

STUDY NUMBER SIX - 1 Samuel 25:1-44

- v. 1 Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon.
- v. 2 A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.
- v. 3 His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.
- v. 4 While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep.
- v. 5 So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name.
- v. 6 Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!'
- v. 7 " 'Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing.
- v. 8 Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.' "
- v. 9 When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited.
- v. 10 Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.
- v. 11 Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?"
- v. 12 David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.
- v. 13 David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.
- v. 14 One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: "David sent messengers from the desert to give our masters his greetings, but he hurled insults at them.
- v.15 Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing.
- v. 16 Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them.

v. 17 Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk with him.”

v. 18 Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys.

v. 19 Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

v. 20 As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them.

v. 21 David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good.

v. 22 May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!”

v. 23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground.

v. 24 She fell at his feet and said: “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say.

v. 25 May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the man my master sent.

v. 26 Now since the Lord has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal.

v. 27 And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you.

v. 28 Please forgive your servant’s offense, for the Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the Lord’s battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live.

v. 29 Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.

v. 30 When the Lord has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel,

v. 31 my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord has brought my master success, remember your servant.”

v. 32 David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me.

v. 33 May you be blessed for your good judgement and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.

- v. 34 Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.”
- v. 35 Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.”
- v. 36 When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak.
- v. 37 Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone.
- v. 38 About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.
- v. 39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Praise be to the Lord, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept me from doing wrong and has brought Nabal’s wrongdoing down on his own head.” Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.
- v. 40 His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, “David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife.”
- v. 41 She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, “Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master’s servants.”
- v. 42 Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David’s messengers and became his wife.

INTRODUCTION:

Psalm 16:5-8,11

“The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; let him support my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me. I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. I have set the Lord continually before me; because he is continually at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; in thy right hand there are pleasures forever.”

Whereas in chapter 24 we saw David victorious in the realm of self-control when he had an opportunity to take Saul’s life, he restrained himself; so in chapter 25 we see him lose his self-control when his reaction to Nabal’s turn-down is ‘put on your swords.’

Psalm 18:30

“As for God, his way is blameless. The word of the Lord is tried; he a shield to all who take refuge in him.”

Psalm 18:16

“He sent from on high, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.”

In our previous episodes in the life of King David,

1. We saw him at 16 years of age, anointed by Samuel and then called to the court as the court musician.
2. David came to the top of the popularity polls by slaying the giant from Gath, Goliath.
3. David began to let the fear of man replace his faith in the Lord. Saul’s hatred intensified to the point that David was driven from the courts of the kingdom.
4. David fled from the Lord’s presence and went down to the land of the Philistines in Gath. His escape from that land was made good by faking insanity. He came back to the cave of Adullam and there met the Lord in a very intimate and personal way and got his life right once again, so the Lord could lead and use him.

5. David saves the city of Keilah from the onslaught of the Philistines, and most of the rest of that episode involves Saul's pursuit of David to take his life. David cut part of his garment while he was in a cave where David and his men were residing.

This brings us now to EPISODE #6 in the life of our hero, King David.

v. 1 Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon.

What a warrior for the Lord was Samuel. He was a great personal friend of David, and I am sure, in this time of grief, David recalls his last meeting and the 2 or 3 week retreat at Naioth when they had spent some quality time together.

Samuel the sensitive servant with an obedient heart—what a man!

The Bible is really brief concerning Samuel's death. It simply says that he died and Israel gathered to mourn for him. Samuel had been a great man of God. He was outstanding. He was the bridge between the judges and the kings. He was the last of the judges and the first of the office of prophets. There were other prophets before Samuel but he represented an office that continued on through the Old Testament and went into the New.

Samuel was also a force for good and probably was a deterrent that prevented the full force of Saul's hatred and bitterness to be vented on David. Samuel was a buffer between David and Saul.

I'm sure David probably felt with the death of Samuel that another restraining factor of protection against Saul's wrath had now gone.

When Samuel died, David went a great distance into the wilderness, as far as he could, away from Saul.

Winter points out, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints' (Psalm 116:15). Verse 1 of this chapter should stand alone. It records the death of a valiant soldier of the cross. Special notice should be taken of this event. God's followers should always mark well the fall of his valiant leaders."

Barrett points out, “The prophet Samuel was dead. The whole country was plunged into mourning. David’s own personal mourning was great, for aside from Jonathan, Samuel had been his greatest source of strength. It was true, David had all of his brothers with him now, and some of their older sons, but none of them could be as close to him as Samuel or David’s beloved Jonathan.”

F. B. Meyer points out, “The tidings passed through the land like fire in prairie grass that Samuel was dead, and Israel, recognizing its unity in the common loss gathered to lament the prophet and saint and perform the last honoring rites.”

Deane and Kirk point out, “He had arrived at a good old age. His work was done. The time for his reward had arrived, so he giveth his beloved sleep. Though of late he had lived in retirement and had taken no part in public affairs, yet his death was felt as a public calamity and all Israel, forgetting its rivalries and contentions, remembering only the mighty benefits he had conferred upon the nation, his unblemished life, his personal piety, assembled as one man to do him honor. Think what he was in himself, what he had done for them, conspicuous in a rough, uncultured age, he stands forth as a witness for God and religion and education. Since Moses, none so eminent had arisen. The child of prayer is especially the man of prayer, a stainless boyhood, passed into the tabernacle of God, and amid the solemnities of holy worship, prepared him for reception of heavenly inspirations. Severed from the outward world, parted even from the influence of domestic affections, he gives himself wholly to God and his country. He communes with the unseen, seeks no guide by the will of God, has no law but the law of the Most High, he is absorbed with his intercourse with heaven, and outward circumstances affect him but little. He began well and he continued in the same path unto the end. He had set one great end before him and pursued it unflinchingly. Undeterred by difficulties and entirely uninfluenced by personal motives, his great strength was prayer. Here was refuge, his weapon, his support. Not only did he flee unto God in all great emergencies before the face of powerful enemies at the defection of Saul, but regularly, at all times, he practiced the habit of devotion and found calmness, comfort and vigor in this communion with God. A more unselfish man has never existed. His heart was filled with love for the Lord and his people and what was best for them—that was his good pleasure also. That great heart thus occupied had no room for petty feelings. If a king could best head the people at this crisis of their history, let one be found. If he could be to them what Samuel himself had hope to be, Godspeed him. All is cheerful, voluntary, dignified. There is no show of compelled submission. He sees what is best and without any consciousness of being slighted or superceded, he freely gives his friendship to the elected monarch. And by loving counsel, by stern rebuke, by solemn warning, by continued intercession, proves his

