

Bible Study - Nabal and Abigail

Life Lessons from Nabal and Abigail

Some Bible scholars call this couple -- The Beauty and the Beast. Nabal was rude and mean while Abigail was kind and caring. The name Nabal means fool or foolish. The name Abigail means father's delight or joy. The meaning of their names -- describe them. Nabal is an ungodly man but Abigail is a Godly woman. In this story we learn about what happens when two people are unequally yoked together.

Nabal's Refusal

Nabal was a wealthy man and David, who is on the run from King Saul because he is trying to kill him, has asked this wealthy man for food for his men and himself.

Read 1 Samuel 25:2-11 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

1. A certain _____ in Maon, who had _____ there at Carmel, was very _____.
(1 Samuel 25:2)

2. His name was _____ and his wife's name was _____. She was an _____ and _____ woman, but her _____, a Calebite, was _____ and _____ in his dealings.
(1 Samuel 25:3)

While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Camel and and greet him in my name."

3. Say to him: "Long _____ to you! Good _____ to you and your _____! And good health to _____ that is yours! (1 Samuel 25:6)

4. Now I hear that it is _____ time. When your _____ were with us, we did not _____ them, and the whole _____ they were at Carmel _____ of theirs was missing.
(1 Samuel 25:7)

5. Ask your _____ servants and they will _____ you. Therefore be _____ toward my young _____, since we come at a _____ time. Please give your _____ and your son _____ whatever you can _____ for them." (1 Samuel 25:8)

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

6. Nabal answered David's _____, "Who is this _____? Who is this _____ of Jesse? Many _____ are breaking away from their _____ these days. (1 Samuel 25:10)

7. Why should I take my _____ and _____, and the _____ I have slaughtered for _____ shearers, and give it to _____ coming from who knows _____?" (1 Samuel 25:11)

Reflective Thoughts ...

Nabal, being a wealthy man, could have easily given David and his men some food but he refused to do so. Even though David reached out to Nabal with a blessing of goodwill through the message he sent to him by his men; Nabal shows nothing but contempt for David and his men. Nabal apparently did not know that it was more blessed to give than to receive. He did not do anything that would bring a blessing back to himself, actually quite the opposite.

David's Reaction

Read 1 Samuel 25:12-13 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

1. David's _____ turned around and went _____. When they _____, they reported _____ word. (1 Samuel 25:12)

2. David _____ to his men, "_____ on your _____!" So they _____ on their swords, and David _____ on his. About _____ hundred men when up with _____ ..." (1 Samuel 25:13)

Reflective Thoughts ...

David had sent a blessing of goodwill to Nabal through the message he sent to him by his men but Nabal in return was very insulting to David and his men. This makes David angry and he is about to react to this insult out of his anger. David had a right to be angry but the Word of God tells us to be angry and sin not (See Ephesians 4:26) and to not repay evil for evil (See 1 Thessalonians 5:15). God knows things will happen that make us angry but we must not let the wrong that has been done to us cause us to commit sin. We need to cast all of our cares on Jesus. (See 1 Peter 5:7).

A Servant's Warning

Read 1 Samuel 25:14-17 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail ...

1. "David sent _____ from the desert to _____ our master his _____, but he hurled _____ at them. (1 Samuel 25:14)
2. Yet these _____ were very _____ to us. They did not _____ us, and the whole _____ we were out in the fields _____ them nothing was _____. (1 Samuel 25:15)
3. Night and day they were a _____ around us all the _____ we were _____ our sheep near them. (1 Samuel 25:16)
4. Now _____ it over and _____ what you can _____, because disaster is _____ over our _____ and his whole _____. He is such a _____ man that no one can _____ with him." (1 Samuel 25:17)

Reflective Thoughts ...

Nabal's servant is concerned that what Nabal has done could possibly bring trouble to him and his household. So he goes immediately to Abigail for help. It appears that he trusts her to do something about what her husband has done. He knows trying to talk with Nabal is of no use but someone has to do something. The actions of an ungodly man can bring harm upon himself and his household. Galatians 6:7 tells us that a man will reap what he sows. So his servant has a good reason to be concerned. Nabal has sown bad seeds that will have to be reaped.

Abigail's Reaction

Read 1 Samuel 25:18-19 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

1. Abigail lost no _____. She took two hundred loaves of _____, two skins of _____, five dressed _____, five seahs of roasted _____, a hundred cakes of _____ and two hundred cakes of pressed _____, and loaded _____ on donkeys. (1 Samuel 25:18)
2. Then she told her _____, "Go on ahead; I'll _____ you." But she did not _____ her husband Nabal. (1 Samuel 25:19)

Reflective Thoughts ...

This is probably not the first time Abigail has had to do something to compensate for her husband's rude and mean dealings with others. She knows exactly what to do and she gets busy doing it. The servants are willing to help her once again save them from a situation her husband has put them in. A Godly woman who is married to an ungodly man has to learn to be a peacemaker. A man is suppose to protect his family and not put them in harm's way but an ungodly man does not know how to do this.

David's Resolve

Read 1 Samuel 25:21-22 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

1. David says: "It's been _____ – all my _____ over this fellow's _____ in the desert so that _____ of his was missing. He has _____ me back _____ for good. (1 Samuel 25:21)

2. May God _____ with David, be it ever so _____, if by morning I _____ alive one male of all who _____ to him!" (1 Samuel 25:22)

Reflective Thoughts ...

David thinks he is justified in taking revenge on Nabal because he has repaid evil to David for the good that David did for him. He even thinks God wants him to do this. But his thinking is confused. In Romans 12:19 we are told: "Dearly Beloved, avenge not yourselves ... Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord." And since the Lord is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8) that is what He would have wanted David to know. God would take care of it; David just needed to put it all in His Hands.

