and David and Michal

Nabal was a descendant of Caleb, who had received Hebron and its environs as his inheritance from Joshua (Joshua 15:13). Nabal was unlike his ancestor in many ways. He was foolish while Caleb was wise. Nabal did not take God into account, but Caleb counted on God's promises. Nabal opposed God's purposes and died prematurely, but Caleb cooperated with God and lived long.

4 that David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

4 that David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

4 While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep.

4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

5 So David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel and visit Nabal, and greet him in my name;

5 So David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, visit Nabal and greet him in my name;

5 David sent ten young men, saying to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, find Nabal, and greet him in my name.

5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 and this is what you shall say: 'Have a long life, peace to you, and peace to your house, and peace to all that you have!

6 and thus you shall say, 'Have a long life, peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.

6 Then say, 'May you live long. Peace to you, peace to your family, and peace to all that you have.

6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.

- Sheep-shearing season was a time of hard work, but also of feasting and celebration

7 Now then, I have heard that you have shearers. Now, your shepherds have been with us; we have **not harmed them**, nor has anything of theirs gone missing all the days they were in Carmel.

7 Now I have heard that you have shearers; now your shepherds have been with us and we have not insulted them, nor have they missed anything all the days they were in Carmel.

7 Now, I've heard that the sheep shearers are with you. Now, your shepherds have been with us. We didn't harm them, and they didn't miss anything all the time they were in Carmel.

7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

- "...not harmed them" - David contrasted the strict discipline maintained by him with the usual license of similar roving bands, and asked that some acknowledgment of this should be made by the wealthy farmer

8 Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore let *my* young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David."

8 Ask your young men and they will tell you. Therefore let *my* young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day. Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David."

8 Ask your young men and they'll tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor with you since we came on a special day. Please give whatever you have available to your servants and to your son David."

8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

- David's armed followers had patrolled the wilderness of Paran, where Nabal's shepherds tended his flocks. They kept the area safe from raiding Amalekites, Philistines and the occasional wild animals that may have attacked Nabal's shepherds.

— In exchange for this "protection," it was common courtesy that wealthy Nabal would express his appreciation to David by providing some food for David's men

9 When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal in accordance with all these words in David's name; then they waited.

9 When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in David's name; then they waited.

9 David's young men came to Nabal and told him all this in David's name, and then they waited.

9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

10 But Nabal answered David's servants and said, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master.

10 But Nabal answered David's servants and said, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master.

10 Nabal answered David's servants: "Who is David? Who is this son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are breaking away from their masters.

**10** And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

- David's army included many runaway slaves, as well as men who had abandoned the service of Saul. Nabal viewed David merely as one of the runaway slaves.

— Nabal probably thought David was running a protection racket to finance his outlaw way of life; or, maybe more likely, Nabal was a miser who didn't want to admit David had been a blessing so he didn't have to part with anything he had.

11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?"

11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?"

11 Should I take my food, my water, and my meat that I've slaughtered for my shearers and give it to men who came from who knows where?"

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?

- In a culture that exalted both courtesy and generosity, Nabal's ingratitude greatly insulted David

12 So David's young men made their way back and returned; and they came and informed him in accordance with all these words.

12 So David's young men retraced their way and went back; and they came and told him according to all these words.

12 David's men turned and went on their way. They came back and told David everything.

**12** So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

13 Then David said to his men, "Each of you strap on his sword." So each man strapped on his sword. And David also strapped on his sword, and about four hundred men went up behind David, while two hundred stayed with the baggage.

13 David said to his men, "Each of you gird on his sword." So each man girded on his sword. And David also girded on his sword, and about four hundred men went up behind David while two hundred stayed with the baggage.

13 David told his men, "Put on your swords." They put on their swords, and David put on his sword. Then about 400 men followed David, while 200 stayed with the supplies.

13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

- David over-reacted to Nabal's insult, and prepared 400 men to attack and kill every male in Nabal's household that night (Cf. 22,24). He never stopped to consider how his uncontrolled anger threatened to make him like Saul.

— By carrying out his intention, David would have sinned against the Lord and against his people; but the Lord preserved him from this sin

— At just the right time, Abigail, the intelligent and pious wife of Nabal, heard of the affair and was able to appease the wrath of David by her immediate and kindly interposition

**14** Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, and he spoke to them in anger.

**14** But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, and he scorned them.

**14** Now, one of the young men told Nabal's wife Abigail: "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our lord, but he screamed insults at them.