interest in the new king and his unselfish desire to make his reign a success. Good men can claim no immunity from trouble, but they have the secret of knowing how to meet it. He suffered many sorrows. He had to make many sacrifices. He saw the ruin of what he had loved. He lost his best and earliest friend. He was unhappy in his children, disappointed in the chosen king; disappointed in his fellow countrymen, but in and through all these afflictions, he bore a brave heart, staying himself on God, rising higher in the religious life as the waves beat against him, finding new occasion for prayer and devotion as every fresh distress fell upon his head.”

1 Samuel 12:23,24

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things he has done for you.”

Soon after the reconciliation between Saul and David, recorded in chap. 24, Samuel, who might be about 96 years of age, died, “and all Israel were gathered together and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.” Samuel’s death was a great national loss. Notwithstanding his extreme old age, his presence in the nation was a tower of strength. He was perhaps the greatest ruler, the wisest statesman, and the most attractive personality in Israel since the days of Moses.

“Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon.”

This is about 18-20 miles southwest of En Gedi, where he resided previous to this.

v. 2 A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.

The distance between Maon and Carmel was only a couple of miles, and so geographically, they were very close.

We are now introduced to a very wealthy man who was only concerned about the here and now and his own selfish enjoyment of what he had acquired.

Blaikie points out, “Two names are brought together in this chapter, representing two very opposite phases of human character—Samuel and Nabal. In SAMUEL we have the high-minded servant of God, trained from infancy to smother his own will and pay unbounded regard to the will of his Father in heaven. In NABAL we see the votary of the god of this world.

Enslaved in his worldly lusts, grumbling and growling when he is compelled to submit to the will of God. Samuel is the picture of the serene and holy believer, enjoying unseen fellowship with God and finding in that fellowship a blessed balm for the griefs and trials of a wounded spirit. Nabal is the picture of the rich but wretched worldling who cannot even enjoy the bounties of his lot and is thrown into such a panic by the mere dread of losing them that he actually sinks into the grave.”

v. 3 His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.

F. B. Meyer points out, “It is said of Nabal ‘he was very great,’ but it was the meanest kind of greatness, consisting not in what he was in character or had achieved in valiant deed, but in the number of sheep and goats that bore his brand over the pasture lands of the south. There are four kinds of GREATNESS:

It is little to be great in possessing,
Better to be great in doing,
Better still to conceive and promulgate great thoughts,
But best to be great in character.
Aim at the greatness of which heaven takes account.”

Luke 12:19,20

“And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come. Take your ease, eat, drink and be merry, but God said to him, ‘You fool, this very night your soul is required of you. And now who will own what you have prepared?’ “

J. Vernon McGee points out, “Dr. McConkey called the story of Nabal and Abigail ‘Beauty and the Beast.’ “

Whyte points out, “By his birth Nabal had come into great possessions in Carmel. And as if to make him a man like his father, as if to keep his heart soft and full of love to God and man, God had added to all of that a wife who shines high up among the household saints of the house of Israel. But all the time Caleb and Abigail, great inheritance and great dowry, happy home and all, there was a stone of obstination in Nabal’s heart that nothing could melt or remove ‘til his whole heart was turned to stone and he died.”

The word fool in the original is Nabal. Nabal was the name of the husband of Abigail and he was a fool by name, by nature, and by choice. An unholy heart, unclean hands and a muddy head constitutes a man, a fool,

Here then is Beauty and the Beast. Nabal's name literally means 'fool.' He was an offspring of Caleb—imagine that. Brave, godly Caleb. He was very rich and he had a beautiful wife. How in the world did such a clod get a neat woman like Abigail? Probably her father married her off to Nabal because of his fine family lineage and all his wealth. Their marriage was probably arranged while she was a child.

That doesn't happen just like that today, but there are a lot of modern Abigails married to a lot of modern Nabals. Sometimes even Christian girls get fooled by the courtship and are flattered or tempted by position or family name or money. And the result is that they live in misery for the rest of their lives. A lot of girls think that they can change the fellow after the wedding.

It doesn't work most of the time. You never raise that other person to your level. You sink down to his or else you go through life just bearing up and suffering in silence.

Abigail had BRAINS AND BEAUTY. The text tells us "she was intelligent and beautiful."

But in contrast, her husband "a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings." Surly means that he was stern and sour and rude and also mean in his dealings.

This is just another way of saying that he was the TOWN DRUNK.

v. 4 While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep.

Nabal evidently had a huge estate, and while David was in the desert, he got word of this big event of shearing the sheep.

v. 5 So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name.

v. 6 Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!

His ten young men are to go up to Nabal during this festive time of shearing the sheep and give him a three-fold greeting:

Long life

Good health

Good health to all that is yours

v. 7 Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing.

David wants the men to communicate with Nabal that his shepherds were never mistreated by his men and that nothing was missing that belonged to them during their tenure of residence there.

v. 8 Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.’ “

So that there can be verification of the conduct of David’s men, Nabal need only speak with his servants and they will tell him.

