

The Empowering Story of Abigail: A Bold Peacemaker
Message 6 of 6 in the series: "Stories to Make Us Bold!"

A. One day, David and his men were deeply insulted by a foolish, ungrateful farmer.

"There was a wealthy man from Maon who owned property near the town of Carmel. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats, and it was sheep-shearing time. This man's name was Nabal, and his wife, Abigail, was a sensible and beautiful woman. But Nabal... was crude and mean in all his dealings. When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep, he sent ten of his young men to Carmel with this message for Nabal: 'Peace and prosperity to you, your family, and everything you own! I am told that it is sheep-shearing time. While your shepherds stayed among us near Carmel, we never harmed them, and nothing was ever stolen from them. Ask your own men, and they will tell you this is true. **So would you be kind to us, since we have come at a time of celebration?** Please share any provisions you might have on hand with us and with your friend David.' David's young men gave this message to Nabal in David's name, and they waited for a reply."
1 Samuel 25:2-9 (NLT)

Note: Wealthy farmers like Nabal were under constant threat from raiders who would steal their livestock. "(The Israelites) abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. **They went after other gods**, worshiping the gods of the people around them... This made the Lord burn with anger against Israel, so he handed them over to raiders who stole their possessions."

Judges 2:12a & 14a (NLT)

"'Who is this fellow David?' Nabal sneered to the young men. '**Who does this son of Jesse think he is?** There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters. Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I've slaughtered for my shearers and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?' So David's young men returned and told him what Nabal had said. '**Get your swords!**' was David's reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment. Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants went to Abigail and told her, 'David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed insults at them. These men have been very good to us, and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us. In fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep. You need to know this and figure out what to do, for **there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family**. He's so ill-tempered that no one can even talk to him!'" 1 Samuel 25:10-17 (NLT)

Note: Nabal must've been aware (or could've easily verified) that David's men had protected his flocks from raiders resulting in an abundant harvest of wool. His insults and stinginess toward David's men violated every standard of Middle Eastern hospitality and made passionate David angry enough to commit murder.

Life Application: We must learn to control our tongues/thumbs. "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a **harsh word stirs up anger**... The tongue has the power of life and death..." Proverbs 15:1 & 18:21a (NIV)

Life Application: We must learn to control our tempers. "Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. **Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.**" James 1:19-20 (NLT)

B. When Abigail realized the gravity of the situation, she quickly became a bold peacemaker.

"**Abigail wasted no time.** She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys and said to her servants, 'Go on ahead. I will follow you shortly.' But she didn't tell her husband Nabal what she was doing. As she was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her. David had just been saying, 'A lot of good it did to help this fellow. We protected his flocks in the wilderness, and nothing he owned was lost or stolen. But he has repaid me evil for good. May God strike me and kill me if even one man of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!' When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him. She fell at his feet and said, '**I accept all blame in this matter, my lord.** Please listen to what I have to say. I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests... And **here is a present that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men. Please forgive me if I have offended you in any way.** The Lord will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the Lord's battles. And you have not done wrong throughout your entire life. Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, your life is safe in the care of the Lord your God, secure in his treasure pouch!

But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling! When the Lord has done all he promised and has made you leader of Israel, don't let this be a blemish on your record. **Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance.** And when the Lord has done these great things for you, please remember me, your servant!"

1 Samuel 25:18-31 (NLT)

Note: Abigail boldly took blame upon herself in order to save many lives (including her wicked husband's life) and bring peace and reconciliation. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Matthew 5:9 (NKJV)

Note: Abigail boldly redirected David's thoughts away from his plans and back onto the Lord's plans. "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)

C. David humbly accepted Abigail's counsel.

"David replied to Abigail, 'Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today! Thank God for your good sense! **Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands.** For I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, who has kept me from hurting you, that if you had not hurried out to meet me, not one of Nabal's men would still be alive tomorrow morning.' Then David accepted her present and told her, '**Return home in peace. I have heard what you said.** We will not kill your husband.'" 1 Samuel 25:32-35 (NLT)

Note: David wisely recognized that God sent Abigail to stop him from taking matters into his own hands and becoming like Saul. "**Let the godly strike me!** It will be a kindness! If they correct me, it is soothing medicine. Don't let me refuse it." Psalm 141:5a (NLT)

Life Application: We must learn to recognize people God sends to stop us from doing sinful things. "The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, **he will show you a way out so that you can endure.**" 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

"When Abigail arrived home, she found that Nabal was throwing a big party and was celebrating like a king. He was very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything about her meeting with David until dawn the next day. In the morning when Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened. As a result he had a stroke, and he lay paralyzed on his bed like a stone. About ten days later, the Lord struck him, and he died. When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, '**Praise the Lord, who has avenged the insult I received from Nabal and has kept me from doing it myself.** Nabal has received the punishment for his sin.' Then David sent messengers to Abigail to ask her to become his wife." 1 Samuel 25:36-39 (NLT)

Life Application: We need to trust that, at the right time, God will settle all scores. "Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, '**I will take revenge; I will pay them back,**' **says the Lord.** Instead, 'If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.' Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good."

Romans 12:17-21 (NLT)

John Schmidt • 09-24-23 • john@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Questions:

Read the story of Abigail, the bold peacemaker (1 Samuel 25). Then discuss the following questions:

1. Have you ever found yourself in a situation where an argument or fight was about to break out? If so, how did you respond? What were the risks of getting involved? What were the risks of not getting involved?
2. Why do you think David was willing to be kind to King Saul who was trying to kill him (1 Samuel 24) but was unwilling to be kind to Nabal who insulted him? Is it possible to obey God in one area of our lives while disobeying Him in another? Explain.

3. Discuss the following statements:

- We must learn to control our tongues/thumbs. (Proverbs 15:1,18:21)
- We must learn to control our tempers. (Proverbs 29:11, James 1:19-20)
- We must never pay back evil with more evil. (Romans 12:17-21)

Which of these is the most difficult for you? How does the Lord help us do these things?

4. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13. How did God use Abigail to show David a way out of sinning? Has God ever used you to be an "Abigail" in someone else's life? Has God ever sent an "Abigail" to you?
5. In what ways are peacemakers like "sons of God"? (Matthew 5:9) Are you a peacemaker?
6. Why didn't Abigail speak to her husband first? (1 Samuel 25:17) How did David respond to Abigail's advice? (1 Samuel 25:32-35, Psalm 141:5) Who are you most like when you're angry, David or Nabal?
7. Reflect on the following verses:

"Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness." James 3:18 (NIV)

"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" 1 Corinthians 10:12 (NIV)