**14** But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

- Nabal's servant asked Abigail to reverse Nabal's orders regarding David

15 Yet the men were very good to us, and we were not harmed, nor did anything go missing as long as we went with them, while we were in the fields.

15 Yet the men were very good to us, and we were not insulted, nor did we miss anything as long as we went about with them, while we were in the fields.

15 The men were very good to us. They didn't harm us, and we didn't miss anything all the time we moved around with them when we were in the field.

15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

- The servant testified about how David's men were good to them and had blessed Nabal's shepherds; Nabal was returning evil for all the good David had shown Nabal's shepherds

16 They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the time we were with them tending the sheep.

16 They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the time we were with them tending the sheep.

16 They were a wall around us both day and night, all the time we were with them taking care of the sheep.

16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

17 Now then, be aware and consider what you should do, because harm is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he is such a **worthless man** that no one can speak to him."

17 Now therefore, know and consider what you should do, for evil is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he is such a worthless man that no one can speak to him."

17 Now, be aware of this and consider what you should do. Calamity is being planned against our master and against his entire household. He's such a worthless person that no one can talk to him."

17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

- As with the case of Saul, Nabal's family and servants sided with David

- Nabal's servants were already planning to revolt against him because of his horrible owner-shepherd relations

— The servant revealed this information to Abigail to consider as she made her decision

- "...a worthless man" - one of the characteristics of a "fool" is that they do not listen to other people

— Nabal was such a fool that he did not even listen to God

**18** Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred *loaves* of bread and two jugs of wine, and five sheep *already* prepared and five measures of roasted grain, and a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and she loaded *them* on donkeys.

**18** Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred *loaves* of bread and two jugs of wine and five sheep already prepared and five measures of roasted grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded *them* on donkeys.

**18** Abigail quickly took 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five butchered sheep, five measures of roasted grain, 100 bunches of raisins, and 200 fig cakes and loaded them on donkeys.

**18** Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

- Just as Abimelech did earlier (21:4), Abigail prepared a meal to sustain the Lord's anointed (David) and his men with food

— Jacob did the same to placate Esau (Gen 32:13-21)

19 Then she said to her young men, "Go on ahead of me; behold, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

19 She said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

19 She told her young men, "Go ahead of me, I'll be coming right behind you." But she said nothing to her husband Nabal.

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

20 And it happened as she was riding on her donkey and coming down by the hidden part of the mountain, that behold, David and his men were coming down toward her; so she met them.

20 It came about as she was riding on her donkey and coming down by the hidden part of the mountain, that behold, David and his men were coming down toward her; so she met them.

20 She was riding on the donkey and as she went down a protected part of the mountain, David was there with his men, coming down to meet her, and she went toward them.

**20** And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

21 Now David had said, "It is certainly for nothing that I have guarded everything that this *man* has in the wilderness, so that nothing has gone missing of all that belonged to him! For he has returned me evil for good.

21 Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have guarded all that this *man* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good.

21 Now David had said, "Surely it was for nothing that I protected everything that belonged to this man in the wilderness, and nothing was missing of all that belonged to him. But he has repaid me with evil for good!

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 May God do so to the enemies of David, and more so, if by morning I leave alive as *much as* one male of any who belong to him."

22 May God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if by morning I leave *as much* as one male of any who belong to him."

22 May the LORD do this to the enemies of David—and more also—if by the morning I've left alive a single male of all those who belong to him."

22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

**23** When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face in front of David and bowed herself to the ground.

**23** When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground.

**23** When Abigail saw David, she quickly got down from the donkey and fell on her face before David, prostrating herself on the ground.

**23** And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

24 She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your slave speak to you, and listen to the words of your slave.

24 She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant.

24 She fell at his feet and pleaded, "Your majesty, let the guilt be on me alone, and please let your servant speak to you. Listen to the words of your servant.

24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

- Abigail's approach of David and his 400 men, intent on slaughtering her household, was a model of courage, boldness and wisdom. She was taking her life in her hands.

- First, Abigail took the blame for her husband's foolishness, reminding us of Jesus Christ, who also rode a donkey into the teeth of His enemies, and took on Himself the sins of generations of fools, willing to suffer the consequences unselfishly.

