

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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You will remember last week we left David just about to encounter Abigail Nabal's wife. It was sheep shearing time at Nabal's, a time of great banquets and lavish hospitality. David had sent a delegation up to Nabal in his own name requesting food for his men. They reminded Nabal that the harvest was great because of David's watchfulness over Nabal's flocks. But instead of food Nabal deliberately insulted David. Nabal may be a "fool" because he believes there is no God, but he is no fool from a worldly standpoint. He knows that Saul, who is only 30 miles north of him, is winning, and David, way down in the wilderness, is losing. He not only refuses David's request, but he also deliberately insults him on a personal level when David makes a personal request. Word gets back to David, and he is enraged. Without consulting God, he has 400 of his 600 men strap on their swords, and he heads north to kill Nabal. He is not only going to kill Nabal but also every male in Nabal's household. He intends to wipe the name of Nabal from the face of the earth leaving no offspring to carry on his name. David is a very angry young man.

Fortunately one of the shepherds who has lived with David in the wilderness is a very discerning young man. He has observed this vindictiveness in David and, although he does not know exactly what David is planning to do, he is aware of David's character. He knows exactly how David will respond to a personal insult like this. So he warns Abigail that, since her husband is a fool and cannot even be spoken too, she had better do something. The word "fool" here has the concept of a hard, unbending, unteachable, unreasonable person who will not listen to people. Abigail quickly gathers together a great feast and takes off through a hidden part of the mountains where she thinks David will come. We left her last week having run into this mountain pass and having sent her servants before her with roasted lamb, roasted grain, wine, cakes of figs and clusters of raisins, a feast fit for a king. She has deliberately defied her husband and done what she knows he would not want her to do. This is where we get the "Abigail syndrome" sometimes encountered in counseling. I want to look at that syndrome later on.

Here we have a woman who by God's definition is intelligent, which means she is godly. "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord," the Scriptures say. And we have a husband who is a fool. The Scriptures say, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" As defined by Scripture a fool or a wise man is determined by his attitude toward God. So we have a godly woman and an ungodly husband. The godly woman has defied her husband, but with his best interests at heart, and gone out to stop David.

Now in I Samuel 25:23, Abigail comes upon David. As we saw in verses 21 & 22, David has been mumbling in his beard all during his northward trek about how he is going to annihilate Nabal because of what Nabal has done to him, [notice the personal pronoun in verses 21 and 22].

Let us look at 1 Samuel 25:23 and following. This is a beautiful example of how to argue with an angry man.

I Samuel 25:23:

When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David, and bowed herself to the ground. [That is the first step in dealing with an angry

man.] And she fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him [He is a fool]; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.

Let's look at this little portion first. First Abigail approaches an angry man by humbling herself. She does not approach David whining for her rights, and believe me, she has rights. David is up there on an ego trip. He does not have any kind of legal or moral right to kill off all the males of Nabal's family. However, Abigail has lived all her married life with an angry man, a fool, a man who is ungodly, and David right now is very ungodly. She knows that ungodly angry men do not respond to reason. You cannot argue your "rights" and expect an angry man to listen. Angry ungodly men will not respect even God's rights, how could you expect them to respect yours? So, she starts out with the approach of I Peter 3, "Wives be submissive to your own husbands so if any of them are disobedient to the word [the condition in the Greek is "and they are"], they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives as they observe your pure and respectful behavior." In other words, if you have a husband who is non-persuasive to the Word of God, then you win him without a word. [It is a play on words here.] You keep your mouth shut and live a life before him that is both pure and respectful when he deserves neither the purity nor the respect. That is exactly what Abigail does here. She comes to an angry man, who is on an ego trip, who has no right to be where he is, and the first thing she does is show him respect. She falls on her face before David, which was the way of showing respect in that ancient East culture. She is, by-the-way, the wife of a very wealthy man. She has servants. She has flocks and herds. She is a "big woman on campus." She is not just some little peasant girl.