It is then that David makes a request of Nabal: “Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.”

David had been protecting Nabal’s property. He had quite an army with him—600 men—and he could have robbed this man and taken his sheep for food, but he did not. Instead, he kept thieves and raiders from getting the sheep. He was really assisting Nabal, and now that he and his men need food, he sends his young men to ask for help.

Notice how courteous, respectful and modest he is in this request.

Winter raises the question, “What was the basis of David’s request? While David was in and around Maon and Carmel, he had protected Nabal’s shepherds and their flocks. Nabal may have been one of those who profited greatly from David’s driving the Philistines away from Keilah. Whether David had protected Nabal’s flocks from wolves or human predators, David felt that Nabal should be grateful for what he had done. The occasion of sheep-shearing was also a joyous occasion, when a man’s heart should be open to his friends and benefactors. The sheep had been sheared and the profit from the sale of the wool would have brought prosperity to the owner. For all these reasons, David asked for any token of Nabal’s good pleasure which might have been convenient for him.”

Young points out, “The practice was similar to our custom of tipping. Recently after I had checked into a hotel, the bellman came in with my baggage while I was talking on the telephone. He hung up the clothes bag, placed the suitcase and neatly arranged a few other items. He was busy checking the thermostat, making sure the bed was just right, and checking the bathroom, but he waited until I got off the phone. When I finished my call, he asked, ‘Is there anything else, sir?’ Now there is nothing in writing which says I had to tip the man, but it is customary. We leave a tip in a restaurant, and some of us delight in doing this when service has been rendered satisfactorily. This practice has been around for a long time. The conflict between Nabal and David was over tipping. While David and his men guarded the flocks, they didn’t lose a single sheep. None of Nabal’s possessions were lost as long as David’s men formed a wall for 24 hours a day around his herds. The time came for Nabal to tip David and his men.”

v. 9 When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited.

David’s ten young men arrived at Nabal’s place and gave the message in David’s name. Then they waited for a response.

v. 10 Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.

You can really feel the cynicism in Nabal’s voice in the questions that he asks:

“Who is this David?
Who is this son of Jesse?

He then seems to lay the blame for the relationship with Saul being such as it is by the next statement: “Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.” In other words, Nabal is blaming David for the break with Saul, rather than seeing Saul as the one responsible for the condition of the relationship at this time.

v. 11 Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?”

In this 11th verse now Nabal asks his third question, and it has to do with WHY. In verse 10 it was WHO, and now “why, should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to my men coming from who knows where?”

What a shock this is. Nabal's answer devastated David's ego. "Who is David?" Nabal knew perfectly well who he was but he pretended not to know just to insult David, and then he insinuated that David was being disloyal to Saul. He covered his stinginess under a very pious show of regard for law and order.

Macintosh points out, "Nabal could well understand the value of David's protection, though he cared not for David's person. So long as David's men were a wall to his possessions, he would tolerate them. But when they would become a burden, they were rejected and railed upon."

v. 12 David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.

I think David's men felt reproached and put upon by Nabal. So they quickly turned around and went back to David.

When they arrived empty-handed, they reported every word that Nabal had said.

v. 13 David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

Here David is a MAN OF REACTION instead of RESPONSE.

This response is so much in contrast to what we saw back in chap. 24 when he had a chance to take Saul's life and he controls his response in that circumstance, and then we'll see this once again in chap. 26 where he uses self-control once again.

Thomas a Kempis points out, "It is easy to live with good and gentle people, but to be able to live peaceable with hard and perverse people is a most commendable thing."

This really got to David because his kindness was being repaid with INSULTS and INSOLENT.

David loses his cool completely and orders his men to pick up their swords. He is red-headed and hot under the collar.

The bible tells it all, the truth about its heroes, and shows us the contrasts in personalities. The last chapter shows David's patience and kindness to his worst enemy Saul; and now here he is in a blazing temper, set out with 400 men not only to murder Nabal, but also every male relative.

Nabal was a stinker—overbearing, contemptuous, hard hearted, insulting, and surly, and he was wrong. But the big ‘but’, he was a fool and not worthy of David’s anger.

David is saying, “Right now listen! I am justified in doing this. I will show him that he can’t take my goodness and kindness and spit in my face. It is one thing to take it from Saul, who is my superior at this point, but this high-handed dope must be taught a lesson!”

Before you get too judgmental of David, though, think of your own life. You may have overcome some great temptation or controlled yourself in some monumental moment, really under the power of the Holy Spirit; and then tripped up by the smallest pin prick that got under your skin.

No spiritual triumph in life can give us power to resist the devil the next time he comes. We need Christ’s grace and love in us moment by moment.

How many of us have been attacked unjustly? It is a trap. Lots of great Christians fall into that silly little trap that can ruin their witness. The trap is to get you to hit back, get even, show him up for what he is.

In other words, we explose and rush out rashly to defend our honor. Here we have David on the verge of committing a sin that could have ruined his life.

Maybe we don’t rush out with swords to kill a person who has hurt us. But God is just as concerned about the poison and bitterness that is inside our hearts. Christ said, “Love your enemies,” and that is so hard. God is so good, and He will always provide a way out of temptation.

Maclaren points out, “Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the life of David is its romantic variety of circumstances. What a many-colored career that was which began amidst the pastoral solitudes of Bethlehem and ended in the chamber where the dying ears heard the blare of the trumpets that announced the accession of Bathsheba’s son. He passes through the most sharply-contrasted conditions and from each gathers some fresh fitness for his great work of giving voice and form to all the phases of devout feeling.”