25 Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and stupidity is with him; but I your slave did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

25 Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

25 Please, your majesty, don't pay attention to this worthless man Nabal, for he's just like his name. Nabal is his name and folly is his constant companion. But I, your servant, didn't

see your majesty's young men whom you sent.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

- Abigail begged David to listen to her, as her own husband would not (v17)

- Abigail was not being disrespectful to her husband by calling him a "fool"; she likely meant that by responding to David as he had, he was substantiating what others called him — If David had interpreted her description of her husband as disloyal, it's doubtful he would have asked her to marry him (v40), as she may have proven to be disloyal to him as well

- The Hebrew words for "fool" and "folly" denote not mere stupidity, but moral perversity. The word in Hebrew suggests one who is insensible to the claims both of God and of man, and who is both irreligious and churlish.

**26** "Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then, may your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be like Nabal.

**26** "Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, since the LORD has restrained you from shedding blood, and from avenging yourself by your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal.

26 Now, your majesty, as the LORD lives and as you live, the LORD has kept you from shedding blood and from delivering yourself by your own actions. Now, may your enemies and those seeking to do evil to your majesty be like Nabal.

26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

- Abigail helped David view his situation from God's perspective; Abigail reminded David of God's sovereign promises and great mercy

— She referred to the Lord as the One who, in response to her words, was restraining David from shedding innocent blood

— In keeping David from taking revenge, the Lord personally and purposefully protected not only Abigail and her staff, but David himself

— David later wrote, with wisdom, that the Lord keep him from willful sins, that they may not rule over him (Ps 19:13)

— She was anticipating David's proper response to her appeal, and she further wished that all who opposed David, as Nabal had done, would be ineffective

27 And now let this gift which your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord.

27 Now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord.

27 Now let this present that your servant has brought to your majesty be given to the young men who follow your majesty.

27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28 Please forgive the offense of your slave; for the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil will not be found in you all your days.

28 Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil will not be found in you all your days.

28 Please forgive the offense of your servant. For the LORD will certainly make a strong dynasty for your majesty, for your majesty is fighting the LORD's battles. May evil not be found in you for all of your life.

28 I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

- Abigail was as certain of David's rise to kingship as was Rahab certain of Israel's conquest of Canaan (Joshua 2:9-13)

— In spite of David's misfortunes at court, the average citizen expected his tide to turn. Many looked upon him in his exile as the hope of Israel.

29 Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound **in the bundle of the living** with the LORD your God; but the lives of your enemies **He will sling out** as from the hollow of a sling.

29 Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling.

29 If anyone should arise to pursue you and seek your life, may the life of your majesty be bound up with the LORD your God in a bundle of the living, and may he sling out the lives of your enemies from the pocket of a sling.

29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

- "...in the bundle of the living" - this saying has long been applied to life beyond the grave, and its initial Hebrew letters are today found on almost every Jewish tombstone

— This beautiful metaphor is taken from the custom of binding up valuable things in a bundle to prevent their being injured. The figure is that of a precious jewel carefully tied up (Gen 42:35).

— The converse follows in the prayer that the lives of David's enemies might be cast away "like the stones from a sling"

- "...He will sling out" - Abigail wisely brought David's mind back to how God had given him victory over Goliath

— This gave David comfort that he could safely leave vengeance to God's perfect justice. Then, when David eventually ruled over all Israel, the staggering burden of needless bloodshed would not weigh down David's conscience.

30 And when the LORD does for my lord in accordance with all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel,

30 And when the LORD does for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and appoints you ruler over Israel,

30 When the LORD does for your majesty all the good that he promised concerning you and appoints you Commander-in-Chief over Israel,

30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

- First, Samuel recognized David as a future king (16:12), then Jonathan did (20:15), then Saul did (24:20), and now Abigail does (v30)

— Abigail reminded David that no enemy could stop God's plan to give David a lasting dynasty

31 this will not become an obstacle to you, or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having **shed blood without cause** and by my lord's having avenged himself. When the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your slave."

31 this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause and by my lord having avenged himself. When the LORD deals well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

31 this shouldn't be an obstacle or stumbling block for your majesty's conscience, that he poured out blood without cause or that your majesty delivered himself. When the LORD does good things for your majesty, remember your servant."