Secondly, she puts the blame on herself which is very wise to do. In those days, unlike today when women have "equality," they did not take revenge on women. So Abigail knew she was safe if she put the blame on herself, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame." She tries to take the blame off her husband, even though he does not deserve it, and put it on herself. Even David, as angry as he is, is not going to slaughter women.

Thirdly, she then begs him to listen because she is used to a man not listening to her. "Please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant." Just give me a hearing. That's all I ask.

Then she begins to move. First of all she agrees with David that he is right, and Nabal is a fool. "Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he." Nabal was a fool. He did act ungodly and there was no excuse for his actions, but she does not try to cover. "Nabal is his name and folly is with him;" however there is another side to the coin. "but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent." There are a lot of innocent people, David, who did not hear what you ask for and would have responded had they known. Therefore, it is not right to annihilate them when they did not even have a chance to hear.

Then she begins an interesting argument which relates David to his Lord.

I Samuel 25:26:

Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord lives, [she begins to immediately focus David's mind and his thoughts on YHWH, not on the issue, not on Nabal or her rights, but on YHWH himself] and as your soul lives, since the Lord has restrained you from shedding blood and from avenging yourself by your own hand,

I love this argument. This is typically female. She assumes what is to be argued as being already settled. I have never yet understood the female mind, but some how when you get into a discussion with them, you have lost before you even start discussing. It happened to the Lord with his own mother. At Cana of Galilee the Lord begins his public ministry. He goes down to Cana, which is not too far from Nazareth, and Mary his mother is part of the wedding party. Obviously she is in charge of getting things done. They run out of wine. That is a terrible insult and loss of face to an Easterner, an Oriental. The bridegroom is to supply the needs of the whole family for probably up to seven days. Guests come from long distances, and to run out of wine in the middle

of the celebration shows a lack of concern for your in-laws. So, the poor host is going to be greatly humiliated. Now, here comes the Lord and his disciples as guests at the feast. Mary, as part of the wedding party, looks at her son and says, "They have run out of wine." She knows what she means, and he knows what she means, "Do something!" She knows that he is the Son of God. Don't forget the angel told her that before he was conceived, and she has seen a sinless life for 30 years. The Lord tells her, "Woman, [which is impersonal but not an insulting term. He is saying "There is a new relationship established now, Mary. I am no longer under your motherhood."] what have I to do with you. My time has not yet come." This is telling her "No" very nicely and very quietly but very firmly. What does she do? She turns to the servants and says, "Do whatever he tells you," and walks away. There stands the Lord with egg on his face. Every time I read that I think the Lord must have had kind of a wry smile on his face, "Of all the people who ought to know better than to argue with women, I who made them ought to know." Of course the Lord, in order not to embarrass his mother and to keep the bridegroom from being humiliated, does his first miracle and, "humanly" speaking, does it against his own will. She won. Abigail, has come from a long line of "Marys" and assumes as true what is about to be argued.

I Samuel 25:26b:

Now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal.

In essence Abigail says, "God, will deal with the ungodly. A fool is an ungodly person, David, and God will deal with the ungodly. You don't have to do that. He is a Nabal. He is a fool. He is ungodly. He will get his. You have no right to move in where God has sovereignty."

I Samuel 25:27:

And now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord.

There are four hundred hungry, thirsty young men there, and in one bold move she just wins four hundred votes. The odds are now 401 against David. And she does it very beautifully. She says, "If this gift is not good enough to give to you, just give it to your young men." So far she has done a beautiful job of bringing David to the point where she wants him.

Now she has to move in and insert somewhere that sin against YHWH would have been involved in what David had planned to do. She does that beautifully too.

I Samuel 25:28:

Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; [She brings in the word "transgression" here, a deliberate and willful rebellion] for the Lord will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you all your days.

She now begins to relate David to his Lord. Having pointed him toward the Lord, she begins to show the relationship between the two. First the Lord is going to make an enduring house for David because David represents YHWH. He is not a free man to do his own will. He fights the Lord's battles. Therefore, he is under the sovereignty of the Lord. He does not have the right to "rule" on his own. Even when he becomes king and even though he has already been anointed king, he still reigns under YHWH.