Epp points out, “David does not shine so well in the following incident as he did with regard to Saul. This is a dark picture that is presented to us, but as we have noted before, God does not gloss over the sins of his people. Here was the case where David was a miserable failure, though even in his failure we catch a glimpse of why God called him ‘a man after his own heart.’ “

There is a contrast here between David's victory as he controlled his temper (according to chap. 24) and this miserable failure when he completely lost his temper as recounted in chap. 25. In the former chapter we see him leaving vengeance to God, but in this one we see him about to take vengeance into his own hands. Fitting right in with this is a statement by a missionary now with the Lord, 'Walk softly, speak tenderly, pray fervently.' This would have been a good motto for David in the following experience.

Mackintosh raises the question, "Why did he not act thus toward Nabal? Because he was not in communion; he was off his guard. And the enemy took advantage of him. Nature will ever lead us to vindicate ourselves and resent every injury. The heart will secretly murmur. He had no right to treat me thus. I really cannot bear it, not do I think I ought to do so. This may be so, but the man of faith at once rises above all such things. He sees God in everything, the jealousy of Saul, the folly of Nabal—all is looked at as coming from the hand of God and met in the secret of His holy presence. The instrument is nothing to faith. God is in all. This gives real power to move on through all sorts of circumstances. If we do not trace God in everything, we shall be constantly ensnared."

Karssen points out, "David reacted to the scornful treatment with an outburst of rage. Only recently he had refused to avenge himself on Saul who had tried to kill him, and had left the matter for God the judge. During his fight with the insulting and cursing giant Goliath, he had thought only of the name of his God, but the man who later in history would be known as a man after God's heart, could not ignore this personal insult. He wanted to take immediate revenge."

Redpath speaks to the issue when he says, "Even a man after God's own heart, who already has shown many spiritual qualities and much evidence of spiritual growth, is capable of losing his temper and taking vengeance into his own hands. We find David rushing to commit a terrible sin from which he is mercifully delivered by the providential interference of the Lord. This is a very heart-searching and yet wonderfully comforting revelation."

Krummacher raises the question, “How did David receive their report? Did he humble himself and commend his cause to God the Lord? On the contrary, we meet him now for the first time not master of his own spirit, but hurried along by his natural passionateness of disposition. With a flaming anger in which perhaps as in that under the influence of which Moses once slew the Egyptian, a feeling prophetic of his future dignity may have formed apart. He gave forth to his men the order of the day—’Gird ye in every man his sword.’ Surely he had not this time either prayed or inquired of the Lord by the urim and thummin.”

Getz points out, “In many ways, the story of David is a story of contrasts, not only in his relationship with Saul but in relationship to himself. Though he was evidently a man small in stature, he was known in the kingdom for his largeness of heart, his great love for God, and his unique compassion for mankind. Though he was never technically trained in the arts and sciences, he became the greatest poet and musician in the Old Testament.”

David allowed himself to be quick tempered. David flew off the handle, to use a common expression of yesteryear. Stated in more contemporary fashion, he lost his cool. This kind of quick-temperedness is a mark of immaturity in the Christian life.

Closely related to David’s failure to consult God regarding his will was his tendency to stop trusting God and to take matters into his own hands.

“Calm me, my God, and keep me calm.
Let thine outstretched wing be like the shade of Elim’s palm,
Beside her desert spring,
Calm in the sufferance of wrong,
By him who bore my shame.
Calm ‘mid the threatening taunting throng,
Who hate thy holy name.”
Horatius Bonar

Blaikie points out, “This chapter recording David’s collision with Nabal and showing us how David lost his temper and became hot and impetuous and impatient in consequence of Nabal’s treatment comes in between the narrative of his two great victories over the spirit of revenge and impatience. It gives us a very emphatic lesson how the servant of God may conquer in a great fight and yet be beaten in a small. The history of all spiritual warfare is full of such cases.”

The revengeful purpose and rash vow of David were not the result of deliberate consideration. They were formed under the influence of excitement, most unlike the solemn and prayerful manner in which the expedition at Keilah had been undertaken. God, unacknowledged had left David to misdirected paths. But if we blame David, as we must, for his heedless passion, we must not less admire the readiness with which he listens to the reasonable and pious counsel of Abigail.

Pink points out, "It is our reaction unto the lesser irritations of everyday life which most reveal us to ourselves, humbling us through our failures and fitting us to bear with more patience the infirmities of our brethren and sisters in Christ. A small temptation is likely to prevail after a greater one has been resisted. Why is this so? Because we are less conscious of our need of God's delivering grace."

Speaking on the subject of revenge, Byron said, "Sweet is revenge."

Bacon said, "A kind of wild justice."

Swindoll says, "It is life's most subtle temptation."

Shakespeare said, "Revenge will swallow you up."

A teenager stole a parking place from an elderly lady. The lady said, "Why did you do that?" And the young man said, "Because I'm young and fast." After the boy went into the store, she rammed her Cadillac into his VW and took his spot. "Why did you do that?" he said upon arrival at the accident. The elderly lady said, "I'm old and rich."

A little boy was saying his evening prayers after getting spanked by his mother. He was heard to say, "Bless Daddy, brother, sister, Rover, Fluffy." And then he jumps into bed. He looks at his mother, "I supposed you noticed—you weren't in it."

Someone has said that "Few speed records have ever been broken running from temptation."

"Hawks when they are attacked, don't fight back; they just fly higher."

One elderly couple was asked by a young man how they lived so long. "When we get angry, we each go for a walk. With all that exercise and fresh air, we'll probably live to 130!"

Isaiah 40:31

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

v. 14 One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: "David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them.

Now back at Nabal's household, one of the servants comes to find Abigail and report to her what had happened to David's servants.

v. 15 Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing.

v. 16 Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them.

Here the servants of Nabal vindicate David and speak of the things that he has done to assist them that qualifies him for the food assistance request that he has made of Nabal.

v. 17 Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him."

The servant now asks Abigail to think it over and see what she can do. The reason the need is so great and the emergency so dire is because "disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household." They are all in real danger.