31 That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

- "...shed blood without cause" - Abigail's argument was that any shedding of blood at this point would work against David's program
- It would start a blood feud among the clans of Judah that would involve men David needed to support his bid for kingship. David had only Judah to back him in the quest for the throne.
- In addition, Abigail argued, David's conscience would trouble him if blood flowed needlessly. In her wisdom, she anticipated that day, and viewed David as having a good conscience then for not taking vengeance against Nabal now, since vengeance belongs to God.
- Abigail finished her plea with a request for David to remember her when he attained the throne
- There are many similarities between Abigail's appeal to David here, and the appeal of the wise woman of Tekoa (2 Sam 14:1-20)

### **Becoming Wise**

Becoming a fool has nothing to do with our abilities, and everything to do with our response to God. Fools reject God, His ways, and His people. Nabal shows us how the person God calls foolish lives:

- Nabal probably thought God existed, but he lived as if God had no claims on him (Ps 14; 53:1)
- Nabal and David responded in very different ways to Abigail's words. Nabal, a foolish man, "became like a stone." David, the wise man, accepted Abigail's rebuke and praised God (Prov 10:8).
- Nabal insulted David intentionally and refused to admit any wrongdoing. Abigail showed true wisdom: she took the blame and also shared lavishly (Prov 14:9).
- David came dangerously close to acting more like the fool Nabal than the "man after God's own heart." Praise God for mercifully restraining David! (Prov 20:3)

If you want to become wise: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding" (Ps 111:10; Prov 1:7)

**32** Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me,

**32** Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me,

**32** David told Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today.

**32** And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

- David recognized the Lord's voice behind Abigail's words; thus, he thanked the Lord for her and her wise discernment

33 and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand.

33 and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed and from avenging myself by my own hand.

33 Blessed be your good judgment, and blessed be you, who today stopped me from shedding blood and delivering myself by my own actions.

33 And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

34 Nevertheless, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, there certainly would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light *as much as one male.*"

34 Nevertheless, as the LORD God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light *as much as one male.*"

34 For as surely as the LORD God of Israel lives, the one who restrained me from harming you—indeed, had you not quickly come to meet me, by dawn there wouldn't be a single male left to Nabal."

34 For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

35 So David accepted from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."

35 So David received from her hand what she had brought him and said to her, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."

35 David took from her what she had brought him and told her, "Go up to your house in peace. Look, I've heard your request and will grant it."

35 So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

**36** Then Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was having a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was cheerful within him, for he was very drunk; so she did not tell him anything at all until the morning light.

**36** Then Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; so she did not tell him anything at all until the morning light.

**36** Abigail returned to Nabal, and he was there in his house holding a festival like the festival of a king. Nabal's heart was glad, and he was very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything at all until morning.

**36** And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

- Nabal was completely drunk, oblivious to the mortal danger Abigail's negotiation with David had averted

— Nabal's idea of happiness wasn't to praise God or feed the hungry, but to eat to the full and get drunk (Cf. Phil 3:19)

**37** But in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him so that he **became like a stone**.

**37** But in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him so that he became as a stone.

**37** After Nabal became sober the next morning, his wife told him all that had happened. Nabal's heart failed and he became paralyzed.

**37** But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

- The Hebrew word for wineskin is *nebel*; it was as if the writer was suggesting that Nabal was a *nebel*. When the wine had gone out of him, he was nothing.

- "...became like a stone" - the news delivered by Abigail put Nabal into shock, from which he never recovered; it appears he may have gone catatonic

— Nabal's heart died when he realized what a fool he had been

- Wealth or success in life does not equate to God's approval

— Nabal stored up things for himself yet lost everything because he was not rich toward God (Luke 12:13-21)

**38** About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

**38** About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

**38** About ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died.

**38** And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

- Sometimes, people who fail to respond to the will of God die prematurely (Num 3:2; 16:32; Joshua 7:25; 1 Cor 11:30; 1 John 5:16)

**39** When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of the shame inflicted on me by the hand of Nabal, and has kept back His servant from evil. The LORD has also returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head." Then David sent a proposal to Abigail, to take her as his wife.

**39** When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal and has kept back His servant from evil. The LORD has also returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head." Then David sent a proposal to Abigail, to take her as his wife.

**39** When David heard that Nabal had died, he said, "Blessed be the LORD who has judged the dispute over my insult at the hand of Nabal, and has held back his servant from evil. The LORD has repaid Nabal's wickedness."

Then David sent word to Abigail that he would take her as his wife.