Secondly, in the midst of a feast, he cannot do evil in the name of YHWH by using four hundred armed guerrilla warriors to butcher a helpless family, including small male children. She really begins to move in on him.

I Samuel 25:29:

And should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then 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 [or from the cup of a sling].

In the customs of those days, if you had something very precious, you bound it up in something and wrapped it around with something so it would not get hurt. She is saying, "You are the anointed 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. You do not have to fight your battles, David. God has you packaged with himself. Nor do you have to go after your enemies, David, for God will take your enemies and put them in the cup of a sling and fling them away. You don't even have to fight your enemies, David. God will take care of you and them."

Why do you suppose she used the word "sling?" What did David do when he was a young lad? He slew a giant fighting for whose honor? YHWH's! He told Goliath, "I am going to kill you because you are defying the armies, not of David or of Israel, but of the living God." It was God's honor that was at stake when he won with that sling shot. It was not David's honor or David's rights, and God honored that. As a lad David, dressed in a shepherd's jacket and with only a little sling shot and five smooth pebbles, slew that giant who stood 9 feet tall and was fully armed and armored. She points him back to what made him famous; being a godly man and fighting God's battles for God's honor. She points him right back to the past.

Then she points him to the future, I Samuel 25:30:

And it shall come about when the Lord shall do for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and shall appoint you ruler over Israel, [Here she goes for the jugular vein] that this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause ["David, you have no right to do what you are going to do and you know it," and she was a woman against 401 men] and by my lord having avenged himself. [Taking the prerogatives of God into his own hands, and this really hits home] When the Lord shall deal well with my lord, then remember your maidservant.

She is an amazingly discerning woman. She senses in David, because of the way God has been acting in the lives of David and Saul, that David is going to be king, that he has been the hero of Israel and that, before he was chased into the wilderness by Saul, he was the unifying force in Israel. Yet she has seen in the actions of Saul and David the deterioration of Saul and his empire and the exaltation of David even though he is still a fugitive. She can see the hand of God in this. She is a godly woman.

She also can see something else. Why do you think she says, "And when the Lord shall deal well with my lord, then remember your maidservant?" What does she also see? She sees David's future. As a godly woman, who else's future does she see? Hers, yes, but how would hers suddenly be available to David? How can a married woman talk about David "remembering me?" What does she also see? Just as surely as David shall be king because he is acting righteously so she is also certain something else will happen because someone else is acting unrighteously? Nabal is going to get it. The same God who rewards the righteous by making him king is going to deal with the ungodly. Just as surely as one is true, so is the other. She knows her husband, somewhere along the line, is going to get taken care of by God, and when David is king and her husband is removed by God, she wants David to remember her. This is really a godly woman.

So, a godly woman's godly response gets a godly repentance. The Spirit of God takes her words like a two-edged sword and carves David right in the heart. Look at his response, and it is a beautiful order of progression.

I Samuel 25:32:

Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me,

The first thing he does is see that the hand of YHWH is in this. By focusing entirely on YHWH, Abigail has brought this out. He sees that now. He does not change his mind about Nabal, or his rights, or fight with Abigail and argue against her and try to win the argument. He realizes the issue is between himself and

YHWH. That just removes any vestige he might have of his own rights.

Secondly, I Samuel 25:33:

...and blessed be your discernment,

Now, she was both intelligent and beautiful. David likes beautiful women. He gets in a lot of trouble in chapter 11 & 12 of II Samuel because of a beautiful woman. As king, David will probably have up to ten wives and concubines. He violates the law of Deuteronomy 17 by multiplying wives. But what strikes him most of all here is not her beauty, it is her discernment. It strikes him to the heart. The beauty probably got her a hearing. That Chanel #5 wafting about as she bowed herself before him undoubtedly got a look, but it did not win the argument. It did not get his eyes on YHWH. It was her discernment that accomplished that.

Then the third thing he sees is in her person.

