

# **DAVID, NABAL & ABIGAIL**

1Samuel 25

Today's passage clearly illustrates the important biblical principle that a person reaps what he sows. In our narrative we encounter three people who represent three different actions and whose actions lead to three different outcomes. In 1 Samuel 25 we meet Nabal the fool, David the rash and Abigail the wise. The message can be entitled: "The Fool, the Rash and the Wise."

Verse one tells us of Samuel's passing. Samuel's death marked the end of an era, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him. It's interesting that his death takes place while David is fleeing Saul.

I believe, the insertion of this parenthetical verse is key to understanding David's ensuing behaviour.

Samuel was a great prophet. Samuel had been David's mentor, the one to whom he had constantly relied for counsel and encouragement. With the prophet's death the "stabilizing force" for David was gone. And a new sense of fear and vulnerability grips David's heart. Perhaps even feelings of depression have overtaken him because he will manifest a change of behaviour.

David moves back into the Desert of Maon and that is where we meet Nabal.

## **I. The Fool – Nabal (1-11)**

Nabal is presented as a foolish person in the story. In fact, his very name means "fool." We'll see that his actions back up his name.

We are told four things about Nabal. He is very wealthy. He has an intelligent and beautiful wife. He is harsh and he is mean.

Proverbs 18:6 says: ***“A fool’s lips bring him strife, and his mouth invites a beating.”*** That’s Nabal. He is mean and a fool, and his lips are about to invite a beating.

In verses 4 to 11, we read Nabal had 1000 goats and 3000 sheep, and it was the shearing season. So, a festival was on in Nabal’s town. David sends 10 men to Nabal’s house to greet him and to ask for compensation for the wall of protection he and his men provided for Nabal’s flocks in the desert as they grazed.

David’s men greet Nabal pleasantly enough with words of blessing and well-wishing. David asks for some provisions for his men, nothing outrageous, especially considering that David and his men treated Nabal’s men well when they were in the desert. Nabal has the opportunity to do good here, and what does he do instead? He is arrogant and selfish, and he refuses. He says, ***“Who is this David that I should help him?”***

Nabal pretends not to know him –everybody knows David. It was an excuse for his unwillingness to pay his debt and show kindness to David.

Not only that, but it is also a festive time and thus even more a time for sharing. I believe David and his men wondered why they weren’t invited in the first place.

Nabal is a wealthy man and can easily afford to be generous. But the problem was he was a selfish, prideful and a mean person. My water, my bread, my meat, for my shearers.

1 Timothy 6 in the New Testament says: ***“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant.... Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing***

***to share.***" (1 Timothy 6:17-18). Nabal does none of those things. He's in for great trouble.

So, David's 10 men return to him empty-handed.

## **II. The Rash – David (12-22)**

Next, we come to David's part in the story. If Nabal is presented as the fool in the story, David is presented as rash. David is admirable in so many ways, but he is certainly not perfect, and he makes his fair share of mistakes. His response to Nabal here is one of them.

When David hears how Nabal responded to him, he is furious, to say the least. David is insulted with Nabal's ingratitude and his failure to pay up his debt.

His anger gets the best of him. He doesn't stop to pray and consult the Lord. He is led into temptation and sets out to satisfy his passion for revenge.

He gathers four hundred men and their swords, and they set out for Nabal's place.

James says: ***"Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires."*** (James 1:19-20).

Proverbs 14:16: ***“A wise man fears the Lord and shuns evil, but a fool is hotheaded and reckless.”***

David in chapter 24 wisely spares Saul’s life, and in chapter 26, again we find him sparing Saul’s life as Saul attempts to kill again. But here, in Chapter 25, which is between the acts of mercy, we have David totally behaving differently. He is out for revenge. He vows to kill Nabal. He’s not controlled by his spiritual principles. He ready to return evil for evil.

Romans 12, ***“Do not repay anyone evil for evil .... Do not take revenge ...leave it for the Lord....Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.”***

Let's be careful, the devil can quickly trigger our emotions. David was a godly man and a gifted man, but the best men, are but men at their best.

Fortunately, Abigail intervenes. We will learn about her wisdom in a moment. David is acting rashly, but Abigail will act wisely in order to protect her family.

We see God’s providence in the timing here, just as we did earlier when God brought a messenger to break off Saul’s pursuit of David just in in time.

Except this time God in his providence isn’t protecting David from Saul. God is protecting David from himself! From committing presumptuous sin.

Psalm 19:13 (David)- ***Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.***

Praise God for all the times when we are about to do something stupid, and God in his providence intervenes and saves us from ourselves.

God knows how to bring the right people in our lives to direct us and warn us. We must listen and be thankful for such people, friends, and family.

### **III. The Wise - Abigail (23-31)**

Abigail is the wise one in the story. Abigail's name means "my father is delighted."

Abigail meets David, and unlike her foolish husband Nabal, she is humble and gracious.

Look at 1 Samuel 25:23-27

***When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and let me speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. 25 Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my lord sent. 26 And now, my lord, as surely as the LORD your God lives and as you live, since the LORD has kept you from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, may your enemies and all who are intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. 27 And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you.***

Last time we looked at the longest unbroken speeches by David and Saul in the Bible. Well Abigail's speech to David here is the longest unbroken speech by a female in the Bible. And it is a speech full of wisdom.