The servant then describes Nabal from his perspective: "he is such a wicked man that no one can talk with him."

He is so bad no one can communicate with him. He is stubborn, bull-headed, and unapproachable; plus being bent on doing his own thing, so no one can get through and communicate with him.

v. 18 Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys.

Abigail realizes the very preciousness of every minute, so she lost no time in putting together this large gift for the 600 men.

There are six parts to the gift that are prepared:

- 1.200 loaves of bread
- 2.2 skins of wine
- 3.5 dressed sheep
- 4.5 seahs of roasted grain
- 5.100 cakes of raisins
- 6.200 cakes of pressed figs

v. 19 Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

Genesis 32:11

“Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he come and attack me, mother with children.

v. 13 So he spent the night there, then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau, 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 ewes and 20 rams, 30 milking camels and their colts, 40 cows and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, ‘Pass on before me and put a space between the droves, and he commanded the one in front saying, “When my brother Esau meets you and asks you saying, “To whom do you belong and where are you going and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?” then you shall say, “These belong to your servant Jacob. It is a present sent to my lord Esau, and behold, he also is behind us.” Then he commanded also the second and the third and all those who followed the droves saying, ‘After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him. You shall say, “Behold your servant Jacob also is behind us,” ‘ for he said, ‘I will appease him with the present that goes before me, then afterward I will see his face. Perhaps he will accept me.’ “

v. 20 As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them.

God is going to use Abigail to perform a special service to David, to cool him down and to bring him back into fellowship once again with God. Here was true intercession in action.

Boy, this Abigail was one sharp girl. She had a lot of attributes that went deeper than her surface beauty. She was:

wise
humble
tactful
intellegent
unselfish
and had great faith.

David was not about to do anything to a gorgeous woman with an appeal like she made.

v. 21 David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good.

v. 22 May God deal with David, be it ever so severely if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!”

When you take David’s emotional temperature at this time, he is very hot and volatile. He is indeed very angry.

Mackintosh points out, “Nabal’s selfishness was Satan’s snare to trap David. Abigail was God’s instrument to deliver David.”

v. 23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed before David with her face to the ground.

Here she immediately pays homage and respect to David, the future king.

She prepares food and drink and goes out to meet David. She falls at his feet and offers to take the blame for her stupid husband.

Mackintosh points out, “The case of this remarkable woman is full of encouragement and instruction to all who may find themselves cramped and hindered by unavoidable connection and associations. To all such, the history of Abigail simply says, Be patient; wait on God. Do not suppose yourself void of all opportunity for testimony. The Lord may be much glorified by meek subjection and will assuredly give relief and victory in the end.”

Luis Palau says, “In 1 Samuel 25 the one who spoke was a woman named Abigail. This one brave woman stepped in front of a vengeance-bent 400 man army with David leading the pack. Putting one’s self in the path of an inflamed company of fierce swordsmen would be like leaping from a subway platform in front of a speeding train. In those days men of war didn’t have much time for pleading women, especially when they were in the way. David was on fire and his eyes were filled with visions of liquidating one wooden-headed sheep rancher named Nabal. Here was a woman David had never met before, and when she pointed out to him the folly of his course, the most feared man in Israel replied, ‘Thank you for coming. Thank you for stopping me. You are right. It would have been awful.’ In Psalm 51 David said, ‘A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.’ David always had a broken heart over his sin. He didn’t point the finger like Saul. He allowed the finger to point at him. Even when he was king, on top of the pile again and again, David would come down from his throne, get on his knees and admit, ‘I’ve sinned against the Lord.’ And the Lord always forgave him. You never find David defending himself like Saul did. You never see him trying to justify his own guilt. As soon as the sin or weakness was pointed out, he’d say, ‘You’re right. I’m to blame. God forgive me.’ That’s the big difference.”

Krummacher, in speaking of Abigail, says, “How affecting and how rich in enlightened wisdom and in tender, yea holy tact, was this heart-gush. Where in the whole heathen world do we find a woman comparable to Abigail, this daughter of the wilderness of Paran. May she not be regarded as of almost equal rank with the Marys of the New Testament? It is true that she is unhappy. Ah, her house, however blessed with earthly goods, is no house of Bethany. She is contrained with deep sorrow to call her rude husband, hardened in the service of mammon, a fool. But she bears with him with patient and hopeful love and fidelity, and perhaps often times raises holy hands to God for him.”

v. 24 She fell at his feet and said: “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say.

Here in verse 24 Abigail’s opening remarks are a plea for time and an ear. First, let your servant speak to you. Just give me some time to speak with you. Secondly, an ear to hear what your servant has to say.

v. 25 May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.

She acknowledges the condition of her husband and then speaks of the fact that she did not have a chance to see the servants when they were there so that she could make good the request that had been given.

v.26 Now since the Lord has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal.

Here Abigail speaks of the Lord. She is obviously a GOOD, GRACIOUS and GODLY woman.

“Since the Lord has kept you from bloodshed” and “avenging yourself with your own hands,” she then makes a wish, “May your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal.”

v. 27 And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the man who follow you.

Now she brings to David’s attention the gift that had been hastily prepared.

In verse 27 she makes a plea for accepting the gift which she has brought, and in verse 28 she makes a plea for forgiveness.

v. 28 Please forgive your servant’s offense, for the Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the Lord’s battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live.

She not only asks for forgiveness, but she acknowledges the fact that the Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for David. The reason given is “because he fights the Lord’s battles.”

Here she is quoting a statement from David on the field of conflict with Goliath, “The battle is the Lord’s.”

Therefore, in light of this, let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live.

Abigail agrees and admits that David was right, and that Nabal was wrong. But she advises David not to waste his attention on a man who is not worth it.

In a very sweet and lovely way she appreciated his true desire to fight the Lord’s battles and to keep a character that was unstained. She reminds him of the day coming when all of God’s promises will be fulfilled for David’s life.