I Samuel 25:33b:

...and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed, and from avenging myself by my own hand. Nevertheless, as the Lord God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light as much as one male."

He fully confesses his intentions. "But for you, Abigail, I would have killed everybody in your house that was masculine." He confesses and repents of his actions and acknowledges fully that she was the one God used to turn him around.

See how you win an argument with a willful, rebellious, unrepentant, angry man? You point him to the Lord and take the humble place. You get yourself out of the argument and get it between him and his God, instead of you and him with God somewhere around the periphery. That is all she did. She got him focused on her and then got out of the way and got him looking at YHWH. Pretty soon David began to realize, "Hey, I'm not fighting Nabal or my honor. I'm dealing with the living God." That is what broke him.

I Samuel 25:35. I just love verse 35. I chuckle when I read it.

So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and he said to her, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."

He acted like he had been running everything himself while the whole time he had been led around by the nose by the Holy Spirit through this beautiful woman.

Now, notice what Abigail does not do. She does not desert her husband. She does not deceive her husband. She goes right back to her old abusive, hard, unteachable, irascible, evil Nabal, instead of running off with David.

I Samuel 25:36:

Then Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk: so she did not tell him anything at all until the morning light. But it came about in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, [He's got a splitting headache, and he is depressed and nauseated.] that his wife told him these things, [Now, he has just had his life saved by her actions.] and his heart died within him so that he became as a stone. [He has a massive stroke. He is still alive but he is paralyzed, probably both by fury and by fright. Nabal was undoubtedly enraged by what his wife had done. She had deliberately taken food and given it to David after he had told David no. And yet he is also frightened to death because he realizes he came that close to having his head lopped off.]

Now look at the next verse.

I Samuel 25:38:

And about ten days later, it happened that the Lord struck Nabal, and he died.

Let me ask you a question. Let your sanctified imagination wander a little. If I were God I would have snuffed Nabal's life out just like that with a massive coronary, "You mess with Me and that is what you get, Nabal." It would have had a lot more impact. Why did God allow Nabal to live 10 helpless days, without any ability to manipulate people, where his wealth could do him no good, where he could do nothing except lie and look up? God loved Nabal. He loves fools. Have you ever heard of what I call "The Noah forty day principle?" God demonstrated this same principle before. Way back in Noah's day, God had one person who was righteous. He said to Noah, "Noah, I am going to give mankind 120 years more and that is it. You start building a great big wooden box up on the mountainside because there's going to be a flood." [As far as we can tell there had never been any rain on the earth yet] "What's a flood, God?" "Don't worry about it. Build the box 450' long, 75' wide, and 50' high." [This is using the 18" cubit.] It took him 120 years to build that huge box with stories in it, a roof on it, windows all the way around. While Noah was pounding those pegs in and while his sons were working for him, he was preaching righteousness. Noah warned about a coming judgment of God against the life on earth. Of course, people would nod and say, "Hey, there goes old crazy Noah lugging another timber up there. Hey, what are you building, Noah? Where's the water, Noah? What's a flood, Noah?" You can see they would be having a big ball. Noah sat there and took that guff for 120 years until he put the animals in the ark, and he entered with his family.

Then Scripture says, "God shut the door."

Then the fountains of the deep opened up and the heavens opened up. [Apparently there was some kind of heavy cloud canopy around the earth in those days that came pouring down.] The intriguing thing is God did not send a gigantic flood that swept everyone away just like that. He had the water slowly rise for 40 days and 40 nights until it finally covered the top of the highest hill. Why? Why did God deliberately do this in an unhurried way? What were the people doing while the water was slowly, inexorably rising, pushing them to the top of the hills before covering them? What is God giving them? Time to repent. [What did God give the Jews at Kadesh-Barnea? Forty days to go in and see if the promised land was exactly the way he had said it was, but even though it was, they still refused to go in. So they spent a total of 40 years in the wilderness until that generation died off. [During that time, though, many did repent.] God loved those wicked people of Noah's day. God gave them 120 years of Noah's preaching righteousness, and then he gave them 40 days of inexorable approaching death to repent. He really wanted them to repent. In II Peter 3:9, Peter argues that God is long suffering. "God is not slow concerning promise as some men count slowness," he says, "but he is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (change their mind)" I think God honored the I Peter 3:1-6 principle for Abigail's sake. My personal feeling is that those 10 days in which Nabal had to lie helpless looking up while Abigail loved him and ministered to him were deliberately given to him so he would have an opportunity to repent. I like to think that he did..

