

ABIGAIL: A WOMAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

1 Sam 25

INTRODUCTION

Incredible example of godliness – of a woman after God's own heart → **Abigail**

So That: This is a message for all Christians - moms to be sure, married women no children, single women, all Christians have much to learn from this godly women and God's use of her to deal with the sin of a fool and the sin of a man of God.

Abigail is a woman under pressure – facing a crisis situation

- a foolish worthless man on one side
- A bloodthirsty man with vengeance and slaughter in his eyes on the other side

When testing comes – shows one's true character– one's mettle

The Setting/Background → **READ 1 Sam 25:1-3**

25:1 – “**Then Samuel died**” – Samuel was the last of the Judges – this is the end of an era

When **Samuel** dies, **David** leaves **Engedi** [which is on the western side of the Dead Sea], and goes down to “**the wilderness of Paran**”

- desolate area in the wilderness of Sinai
- this is the same place where Hagar and Ishmael lived after being sent away by Abraham and Sarah (Gen 21:21)
- this is also where Israel camped after leaving Mt. Sinai when the 12 spies were sent to spy out the Promised land (Num 10:12; 13:3).

→ Now, it is a place of hiding for **David**.

25:2-3 – This is dangerous enemy territory. People aren't loyal to **David**. But **Nabal** should be loyal by virtue of his genealogy – “**he was a Calebite.**”

“**but the man was harsh and evil in his dealings**” - he is a fool – **v. 25** – “**worthless man**” - his name literally means “son of Belial” – the Hebrew word meaning godless, lawless, corrupt, perverted

25:4 – “**Nabal was shearing his sheep**”

Time of Festivity

- harvest time for a shepherd, a time of great festivity
- feast day – day of rejoicing of the harvest of wool

Time of Vulnerability

When Nabal's shepherds tend his flocks, they have to travel great distances into the wildernesses and are open to bands of marauding thieves/Bedouins, who can come up out of the Paran wilderness, steal animals from the flock, and return back to cover.

25:5-9 – David and his men stay with the shepherds, protect them from the enemy, never touch a sheep or give the shepherds any trouble. David humbly asks for consideration.

“**Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David.**” (v. 8). Even the way David approaches Nabal and his men shows his humility.

25:10-12 – “**Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse?**”

- This is a deliberate insult, followed by clear indication **Nabal** knows exactly who **David** is and who his father is.
- If you want to **insult** someone from the Mideast, now as it was back then, question his heritage.

“There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master.” – “David, you’re just a slave running away from his master. And there are a bunch of you all over the place.”

(David is not breaking away from Saul → Saul is driving him away.)

Nabal is deliberately going out of his way to insult **David** on a very personal level.

→ v. 14 – **“scorned”** – “hurled insults at them” (NIV)

Nabal chooses Saul’s side (not God’s side).

Really, he is not choosing Saul out of loyalty to Saul, Nabal chooses his own selfish greedy interests

→ v. 11 – 4 times he uses **“my”**

25:13 – **David** had wonderfully resisted the temptation to take vengeance against **Saul in the cave** (**1 Sam 24**); but now, he gives in when the same temptation comes again.

This is the setting that introduces us to Abigail.

Proposition: 5 Virtues of this woman after God’s own heart.

Abigail is a woman of:

- I. Respect**
- II. Action**
- III. Humility**
- IV. Beauty**
- V. Wisdom**

So That: We all (every believer) can learn and imitate – especially women – to celebrate this Mother’s Day.

Abigail is a godly woman displaying timeless virtues that leap forward 3000 years in the future with binding value.

1st Virtue of this woman after God’s own heart, ...

I. Abigail is a woman of **Respect** **25:14-17, 35**

Point – **Respect**

- it is defined as a sense of the worth or excellence of a person
- the personal quality or ability of one to be esteemed or honored

Point – The servants of her household hold her in high regard. She has earned their respect by her life. My point here is this is an **earned respect**, not a **given respect**.

Proof – **25:14-17, 35**

The name **Abigail** means “joy of her father.”

Now, we might ask, how did a beauty like this ever get hooked up with a fool like Nabal? We don’t know exactly how ... but we do know:

→ God uses providentially to protect David and to bless us.

This servant has a **great respect** for Abigail and her judgment. This is why he seeks her out in this time of crisis. He does not suggest what Abigail should do, but simply tells her the situation. → She sees the need for decisive action.

After their encounter, **David** also holds her in great **respect** → v. 35

Abigail will command the attention and respect of **David** because of her gentle submissiveness and wisdom.

The bottom line:

She exerts tremendous influence without defined authority.

Application – The exchange between **David** and **Abigail** holds important lessons for us. → If we want the **respect** of others, we need to act and speak in a way that earns this respect.

2nd Virtue of this woman after God’s own heart, ...