Epp points out , “She recognized that David was out fighting the Lord’s battles and that he had a right to be incensed against Nabal for his

churlishness and selfishness and greed. Nevertheless, she pleaded, ‘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.’ This is the very message David needed. While he walked with God in humility, he was able in the power of the Holy Spirit with just a sling and a stone to kill Goliath and save the army of Saul from defeat. How much better it would be to leave this in God’s hands and not have to look back on this experience with shame.”

Mackintosh points out, “All these allusions to David’s future blessing and glory were imminently calculated to withdraw his heart from his present grievance. The sure house, the bundle of life, and the kingdom were far better than Nabal’s flocks and herds; and in view of these glories, David could well afford to leave him to his portion and his portion to him.”

Pink asks the question, “Were there not times be they recalled to our deep shame, when we had determined upon a course dishonoring to our Lord, when all praise unto him someone crossed our path and we were delayed, hindered and detoured.”

v. 29 Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.

Here Abigail makes reference to Saul when she says, “Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life...” This is so different from what Nabal had said back in verse 10, “Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.”

The master stroke of her whole argument is in the words of verse 29. In effect, she said, “David, your soul is wrapped up in a bundle of life in the Lord your God, and the strength of that bundle lies in the identity of God with all that goes on inside it. He is there with you.

Nabal can’t hurt you. Why should you stoop to his level?

Then she adds another touch that must have made David hang his head. She reminds him that he was taking 400 men to do what God could do as easily as throwing a pebble out of a sling. This must have reminded David of Goliath and that day when he conquered the enemy with God and one stone.

When the issues are left in God's hand, it is as easy as that. But taking them out of his hand and getting hot under the collar is not the way for a man of God.

Winter asks the question, "What is the meaning of the phrase 'the bundle of life'? If an object were in the midst of a lump of clay in a sling, it would fall away. Abigail may have known of David's great victory over Goliath as David used his sling to kill a giant. She knew that David would appreciate this figure of speech and hope that this would convince him of her good intentions toward him."

Karssen points out, "Abigail is a woman who watched over the conscience of a servant of God. A woman's inner beauty is almost always dependent upon her relationship with God. Abigail's husband was the descendant of a great man Caleb, but he in no way resembled his illustrious forefather who had excelled in the fear of God, insight and courage. Nabal, whose name meant 'the fool,' was precisely that. A rude, clumsy fellow who failed to talk reasonably."

Abigail was God-centered. She put God first in her thoughts and exemplified him in everything she did. She was not only thinking about the lives of her husband and his workers, she also was mindful of David's reputation. She saw things in the light of the future plans God had laid out for him. Her plea, therefore, was based on what was best for David, and not on her own interests. Her motivating force was love for David as her fellow man.

Laney says, "The phrase 'bound in the bundle of the living' is a metaphor that reflects the custom of binding valuables in a bundle to protect them from injury. The point of that verse is that God cares for his own as a man would his valuable treasure. David was quick to acknowledge the wisdom of Abigail's words, accept her provisions and promised her peace."

John 10:28, 29

"And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Gehrke says, "Abigail calls on David to look to the future when Nabal, as well as all of David's enemies, will have them slung out as from the hollow of a sling. What rhetoric! And David will be the prince over Israel and will have an enduring dynasty, a sure house. That David is even now fighting the Lord's battles and holy wars is proof of what his real destiny is to be. That is, that his life shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord."

Alan Redpath says, “In effect, she said, ‘David, your soul is wrapped up in a bundle of life in the Lord your God, and the strength of that bundle lies in the identity of God with all that goes on inside it. He is there with you. Therefore, the life of a man after God’s own heart is safe in God’s keeping. And what can the churlishness of Nabal do against you? Why should you stoop to his level?’ Then she added a very lovely touch by reminding him that he was taking 400 men with 200 behind looking after the stuff to do what God could do as easily as throwing a pebble out of a sling. I wonder if David held his head a little lower at this point and remembered a day in his youth and all the ardor of his love and affection and commitment to the Lord, and the fragrance of that fresh anointing of the Spirit, when he took one stone of the sling and killed a giant. When the issues are left in God’s hand, it is as easy as that. But taking them out of his hand and getting hot under the collar, with everything bursting inside you until you get your own way, is not the way for a man of God.”

He wants you to find indeed that your life is bound up in a bundle of life with himself. Then all these complicated situations that drive you to the point of distraction he will deal with as simply as throwing the stone out of a sling. Trust him right now in whatever situation you may find yourself so that you may rest in him and in his power.

Krummacher says, “As long as life lasts, he will not forget this march toward Carmel, and we perhaps do not err if we suppose that what he once experienced at Carmel hovered before his soul as often as in his Psalms, particularly in the 17th, 18th, 37th, and 66th. He raised his cry to the Lord as a God holdeth out soul in life and suffereth not our feet to be moved.”

1 Cor. 12:13

“For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we are all made to drink of one Spirit.”

J. Vernon McGee points out, “We are said to be in Christ and there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ, so we are bound in the bundle of life with the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Vos points out, “This is a reference to a bundle in which an Israelite householder securely tied together silver and other precious belongings. That protecting care would not extend to his enemies whom God would hurl away as from the cup or pocket of a sling.”

v. 30 When the Lord has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel,

Here now Abigail turns in faith, believing what the Lord is going to do to fulfill the promises that had been made to him.

v. 31 My Master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord has brought my master success, remember your servant.”

Abigail in this little address that we have just looked at, uses the term ‘my lord’ twice, the term ‘the Lord’ seven times, the term ‘your servant’ six times, and the term ‘my master’ nine times. This is a total of 24 occurrences of respect to authority that is over her.

Abigail’s argument was so gracious and tender without a word of harshness or rebuke. And look how David melted under her pleading.