I Samuel 25:39:

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal,

Don't judge David, now, by the New Testament. He was very grateful that Nabal got it and that David was thereby vindicated in the eyes of men. Some of the Psalms also say this, but David is 1,000 years before the New Testament, and he is 3,000 before our time. So do not judge him based on the New Testament.

I Samuel 25:39b:

...and has kept back His servant from evil. The Lord has also returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head."

He sees that had he done something, he would have usurped the prerogative of God. God was about to take care of it the very next morning, and he dealt with the one man who needed dealing with and not the whole family, or all the males. "The soul that sins, it shall die," the Scripture says. God holds each individual accountable. The principle in the Mosaic Law is that the son shall not die for the sins of the father, nor the father for the sins of the son. Each shall die for his own sins. Each man stands before his God alone.

I Samuel 25:39c:

Then David sent a proposal to Abigail, to take her as his wife. When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you, to take you as his wife." And she arose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, "Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants." Then Abigail quickly arose, and rode on a donkey, with her five maidens who attended her; and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife.

Interesting, Abigail has a choice, doesn't she? She is now the widow of Nabal, a very wealthy man, heir to a vast estate. All she has to do is play footsy 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. Same choice Moses had. He was a son of Pharaoh's daughter but he chose to deny the riches of Egypt and the pleasures of sin for awhile in order to accept the reproach of the people of God.

What does Abigail do? How quickly does it take her to make up her mind? Who is it going to be Saul or David? YHWH's man or the man YHWH has rejected? Just like that she makes her choice. You can imagine, of course, what Saul will do to her property the moment he finds out she is with David. It will go into the royal exchequer to be given to someone else.

Now the intriguing thing is you would think because Abigail did all these things God would give her a long life, and she would walk happily into the sunset hand-in-hand with her David as queen of all Israel. But it does not happen that way. In Scriptures she does not appear when David is King of Israel. She does have a son, Chileab, for him when he becomes King of Judah in Hebron. One son only and then she disappears off the scene. She may have died in childbirth. Chileab, the son, does not appear after that either. She has a very short life span apparently, a very short ministry. Intriguing thing is they did have a son called Chileab, and Chileab means "restraint." The same word used in I Samuel 25, verse 33 "who have kept me this day from bloodshed." Here is this beautiful woman and what is it that David remembers most about her still? What is the thing that lives in David's mind about Abigail? Restraint! This godly woman who was used to keep God's king out of trouble apparently was not given a long life by God, but her impact on David went on for years.

It is similar to John the Baptist with Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was to be the messenger of Christ, the forerunner of Christ. He was set apart to this ministry from his mother's womb and was filled with the Spirit of God while yet in her womb. He was a priest, the son of a priest. His mother was even from a priestly family. His whole ministry was preparation. Thirty years he spent preparing for one short ministry which lasted about a year to 18 months at the most. He had tremendous popularity in the beginning. Then he was asked by God to give up his popularity. He was told by God, "When you get this big following, point them to Jesus. You must decrease and He must increase."

Finally, he did not die a hero's death. He chose to rebuke King Herod who had charge of Galilee and Perea, which were adjacent to Samaria and Judea. King Herod had taken his brother Philip's wife to be his queen, because Herodias had designs on becoming a queen. While he was in Herod's territory, John the Baptist rebuked Herod and Herod imprisoned him. After Salome, daughter of Herodias by Philip, inflamed Herod with a sensuous dance, he made a drunken oath to her in front of his debauched guests, "I'll give you anything up to half of my kingdom." She went running to her mother and said, "What shall I ask for?" [The Greek indicates "for myself."] She didn't know what was going on. Herodias immediately responded, "The head of John the Baptist on a platter." So John's head was chopped off for a drunken king, a young naive pawn and a wicked woman. Tradition says Herodias did an obscene dance around his head. That may just be tradition.