**39** And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

- Nabal's death left David in awe of God's justice and mercy; God's intervention to keep David from sin humbled him

— David thanked God for vindicating him and preventing him from doing evil; Abigail was God's instrument to do this

- From Creation, God's will has been monogamy (Gen 2:24), thus, it was wrong for David to marry her

40 When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you to take you to him as *his* wife."

40 When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you to take you as his wife."

40 David's servants went to Abigail at Carmel and told her, "David sent us to you to take you to him as his wife."

40 And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

- David extended God's grace to Abigail by asking her to marry him; this proposal honored Abigail and protected her from the hardships of widowhood

— David's first wife (Michal) had already remarried, but David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel

- David did not restrain himself in his relations with women, which caused him major problems later in his life

- The same words “sent” and “took her” appear both here and in the account of David’s affair with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:4)
- We see here the seed problem that bore bitter fruit in David’s adultery

### **Polygamy**

How could a “man after God’s own heart” marry multiple women? And in doing this, David did not seem to have any near-term consequences. Does God condone polygamy? The Bible records history accurately, which includes such practices as polygamy, which God never commanded and does not condone (Gen 4:23-24; 16:1-16; 21:8-21; 29:16-30:24; 37:3-36).

From the beginning, God established marriage between one man and one woman (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-6; Eph 5:25-33). Powerful men in unbelieving nations around Israel took numerous wives, but God forbade Israel’s kings from doing the same (Deut 17:17). David’s multiple marriages brought strife to his family that spilled over into the nation (Cf. 2 Sam 13-18). His son Solomon’s many marriages lay behind his and Israel’s downfall (1 Kings 11:1-14). God is merciful to sinners, but His design is always the best for His people, and He makes it available through His Word.

**41** And she got up and bowed with her face to the ground, and said, “Behold, your slave is a servant to wash the feet of my lord’s servants.”

**41** She arose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, “Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord’s servants.”

**41** She got up, prostrated herself face down on the ground, and replied, “Your servant would be a slave to wash the feet of your majesty’s servants.”

**41** And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

**42** Then Abigail got up quickly, and rode on a donkey, with her five female attendants who accompanied her; and she followed the messengers of David and became his wife.

**42** Then Abigail quickly arose, and rode on a donkey, with her five maidens who attended her; and she followed the messengers of David and became his wife.

**42** Then Abigail quickly got up and got on a donkey, with five young women walking behind her. She followed David’s messengers, and she became his wife.

**42** And Abigail hastened, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.

**43** David had also taken Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both became his wives.

**43** David had also taken Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both became his wives.

43 David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and both of them became his wives.

43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

- David married Ahinoam, mother of Amnon, before he married Abigail

— Perhaps David justified his second marriage (to Abigail) with the fact that Saul had taken Michal from him

— Perhaps he got into polygamy also because it was customary in the ancient Near East for great warriors and monarchs to have many wives and concubines

— Yet God forbade this of Israel's kings (Deut 17:17)

**44** But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to **Palti** the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

**44** Now Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

**44** Meanwhile, Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Laish's son Palti from Gallim.

**44** But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.

- Evidently, Saul considered David as good as dead, so sometime during these events, he gave his daughter Michal, David's wife, to another man

— Saul may have also done this to remove the possibility of David claiming Saul's throne because he was Saul's son-in-law

— David later reclaimed Michal (2 Sam 3:13-16), but it was a source of grief for David, since Michal did not have the same reverence for God's authority (Cf. 2 Sam 6:16-23; 1 Chr 15:29)

- "...Palti" - "Phaltiel"

- Gallim is mentioned in the neighborhood of Anathoth in Benjamin (Is 10:30)

### **Application**

We can learn a great deal from wise Abigail. We can see how a godly person responds to a spouse's folly—by preserving and protecting the spouse rather than by ignoring the folly.

We see how a godly person responds to a foolish spouse—by honoring him or her rather than by despising him or her. We see how a godly person responds to favors bestowed—by returning them generously rather than by taking them for granted. We see how a godly person responds to other godly people—by helping them rather than by opposing them.

We see how a godly person responds to being vulnerable—by sacrificing oneself for others rather than by becoming arrogant. We see how a godly person responds to the threat of danger—by trusting in God and behaving wisely rather than by ignoring the danger.

We also see how a godly person responds to the desire for security—we do so by relying on God to provide legitimately rather than by seizing security. In the last lesson, Abigail is a negative example rather than a positive one.