Karssen points out, “Through Abigail’s keen insight and wise approach to a difficult situation, David received the opportunity to remain before God as he was, the man after God’s own heart. He was still able to fulfill the purpose for which he and every human being had been created, to bring honor to the name of God. As the future king, he would have missed that chance completely, had not a woman come into his life at the right time and watched over his conscience, thus preventing him from insulting God.”

v. 32 David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me.

Here David’s response is one of praise to the Lord, the God of Israel, and he is so grateful for the fact that Abigail has been sent to meet him today.

Pink points out, “Herein are the children of God made manifest. They are tractable, open to conviction, willing to be shown their faults; but the children of the devil are like Nabal, stubborn, proud and unbending.”

v. 33 May you be blessed for your good judgement and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.

His wish now is that Abigail might be blessed because she has done really three things for him:

1. She has exercised good judgement in a difficult situation.
2. She has restrained David from bloodshed.

3. Restrained him from avenging himself with his own hands.

v. 34 Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.”

Here he makes reference to the seriousness of the situation and what David was fully intending to do when he arrived in Carmel at Nabal’s household.

v. 35 Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.”

Having accepted Abigail’s gift, he says, “Go home in peace because:

1. I have heard your words.

2. I have granted your request.

v. 36 When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak.

There are three things that are true of Nabal when she arrives home:

1. He was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king.

2. He was in high spirits.

3. Very drunk.

In light of these circumstances, she told him nothing until daybreak.

One is reminded of Belshazzar in Daniel 5:

“Belshazzar the king held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles, and he was drinking wine in the presence of the thousand. When Belshazzar tasted the wine, he gave orders to bring the gold and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem, in order that the kings and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. Then they brought the gold vessels that had been taken out of the temple, the house of God which was in Jerusalem. And the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. They drank the wine and praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone. Suddenly, the fingers of a man’s hand emerged and began writing opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the back of the hand that did the writing. Then the king’s face grew pale and his thoughts alarmed, and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together. The words written on that wall were mene, mene, tekel, upharsin. ‘You are weighed in the balances and found wanting.’ “

Luke 12:19, 20

“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry, but God said unto him, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?’”

How thankful David was, not just for the gift of food and drink, but for intervention in his life at that moment to deliver him from his anger and the rash act that he almost committed that would have left an awful stain on him. Notice how David admits his fault and cools down.

Also remember, if he had killed Nabal and all his male relatives in this land, I doubt seriously if David would ever have the respect needed to become king of Judah.

Psalms 141:5

“Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me. It is oil upon the head. Do not let my head refuse it, for still my prayer is against their wicked deeds.”

Proverbs 25:12

“Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold is a wise reprov-
er to a listening ear.”

Young points out, “David received the gifts and Abigail returned home to find Nabal drunk. He was celebrating over the money he had made from the wool, and so Abigail went to bed. Abigail prayed and called on God. The next morning she told Nabal what she had done, and how she had saved his life. She did it modestly, I believe, but the Bible states that God struck Nabal and his heart turned to stone. In other words, he had a stroke. Ten days later Nabal died. When David heard about Nabal’s death, he said, ‘Blessed be to God!’ He said what he felt. Most people would have said, ‘Um, I’m sure sorry to hear about that.’ David was candid.”

v. 37 Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and became like a stone.

After about six cups of coffee, Abigail then reported to Nabal all that she had done and said on the day before.

v. 38 About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

This was the Lord’s last shot with Nabal, and after this encounter, Nabal died.

I am reminded of the parable that Jesus tells in Luke 16:19-31

“Now there was a certain rich man, and he was in the habit of clothing himself in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate covered with sores, and eagerly desiring to be fed with those things which were falling from the rich man’s table, besides even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died, and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom, and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, having lifted up his eyes, being in torment, he is seeing Abraham from far away and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus in order that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you received good things during your life, and likewise, Lazarus bad things. But now he’s being comforted here, and you are in agony. And in all these regions between us and you, a great chasm has been placed in order that those who are desiring to come over from here to you may not be able to do so, and that none may cross over from there to us. And he said, ‘Then I’m begging you, father that you send him to my

father's house, for I am having five brothers, in order that he may be warning them lest they also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham is saying, 'They are having Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they are not hearing Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should arise from the dead.' "

Paul J. Jorden speaks on this situation with Nabal when he says, "Medical details in the story are interesting to me. Some people have thought that Nabal suffered a stroke, but it seems consistent with medical experience that he had a heart attack, a coronary thrombosis. An acute coronary can cause a person to fall into a state which would seem stone-like. Such a patient can be in shock, cold and clammy, who with so little strength that he can hardly move a muscle. Also, it is not uncommon for the victim of a coronary to expire about ten days after the onset of the attack."

Pink points out, "Yes, the fool Nabal vividly portrays the case of multitudes all around us. The curse of God's broken law hanging over them, yet feasting as though all is well with their souls for eternity, the sword of divine justice already drawn to smite them down, yet their hearts merry with the pleasures of sin for a season."

Nabal had a big party that night. He was a swinger and probably an alcoholic. He sobered up a little the next morning, and Abigail told him how close he came to being killed, and his heart died within him. Ten days later he was dead.

There are people who will suffer spiritual death because they don't know who Christ is, and who don't listen to those who tell them, who despise and refuse to obey, who will not take the trouble to inform themselves as to who and what he is and the value of his claims upon every member of the human race.

v. 39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the Lord, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept me from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head." Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.

Here David is very open and honest. He is praising the Lord for three things:

1. That the Lord has upheld his cause against Nabal for treating him with contempt.
2. He has kept David from doing anything wrong.
3. He has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head.

David didn't waste any time. He sent word to Abigail asking her to become his wife.

