

Abigail Acting with God's Wisdom

(Lesser Known Characters)

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(Ոչ Հանրածանօթ Նկարագիրներ)

1 Samuel 25

People who make decisions when they are angry and act upon them usually regret. King David was very angry after an incident. That led him to make an impulsive decision. Abigail, a wise and godly woman entered the picture and saved everyone from a catastrophic bloodshed.

What is the story?

Abigail had married a wicked and abusive man called Nabal. The man was very rich (He had 1000 goats and 3000 sheep).

Abigail means “My father is joy” and **Nabal means “a fool”**. The narrator says, “The woman was discerning, intelligent (literally, good understanding) and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite.” (1 Samuel 25:3) What a contrast!

Meanwhile Samuel, the prophet of God, had died. Israel was mourning. **I believe David too was mourning and confused**. He left the area and escaped to the desert of Paran (25:1). In the desert, David was far away from Saul's pursuit and he had shepherd boys who were protecting the flocks.

Now David's men and Nabal's men were in the fields. It seems they respected each other and there were no conflicts between them. **It was the time of sheep shearing**. It was also a feast time. David wanted to establish a relationship with Nabal's men and sent to him ten of his men.

David's men were advised about what to say, and to approach Nabal with respect:

“Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been

with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel (1 Samuel 25:6-7).

Three times they said, **“Peace be with you (*shalom aleykom*)”**. Somehow David is after starting a relationship with Nabal. After all, they are in the desert and it is always dangerous over there. But it was also a feast time, so David asked for some food. **“Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.”**(1 Samuel 25:8). David even acknowledged him as a father.

What was the response?

No response at all. Scripture says David’s men waited and waited. This is unusual for nomadic people. They are usually very hospitable and they never send people back without food! (Give examples). Silence was strange and unusual. It reminds me of incidents in the Middle East where I needed some governmental papers to be signed and the officers delayed it. They made me wait and wait in order to make a point that they had authority over me!

Eventually Nabal responded. He humiliated David and his men.

“Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?” (1 Samuel 25:10-11)

The answer is definitely an insult. He knows who David is. Everyone knows about David. But he acts as if David does not exist. As if Nabal is saying, “I do not have time for this nomadic gypsies and beggars asking for food.”

David’s response: **He was very upset**, and asked his men to take the swords and attack. David said to his men,

“Every man strap on his sword!” And every man of them strapped on his sword. “David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.” (1 Samuel 25:13)

How childish! We find two men who are ready to kill each other for nothing.

Here comes the role of Abigail who knows the Lord. She will be the peacemaker to avoid the volcanic eruption.

-One of the young men told Abigail the situation (25:14-21).

Instead of wailing and feeling helpless, Abigail acts with wisdom. I believe this woman's wisdom is from God.

“Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. And she said to her young men, “Go on before me; behold, I come after you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.”(1 Samuel 25:18-19)

Now David with his men finds this “food caravan”. David slows down. Of course he sees the food but not Abigail. He thinks Nabal is sending a banquet of reconciliation. He likes it, but as he is full of rage and anger, he makes an oath to God to kill these people. What a bad oath! **An oath made under the influence of anger and not from God's wisdom.**

-Next step, Abigail shows up (25:23-31).

What kind of approach? HUMILITY

When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and **fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. She fell at his feet** and said, **“On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant.”(1 Samuel 25:23-24)**

Do you see the author stresses three times how she is falling on her face, bowing down before David? She is risking everything. Her abusive husband would kill her for her actions. She takes the risk to calm down these two angry men.

She says, **“Do not pay attention to Nabal; his name says everything...”**

In Proverbs we read: **“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself.” (Prov. 26:4)**

Then she drops the big bomb on David (a prophetic sound from God):

“Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal.”(1 Samuel 25:26)

Abigail is saying to David, “Wake up! The LORD has restrained you from taking a stupid, impulsive step. David, remember who you are. Remember how God anointed you as king. Do not worry; God will take care of Nabal. God appointed you prince over Israel, so act accordingly. Look at big picture; this is a wakeup call; stop acting like a child!”

David’s response?

And David said to Abigail,

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! For as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male.”(1 Samuel 25:32-34)

She went home, and David went home with his gifts. Nabal was having a big party. He was drunk. His wife waited until the morning when Nabal was sober. She told her adventure to her husband. Nabal was in shock, speechless. **“His heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And about ten days later the LORD struck Nabal, and he died (1 Samuel 25:37-38).**

What can we learn from Abigail?

1. Abigail, a wise woman protected her household.

Abigail, a humble and kind woman, was living with a harsh, fool husband. She did not take revenge from her husband. She knew her role and she did everything to protect her husband's household. She acted quickly. She took the initiative to meet David with gifts and food.

Usually men should protect the household. But her husband was a fool who did not live a wise life. He did not act his role as the head of the house. Abigail protected this household.

2. Her name was the source of her wisdom: Abigail: My father is Joy.

I believe Abigail's life in this household was not fun. To live with a fool is not a joke. In marriage counseling I stress this point. Some say: "I want to get married to be happy." Let me tell you something, "If you want to be happy go to Disneyland; don't get married."

Abigail means: My Father is Joy. We each need to find our joy in God himself, and not in things or other humans. Each of us needs that inner joy that comes ONLY and ONLY from God. It seems Abigail found that joy in her life. Circumstances were not very good around her.

Here I want to open a paragraph. If you are living with an abusive husband or wife, please do not be silent. The issue must be addressed and dealt with.

I have also seen quite a few some marriages that have lost their joy. Some marriages have lost their first love, the excitement... Well, this are not good, and there are ways to address the issues and learn to deal with them.

Each of us needs to find JOY in our God. Each of us needs to have personal relationship with Jesus Christ our Savior and source of life. Each of us finds peace and contentment in God. When we face issues in life, we face it with the Wisdom of God. For example, divorce and finding a new relationship will not necessarily make us happy again. Abigail, My Father is my JOY.

3. Abigail learned to give credit to God and Trust Him ONLY

-If you realize she did not boast over David saying how wonderful and wise woman she is, instead she said:

Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal.”(1 Samuel 25:26)

She knew only God is wise and whatever she does it is because of God’s presence and wisdom.

-She did not put her trust in humans. She had seen how men could be impulsive and abusive. She could not trust anymore anyone. **Her joy was only trusting God. God was her Father.** God was source of her protection and JOY.

Later in her life, she would marry David and a new life would start with King David. She learned to trust God and wait for the right moment.

4. Abigail Had a Plan to Face David

Just check her actions and speech to David.

- She bowed down three times.
- She spoke with wisdom.
- She took on herself the fault of her husband.
- Then she spoke boldly and courageously reminding David in whom he should trust: God and not one’s impulses.

No wonder David said: **“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!”(32)**

Let me summarize:

If you believe in God, you will face impossible situations. God works in those tough situations. In fact, God used these situations to shape the character of these leaders. Obadiah hid 100 of God's prophets endangering his life. He knew that he could not compromise his faith. All God's people will face impossible situations, then what? Whom do we choose?

We should not lose our focus on God. Hardships will face us. They are opportunities to grow.

Chuck Swindoll writes:

When one has a vision it means it is: **“the ability to see God's presence, to perceive God's power, to focus on God's plan in spite of the obstacles.”**

Let us learn from Abigail, to be God-fearing and trusting. Let us learn from Abigail to be bold and courageous when we see the danger coming. Let us learn from Abigail to take action when it is needed even though it can be dangerous. Let us learn from Abigail to be humble when we face tough and impossible situations.

Amen