II. Abigail is a woman of **Action** **25:18-20**

Point – **Abigail** does not let the grass grow under her feet!
→ She shows **initiative!** **urgency!** **excellence!**

Proof – **25:18-20** – Understanding the danger because of her fool husband's foolish insults, she seizes the initiative by going to David as an intermediary.

She knows time is of the essence. She realizes that something has to be done and it has to be done quickly – she has a sense of **urgency**. She does not wait to see what will happen but she takes action quickly.

And **Abigail** doesn't just go with words and her beauty.

- She does not come to David empty-handed.
- She brings a very generous offering → **Excellence!**

Illustration – **Prov 31:13-15** – “She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight. ¹⁴ She is like merchant ships; she brings her food from afar. ¹⁵ She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens.”

Application – Do you give your best? Maybe...

- it's applying a second coat of paint
- it's studying the lesson before teaching the children
- it's finding a replacement for yourself if you must miss your ministry commitment
- it is surely doing all without grumbling or complaint

→ **Abigail** gives her best.

3rd Virtue of this woman after God's own heart, ...

III. Abigail is a woman of **Humility** **25:21-25**

Point – There is an insidious cult of self-love that has crept into the 21st century American church – whatever feels good to me, whatever satisfies me, whatever builds me up, whatever gets

me over my inferiority complex, whatever gives me a better self-image, whatever gives me better self-esteem.

→ Abigail on the other hand, is humble and gracious. She doesn't demand anything. She gives charity to those who commits crimes against her. She gives mercy toward the failures of others.

25:21-22 → David does not have any kind of legal, moral, or biblical right to kill all the males in the idiot Nabal's family as a result of Nabal's situation.

Point – **BUT!!!** → **Abigail humbles herself**. She does not come to David claiming her rights, and believe me, she has “rights” → she is the wife of a very wealthy man.

Proof – Look how **humble** Abigail is in her appeal:
25:23-25 “**fell on her face before David . . . bowed herself to the ground . . . she fell at his feet . . . on me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant.**”

In her appeal, Abigail calls David **my lord** 13 times.
She calls herself David's **maidservant** 5 times.
She appeals to David as someone who has authority over her.

<p>Application – Abigail gives the right example – <u>humility</u> that speaks, and speaks sweetly instead of sharply.</p>

- She is protecting her fool husband.
- She could let David kill Nabal.

Illustration – If your husband is in the hallucinating throes of a mind-altering sickness, are you defying him to save his life by taking him to the doctor despite his objections? No.

Application – Godly humility → is willing to:

- “Swear to our own hurt”
- Sacrifice our “Rights”
- Consider others as more important than ourselves (Phil 2)
- Silence our opinion while speaking sweetly.

Application – Christians, please be very careful in your use of **social media**. Realize what you post is your witness.

Is your testimony, your witness, in social media communicating to your unsaved family and friends, that you are a satisfied man or woman trusting in God? Or is your presence in social media communicating you are bitter and forlorn?

Are you communicating confidence in the Lord? Or are you communicating fear in your circumstances? Is your Christian testimony in social media communicating Christianity is for the cause of Christ? Or is your presence in social media communicating Christianity is an arm of the Republican party?

Application – Special application to women. Posting on social media in ways that are unbecoming of a woman.

1 Pet 3:4 – “*let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”

I see Christians violating 1 Cor 6 all the time in social media.

Illustration – Christians spewing their opinions on social media like a **broken hose faucet**. I see Christian women, who would never dream of challenging men in a group setting but who regularly do so on social media.

Beloved, maybe this will help you. Before you post something on social media, ask yourself, “Would I be willing to stand up in the middle of a worship service, would I be willing to stand up in the middle of my work cafeteria, would I be willing to

stand up in the middle of the supermarket checkout line and shout this out?

4th Virtue of this woman after God's own heart, ...

IV. Abigail is a woman of **Beauty** **25:3, 26-29**

Point – Internal and external beauty – from the greater to the lesser

Proof – **25:3** – “**Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance**”

- Literally means “of good understanding”

→ **Internal Beauty**

Abigail speaks of David's character in high regard.

She presumes David's forgiveness in beautiful language.

Abigail is a woman of beautiful poetry.

Proof – **25:26-29**

26 – Beautifully gives credit to the Lord and honors David.

28 – Humbly takes blame where she has no blame.

Point – Mind-blowing beautiful wisdom in v.29! She points David, beautifully and humbly, to what made David famous in Israel in the first place.

29 – “**the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out, as from the hollow of a sling**”

This perhaps is the strongest point of Abigail's appeal, and she uses beautiful eloquence. She says, “David, you are like a “**bundle**” that the LORD holds closely and securely to Himself.”