Herodias hated him, and she won. That was God's "reward" on earth for his messenger whom the Lord himself said was "the greatest of the Old Testament prophets."

Do you see what this says? It says, if we look only at this life for the righteousness and justice of God, we are going to be disappointed. God has all eternity in view. He will take his only Son, bring him up in a miserable caravan town like Nazareth, have his parentage disputed, have him spend thirty years in preparation and only three and a half years in ministry then snuff him out like that! He can do that to us, but all we have to do when we look at Abigail or John the Baptist or our Lord Himself, is remember the eternal, long range consequences. Because Christ was crucified, someday "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Because Abigail apparently was allowed to have a tremendous impact on David's very formative years, wait until we get upstairs and see what she is like now. If you think she was intelligent and beautiful down here, wait until you see her glorified, the godly woman that restrained David.

Let me bring out a couple principles. The Abigail principle does not give you the right in the New Testament to go out and deliberately do something against your husband's wishes, knowing that you have usurped his place of headship. In the New Testament you are to submit to your husband in everything-, as to the Lord, trusting the Lord to deal with your husband as Abigail did. She went back and lived with Nabal as his wife. She went back to spend the rest of her years with a man who was going to be abusive and angry and hostile to her. She did not run off with David or run home to mother. She went back to her husband, willing to accept whatever the consequences were of her actions, for YHWH's sake.

Secondly, David took it from Abigail in his anger because she gave it to him gently. I Peter 3 points out that you win a husband by a "gentle and quiet spirit" not by a fish wife's approach. All that does is build up a wall of defense and deep-seated resentment.

Thirdly, David responded to Abigail's plea because she focused him on the Lord and not on herself. She made it her aim to get David to see that the issue was between him and his God, not between him and her rights. When you are dealing with your husband and he is non-responsive to the Word of God, do not assert your rights. Point him to the Lord and trust the Lord to deal with him.

David learned out of this to thank Abigail not for her beauty but for her restraining him from ungodly actions. Long after you women have gotten older, have wrinkles, and sag a little here and there, you can still hold your husband by bonds of steel if you build a life of character as his wife; if he loves you because of your discernment, your godliness, your walk with the Lord, your loveliness instead of your prettiness. I wish I could get that across to women. You are suckered by the TV everyday of the week. Use this, buy this, get L'Oreal and fix your hair all up. It is very expensive, but "You're worth it." That is the biggest con you ever heard in your life. No, what David remembers about Abigail is not her beauty, and David likes beauty. He remembers her loveliness, her godliness, and that is what is going to bind a husband to you forever, long after your prettiness is gone. Abigail went before David to do what God wanted her to do, not to assert her rights but to be God's instrument. Are you willing to be that in your husband's life even though he may be churlish, unteachable, unbending, unyielding? That's what Nabal was, and Abigail chose to be God's instrument not only in David's life but also in Nabal's.

Let's look next time at chapter 26, and I want to try a different approach with this chapter. I am going against some of the commentators. I am using some sanctified imagination next week. However, I think I am right on Scripturally, but I will give it to you as an option.

Prayer

Father, we thank you so much for your Word, for the fact that it shows what the real values in life are. The things that count with you are not prettiness but true beauty and true godliness. The things that will have lasting quality are not things that last long on earth necessarily, but things that have eternal value, the spiritual not the physical. Father, we ask now that we might be wise enough to realize that your value system is entirely opposite from the world's, and we must be constantly on guard against allowing our value system to be perverted by the world. Help us to keep our minds and our thoughts on eternal issues and eternal values, so we take

the things in this life and see them from your perspective, trusting you even in the midst of adversity because we know that you are right and that you never make a mistake. Thank you, Father, that you are that kind of a person and that we can trust you in everything and in every situation, and you will never, never fail us. Thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

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