He is so overwhelmed and tremendously impressed with not only the beauty but the spiritual insight and wisdom of this woman whom he has met on the way to Nabal's house.

v. 40 His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife."

v. 41 She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "Here is your maid-servant, ready to serve and wash the feet of my master's servants."

Once again notice how many times she uses the words that make reference to submission:

She calls herself 'a maid-servant.'

She is ready to serve,

and to wash the feet of the servants of her master.

v. 42 Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David's messengers and became his wife.

Back in verse 18 we read that Abigail "lost no time" in the preparation she made. And as a result, she got to David just in time. Now on this occasion, she "quickly"

1. got on a donkey attended by her five maids
2. She went with David's messengers
3. Became his wife.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he wanted Abigail for his wife. When she intercepted David on the road, she had said, "When the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember me." Well, David could not forget her. She had appealed to the best in him. She had advised him and he knew her advice was right.

Winter asks the question, “What kind of woman was Abigail? Abigail was an honorable person and made a good wife for David. Her conduct showed her to be discreet in that she did not reveal her actions to her husband when he could have stopped her. She was:

humble - v. 23
 generous - v. 27
 God-fearing - v. 29
 knowledgeable - v. 30
 affluent - v. 32

Karssen says, “When David heard that Nabal had died, he praised and thanked God for paying Nabal back. God had kept him from taking matters into his own hands. David then showed what an unforgettable impression Abigail had made on him. Right away, without wasting a minute, he asked her to become his wife. And Abigail gladly agreed. She knew from experience how great a loneliness there could be within a marriage where the partners had little in common. But she now became the wife of the man with whom she shared many things:

courage
 faithfulness
 an active intellect
 and discretionary insight

David and Abigail’s greatest unity, however, lay in their attitudes toward God. He had first place in both their hearts. Abigail, the unselfish one, experienced how God could work all things together for good for those who love him. She had unexpectedly become a wife of the king of Israel.”

Eccle. 3:11

“He makes all things beautiful in his time.”

Lamentations 3:25, 26

“The Lord is wonderfully good to those who wait for him, to those who seek for him. It is good both to hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.”

Getz points out, “The last scene in this dramatic story is even more ironical. When David heard of Nabal’s death, he sent a proposal to Abigail to become his wife. She accepted. Nabal not only lost his life, but his wife was married to the man he refused to help, whom he denied even knowing.”

Gulston points out, “The second deputation that David sent to Carmel was more successful than the first. And again, Abigail responded swiftly. With five damsels in attendance, she returned with the messengers of David and became his wife. Abigail would have to be satisfied with sharing David’s love but she would see him rise to power and would bear him his second son. She would always have the satisfaction, too, of knowing that she had saved him from an act he would in afteryears have bitterly regretted. Abigail shines like a bright star in David’s life.”

Hertzberg points out, “Not a word hints that this association with the widow of a rich sheep owner represented a material or immoral support for David. This is, however, to be assumed. No doubt the inhabitants of the place now have a different attitude to David from the people of Keilah and Ziph. The fact that he has already previously taken to wife Ahinoam from neighboring Jezreel, she became the mother of his first-born Amnon, points in the same direction. So he has indeed strengthened his position, but this is not said. What is said is directed rather towards the guidance from above which is evident behind events. That is the most important element here.”

v. 43 David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives.

v. 44 But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David’s wife to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

Whereas David now had acquired Ahinoam and Abigail, Saul by contrast, had reproached David once again. On the first occasion when David had earned the hand of his daughter by slaying Goliath, Merab was given to someone else.

1 Sam. 18:19

“So it came about at the time when Merab, Saul’s daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel, the Meholathite, for a wife.”

Now Merab and Michal both are gone out of David’s life for the present.

Gallim was just a couple of miles from Gibeah.

The last two verses of this chapter tell of two things that took place that God did not approve. Although it is the custom for men to have more than one wife, it was not what God had planned for men, and it usually brought nothing but misery. For example:

Leah and Rachel
Hannah and Peninnah
Sarah and Hagar

The fact that Saul is giving David's wife to someone else is just another insult to David, and another attempt to fight against God.

CONCLUSIONS:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Note the contrast between the death of Samuel in verse 1 and the death of Nabal in verse 39.

LESSON #2: Wealth had made Nabal STERN, SOUR and STUBBORN.

LESSON #3: Abigail has BRAINS, BEAUTY and BELIEF IN GOD.

LESSON #4: It is possible to pass the big tests in our lives and fail the little ones.

LESSON #5: Never make a decision to act when you are angry.

LESSON #6: Being quick-tempered is a mark of immaturity in the Christian life.

LESSON #7: Bless the Lord for bringing people into our lives to keep us from making mistakes.

Psalm 5:11-12

“But let all who take refuge in thee be glad. Let them ever sing for joy, and mayest thou shelter them, that those that love thy name exalt in thee. It is thou who dost bless the righteous man, O Lord. Let us surround him with favor as with a shield.”

Psalm 13:5, 6

“But I have trusted in thy lovingkindness. My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing to the Lord because he has dealt bountifully with me.”

Psalm 18:35, 36

“Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation, and thy right hand upholds me, and thy gentleness makes me great. Thou dost enlarge my steps under me, and my feet have not slipped.”

Louise B. Smedes in his book Forgive and Forget says, “If you hurt me and I retaliate in kind, I may think that I have given you only what you deserve—no more. But you will feel it as a hurt that is too great for you to accept. Your passion for fairness will force you to retaliate against me, harder this time. Then it will be my turn—and will it ever stop? An eye for an eye becomes a leg for a leg, and eventually a life for a life. No matter what our weapons are, words, clubs, arrows, guns, bombs, nuclear missiles, revenge locks us into an escalation of violence. Gandhi was right, ‘If we all live by an eye for an eye, the whole world will be blind.’ The only way out is forgiveness.”