Their clothes didn't have pockets in those days. If you had something precious, you bound it up and wrapped it around with something to protect it. **Abigail** is saying, “You are the anointed man of God. God has taken your life and bound it up

in the bundle of his life. Your life is in the center of the Lord's. His life protects your life."

Perhaps **Abigail** is familiar with Samuel's mother, Hannah
1 Sam 2:6-7 – "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.⁷ "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts."

And **protection** and **preservation** ...

"Your enemies are like rocks that the LORD will sling away."

"You do not have to fight your battles, **David**. God has you packaged with Himself. Nor do you have to go after your enemies. God will take your enemies and put them in the hollow of a sling and fling them away.

David is taking his 400 men to do what God can do as easily as throwing a stone out of sling.

Through her beautifully wise and humble words, Abigail refocuses David's attention from Nabal back to the LORD.

→ She invites David to *act* like a man who is close to the LORD!
→ She invites David to *act* like a man who is trusting the LORD!

Abigail's appeal to David is awesome, it *lifts him up* instead of *beats him down*. She simply asks him to consider if his present course of action is consistent with his destiny and integrity.

She points David back to what made him famous; being a godly man and fighting God's battles for God's honor.

Application – Don't act in a way that expects your husband to fail.

Internal Beauty – Love for God evidenced by Love for His Word

Illustration – What I tell people when they see a picture of My beloved with her stunning physical beauty – “As astonishing as it may seem, she was even more beautiful on the inside.”

In the same way, Abigail was beautiful on the outside and even more beautiful on the inside.

This **woman of God’s** greatest influence on this **man of God** is not her external beauty. It is her internal beauty → “**blessed by your discernment**” (v. 33).

I am sure **Abigail’s** external beauty caught **David’s** eye and helped her get an initial audience.

But it did not get David’s eyes on the LORD. It is her internal beauty, her **discernment**, that accomplishes this.

Now ... in our Christian culture, we understand internal beauty but do we sometimes miss God’s call for external beauty?

v. 3 – a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance: only other women who have this phrase applied to them are **Rachel (Gen 29:7)** and **Esther (Esther 2:7)**.

Application –balance of internal beauty and external beauty.

Prov 31:21-22 – “She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. ²²She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple.”

The Prov 31 woman has an eye for functionality and an eye for beauty. If we question if God is a God of beauty, consider the Tabernacle

God wants us to be disciplined and balanced.

Application – Your external beauty will be enhanced by a lifted countenance: humility, trust, peace.

When God is the apple of your eye → Your eyes will shine

Illustration – I made this Facebook post on April 26th 2016 – “Exactly one year ago, my Margie was blessed to see me baptize our firstborn son 39 days before she went home to be with the Lord. Her sweet little body ravaged by cancer, having gained 60 lbs. from taking steroids to fight the ever increasing and pervading pain, blind in one eye from a tumor in her brain, lungs filling with fluid from the cancer ... my beloved was more beautiful than ever. She was and ever shall be the dictionary picture of a lifted countenance.”

5th Virtue of this woman after God’s own heart, ...

V. Abigail is a woman of **Wisdom** **25:30-31**

Point – **Abigail** is the opposite of a fool. She is a woman of **understanding** and **discernment**.

What marks an intelligent person?

What is “wisdom” according to Scripture?

Psa 111:10 – “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*.” → This is Abigail!!

Abigail is a woman of the Word of God.

Her appeal to David is rooted in Scripture.

Prov 31:26 – “She opens her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”

The woman of God appeals to the man of God with the Word of God.

Proof – **v. 26** “as the LORD lives” – she points David to God

She appeals to God’s promise to David → **v. 28** – Abigail reminds David of God’s promise for his life (**the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house**). She encourages David to look beyond the immediate circumstances to the bigger promise of God.

Proof – **25:30-31**

Abigail knows **Deut 32:35** – “Vengeance is Mine.”

She knows God’s requirements for His King in Israel → **Deut 17:18-20**.
So, she appeals to David to let God deal with his enemies.

Application – Ladies, by rooting your position in Scripture, you get yourself out of the argument and put it between him and his God.

CONCLUSION

25:32-35

A godly woman’s response to crisis results in godly repentance

- David receives advice from Abigail as a gift from God
- She is winsome
- David’s reputation and conscience is kept clear from guilt.
- God responds to bring justice to the situation beyond what was in David’s power.

25:36-38

- She goes back to her husband
- He suffers a stroke or heart attack
- Nabal was going to die either way, but in this way it is an act of God’s judgment, not David’s anger.

→ David offers a proposal of marriage

Abigail has a choice. She is now a very wealthy widow with a vast estate. All she has to do is go along with Saul and she can keep it. Or she can choose to go with God’s man who is still a fugitive in the wilderness, whose future is out there somewhere and a little bit dim at the moment. She will end up in flight all the time until God comes through someday. But she places her faith and trust in God. This is a tremendous example for all of us.