Abigail Meets David

Read 1 Samuel 25:23-31 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

1. When Abigail saw David, she _____ got off her donkey and _____ down before David with her face to the _____. (1 Samuel 25:23)

2. She _____ at his feet and said: "My lord, let the _____ be on me _____. Please let your servant _____ to you; hear what your servant has to _____. (1 Samuel 25:24)

3. May my lord pay no _____ to that wicked man _____. He is just _____ his name – his name is Fool, and folly _____ with him. But as for _____, your servant, I did not _____ the men my master _____. (1 Samuel 25:25)

4. Now since the _____ has kept you, my master, _____ bloodshed and _____ avenging _____ with your own hands, as surely as the Lord _____ and as you live, may your enemies and _____ who intend to harm my master be _____ Nabal. (1 Samuel 25:26)

5. And let this _____, which your servant has _____ to my master, be _____ to the men who _____ you. (1 Samuel 25:27)

6. Please _____ your servant's offense, for the _____ will certainly make a _____ dynasty for my master, because he _____ the Lord's battles. Let no _____ be found in you as _____ as you live. (1 Samuel 25:28)

7. Even though someone is _____ you to take your _____, the life of my master will be _____ securely in the bundle of the _____ by the Lord _____ God. But the lives of your enemies he will _____ away as from the pocket of a _____. (1 Samuel 25:29)

8. When the _____ has done for my master every good thing he _____ concerning him and has appointed him _____ over Israel, my master will not have on his _____ the staggering burden of _____ bloodshed or of having avenged _____. And when the Lord has _____ my master success, _____ your servant." (1 Samuel 25:30-31)

Reflective Thoughts ...

Abigail quickly finds David and is able to make peace with him and soothe away his anger. She reminds him of the good plans that God has for him and that he should not allow Nabal's foolishness to cause him to do something he will regret later. Abigail must know all about this firsthand for herself. Abigail is a Godly woman who has been living with this ungodly man's foolishness every since she married him. So she must have had to remind herself many times of not allowing Nabal's rude and mean behavior to cause her to be less that God intended for her to be. A person who is married to an ungodly spouse has a great burden to bear. Abigail's marriage may have been an arranged marriage as a lot of the marriages were in earlier times. Parents thought that if their daughters married wealthy men they would be well taken care of but they must not have considered the consequences of what it would be like for a believer to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever. But Abigail has honored her marriage even though it was probably very trying at times. 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 tells us: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?" This is good advice for everyone in all situations, not just marriage.

David's Gratitude to God and to Abigail

Read 1 Samuel 25:32-35 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

1. David _____ to Abigail, "Praise be to the _____, the God of Israel, who has _____ you today

to _____ me. (1 Samuel 25:32)

2. May you be _____ for your good _____ and for keeping _____ from bloodshed this day and from avenging _____ with my own _____. (1 Samuel 25:33)

3. Otherwise, as _____ as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has _____ me from _____ you, if you had not come _____ to meet me, not one male belonging to _____ would have been left _____ by daybreak." (1 Samuel 25:34)

4. Then David _____ from her hand what she had _____ him and said, "Go home in _____. I have _____ your words and granted your _____." (1 Samuel 25:35)

Reflective Thoughts ...

Because Abigail was a Godly woman, she was willing to do what she could to stop David from doing something wrong because of Nabal's foolishness. David recognizes that it is God who has sent Abigail to stop him from doing something he would have regretted later. He is grateful to her for coming to him and making him realize he is doing something out of anger and not what God would have had him to do. God will always try to stop us from doing what is wrong because our thinking has become confused due to what has happened to us. When we have been wronged, we must give the whole matter to God and let Him take care of it in His time and in His way.

Abigail Returns Home

Read 1 Samuel 25:36-39 and then fill in the missing words from the following Scriptures (New International Version of the Bible was used):

1. When Abigail went to _____, he was in the house holding a _____ like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very _____. So she told him _____ until daybreak. (1 Samuel 25:36)

2. Then in the _____, when Nabal was _____, his wife _____ him all these things, and his _____ failed him and he _____ like a stone. (1 Samuel 25:37)

3. About _____ days later, the Lord _____ Nabal and he _____. (1 Samuel 25:38)

4. When David _____ that Nabal was _____, he said, "Praise be to the _____, who has upheld _____ cause against Nabal for _____ me with contempt. He has kept me from doing _____ and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing _____ on his own head." (1 Samuel 25:39)

Reflective Thoughts ...

Nabal probably became very angry when he heard that his wife, Abigail, had taken lots of food and wine to David and his men. And this could have caused a bad reaction in his physical body. Some Bible scholars think Nabal had a stroke. God has allowed Nabal's wrongdoing to come down upon his own head. Nabal was not merciful to others but God would have been merciful to him and given him an opportunity to repent before he took his final breath. But we don't know whether he took advantage of that opportunity or not. God is merciful because it is not His Will that anyone should perish but the choice is up to each individual.

People can live a life of being kind to others and reap the benefits. Or they could live a life of being unkind to others and reap the consequences. God tells us in Deuteronomy 30:19 that the choice is ours: life and blessings or death and curse. Nabal had gained the whole but lost his soul. (See Mark 8:36). He had been wealthy with worldly good but chose to be a wicked man. He didn't seem to know that a good name was rather to be chosen than silver or gold. (See Proverbs 22:1). God tells us in Galatians 6:7 that He will not be mocked: whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. Nabal chose to live a life of wickedness and then he had to reap the consequences of his choice.

**"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
but fools despise wisdom and discipline."**

Proverbs 1:7 NIV