

ABIGAIL

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with Pastor Dan Betzer

This is the Bible story about a man and his wife. They lived on a ranch about seven miles southwest of Hebron - in the hill country.

He was rich, but vicious. The Bible calls him a “churl,” a stupid man. His name was Nabal.

His wife was Abigail. She was brilliant and she was beautiful. The third character in this story was David.

Now David had been anointed by Samuel the prophet to follow King Saul on the throne of Israel. Saul knew it and was seized with jealousy and sought on several occasions to kill David. So David and his 600 men were living in the wilderness near the Dead Sea and served - much like Robin Hood - as protectors of the common people. When they needed supplies, such as food, these protected people, out of gratitude, supplied them with what they needed. Except for Nabal. Here is the story from God's Word:

1 Samuel 25:2-44

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 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.

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

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

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

[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. [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 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, 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] 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] And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, [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. [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. [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. [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] 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. [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. [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; [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. [32] And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: [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] For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted 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 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] 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. [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. [38] And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died.

[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. [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. [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] And Abigail hasted, 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 also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

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

**QUESTION: HOW MANY WIVES DID DAVID HAVE?
EIGHT, ALTHOUGH ONLY FIVE OF THEM ARE
MENTIONED BY NAME IN SCRIPTURE.**

How many wives did King Saul have? Only one, for sure. Her name was Ahinoam, although he had a concubine named Rizpah.

1. NOW THE BIBLE DESCRIBES ABIGAIL AS A WISE AND BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. IF SHE WAS SO WISE, WHY DID SHE MARRY NABAL?

It was probably not her choice in that society where weddings were arranged by parents, sometimes even before the couple was born. I have friends in Bethlehem whose marriage was pre-arranged for them.

But, Abigail showed great grace and wisdom in the way she handled her marriage. THIS IS ONE OF THOSE ISSUES THAT SHOULD PRAYERFULLY AND CAREFULLY BE SETTLED LONG BEFORE MARRIAGE. SPIRITUAL COMPATIBILITY

David's men properly approached Nabal about supplies. They had protected Nabal's sheep and other property, and it was usually accepted that such protection deserved something in return - supplies.

2. NABAL RESPONDED IN HIS CHURLISH WAY, AND DAVID WAS SO ANGRY HE WANTED TO KILL HIM. WHY WOULD DAVID RESPOND LIKE THAT?

In his early life David was not known for patience. And this event took place in perhaps the lowest moment of his young life. His mentor and friend Samuel had just died, and it was devastating to the young man.

Never make decisions in times of emotional letdown. How did David react? He certainly did not intend to overcome evil with good! Instead, he readied 400 of his soldiers to destroy Nabal and his property.

3. ABIGAIL TO THE RESCUE

She learned from one of her servants of the rude and downright stupid actions of her husband. She set out immediately to intercept David. She had with her:

- 200 loaves of bread
- wine
- five sheep dressed
- five measures of corn
- 100 clusters of raisins
- 200 cakes of figs

...and brought them to David

**TEN DAYS LATER, NABAL DIED AT GOD'S HAND...
A STROKE? HEART ATTACK?**

4. David very quickly went to Abigail and proposed marriage to her, which she accepted.

LESSONS FROM THIS STORY

1. Don't live by your emotions. Nabal did, and David almost did, which would have destroyed his years of reign to come.
2. Be a peacemaker... like Abigail. How urgently peacemakers are needed in our nation right now.
3. Be willing to do something of substance to heal a situation.
4. Be prayerfully aware of marriage plans.
5. Let vengeance be God's - not yours