She bows down before David. She falls at his feet. She accepts the blame for her husband's actions. She asks permission to speak and tells David her husband is a fool. She's basically saying, "I know what he said to you was offensive but consider the source. The man's a fool. He treats everyone like that!"

"Don't stoop down to his level! Ignore his insults, he's not worthy of your attention."

Proverbs 11:2 says: ***"With humility comes wisdom."*** Proverbs 15:1 says: ***"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."***

Abigail gives David the provisions he had requested earlier. She is following the way of wisdom here. Proverbs 11:25 says: ***"A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed."***

She encourages David to do right. She encourages him not to commit bloodshed by avenging himself with his own hands. She says to David, *"Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live." You are going to be king, and you don't want to have the shedding of blood on your conscience.*

Abigail pacifies David. He's impressed by her diplomatic speech, her generosity, wisdom, and grace. She wins his heart. He blesses God and praises her for her goodness.

David had a teachable spirit. And it saved him from terrible consequences. Proverbs 12:5 says, ***“The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.”***

Abigail is the hero in this story. Of course, God is the real hero of every story in the Bible. But Abigail is the human hero in this story. who put out the fire and extinguished the flames of vengeance I David’s heart.

Through her wise actions she protects her family from harm and prevents David from doing a great evil. Had David succeeded in his revenge, he would have done great damage to his character and his career, but the Lord merciful stopped him.

#### **IV. The Outcomes (32-44)**

So, we have met the wise, the rash and the fool in this story. Now we only need to see the outcomes for each of these individuals. We want to get a hold of the lessons we must learn.

##### **A. David the rash – saved from wrongdoing (32-35)**

We see David’s outcome first. David the rash is saved from wrongdoing by Abigail’s’ wise actions.

As we said earlier, David makes his fair share of mistakes, but one of the things you have to love about David, he is always quick to repent when he is confronted with his wrongs.

Abigail’s wise words and generous gifts had a profound impact on David. She was a woman of faith and godly influence.

James 5:20 says: ***“If one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a***

***sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”***

Abigail turns David back from the error of his ways, and David is rescued from sin.

When I reflect on Nabal and his wife Abigail, I think to myself, “how in the world did they ever come to together? Was their marriage arranged? It must have been. It certainly was the custom of the day. But what a mismatch?

They were a couple we can call the beauty and beast. Abigail possessed beauty, brains, charm, and the blessings of the Lord. Nabal was a beastly brute, mean, evil and morally deficient in every sense of the word. A great fool. He is called the son of Beliel (worthless).

They were unequally yoked. And unequally yoked unions don't promote true and abiding happiness. Paul warns against entering into such unions.

### **B. Nabal the fool – struck down by the Lord (36-38)**

Next, we see Nabal's outcome. Nabal the fool is struck down by the Lord.

In verses 36-38 we read that when Abigail first goes to him, he is drunk, so she waits until morning to tell him what happened with David. When she tells him in the morning, he become so afraid of David and is so shocked that becomes like a stone. He has either a heart attack or a stroke and becomes immobilized. Ten days later the Lord takes his life.

And maybe the good Lord gave him another 10 days to repent and to think about eternal realities.



Nabal was so indebted to his wife, that had he kissed her lips, kissed her hands, kissed her feet, and thanked her for saving him, he would have been alive.

Later in the New Testament Jesus would tell the story about another rich fool whose life was suddenly taken by the Lord. The parable of the rich fool is found Luke 12 and we read in verse 20: ***“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’”*** (Luke 12:20) .

Nabal is a picture of the natural man. The man without faith. The man who trusted himself and had no wisdom. The bible says in Prov. 28: 26- *He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered.* Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The wise man builds his life the words of God (Matt. 7:24-27) and puts them in practice.

All those who reject the greater David, the Lord and his word will perish. To reject Christ is to be a fool.

### **C. Abigail the wise – marries the future king (39-44)**

And then finally, we come to Abigail's outcome. Abigail the wise has the best outcome. She gets to marry the future king! Look at 1 Samuel 25:39-44:

When David learns that Nabal is dead, he gives praise to God for keeping him from doing wrong. He sends word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. The beautiful and intelligent Abigail is thus rewarded for her wisdom by marrying the future king.

This was certainly true in Abigail's life, and it is true of all those who embrace the wisdom found in God's word.

He who exalts himself will be abased (Nabal), but he who humbles himself will be exalted (Abigail). Abigail was exalted to be the wife of the king.

CONCLUSION: 1 Samuel 25 has a very simple message. Our actions affect our outcomes. The Bible says in Galatians 6: ***“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”*** (Galatians 6:7-8)

Your actions and attitudes have a huge effect on your life and the lives of those around you. So, are you a Nabal, a David or an Abigail?

Nabal sowed foolishness and reaped destruction. David sowed rashness and almost reaped disaster. Abigail sowed wisdom and reaped God's blessing.

Men must learn to be like David. Women must learn to be like Abigail. Fools must learn how to get right with God before it's too late.

