**God Keeps David From Bloodshed**

**1 Samuel 25:1-44**

**Key Verse 25:33**

*May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.*

In this passage, we can learn how God trained David through Nabal and Abigail.

1) Nabal’s insult [to provoke David to sin] (v10,11)

2) Abigail’s wisdom [to protect David from sinning] (v23-31)

3) God’s judgment on Nabal [to help David realize the truth] (v38)

May God grant us to wisdom/good judgment to avoid the sin and to fully trust in Him!

**1. Read verses 1-13. What happens after the death of Samuel? (1) How are Nabal and Abigail described? (2,3) What does David tell his men to ask of Nabal? (4-9) How does Nabal answer David’s servants? (10-11) What does David say to his men after hearing their report? (12-13)**

**1-1) Read verses 1-13.**

1 Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon. 2 A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. 3 His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings. 4 While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. 5 So he sent ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. 6 Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours! 7 “‘Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. 8 Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.’” 9 When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited. 10 Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. 11 Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?” 12 David’s men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word. 13 David said to his men, “Put on your swords!” So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.

**1-2) What happens after the death of Samuel? (1)**

a) Then Samuel died

i) He was dedicated to God and served Him even from his childhood. (1Sam 1:28)

A prophet of God. (1Sam 3:20)

The last judge (1Sam 7:15); between the judges to the kings.

A man of prayer (1Sam 7:5, 12:23; Psa 99:6, Jer15:1)

A man of faith (Heb 11:32)

ii) He served God in his generation:

Anointed Saul (1Sam 10:1) and David. (1Sam 16:13)

b) All Israel assembled and mourned for him, buried him at his home in Ramah.

People showed their respect to him because they lost their spiritual leader.

c) Things we learn from the life of Samuel (1Sam 1-25)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Events** | **Things to learn from it** |
| **1** | Birth of Samuel  [1:20] | Pray to God even in difficult times [v10, Psa 55:17] |
|  |  | Fully devote our children to God [v28] |
| **2** | Telling the vision to Eli  [3:15-18] | Priority: God first [v18, Psa 16:8] |
|  |  | Do not lie [v18b, Col 3:9] |
| **3** | Intercessory prayer at Mizpah  [7:3-13] | Proclaim the message of repentance [v3, Mat 3:17] |
|  |  | Intercessory prayer for people [v5,9, 1 Tim 2:1] |
| **4** | Judging over Israel [7:15-17] | Preach the word diligently [v15,17, 2Tim 4:2-5] |
| **5** | Appointed his sons as judge  [8:1-3] | Overcome human tendency for children [v1] |
|  |  | Discipline children [[1Tim 3:4-5]](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Timothy%203.4-8) |
| **6** | Israel asked for a King  [8:4-9] | Bring the burdens to God in Prayer [v6b,21, 1Pet 5:7] |
|  |  | Warn people about the results of disobedience [v9] |
|  |  | Listen to His words and obey/live it out in life [v22] |
| **7** | Anointed Saul [10:1] | Obey God [Acts 5:29] |
| **8** | Reaffirmed kingship [11:14] | Raise up the leader for God’s people [2Tim 2:2] |
| **9** | Farewell message  [12:1-25] | Faithfully serve God without taking bribe [v3-5] |
|  |  | Pointing out sin problem accurately [v6-13, Eph 4:15] |
|  |  | Prayed even for evil people [v23, Mat 5:44] |
|  |  | Encourage to serve God faithfully [v14,24,[1Thes 5:14](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thessalonians%205.14)] |
|  |  | Warn them for disobedience [v15,25] |
| **10** | Rebuked Saul for wrong worship  [1Sam 13:11-14] | Worshiping God according to His words [v13,Jn 4:23] |
|  |  | Rebuke even a King [v13, Titus 2:15] |
| **11** | Rebuked Saul for disobedience  [1Sam 15:1-34] | Absolute attitude toward God’s word [v19,33, Psa 96:9] |
|  |  | Knowing God’s heart [v22, Hosea 6:3] |
|  |  | Teach who God is [v29] |
|  |  | Mourn even for the wicked king [v35] |
| **12** | Anointed David  [16:1-23] | Overcome fear of men [v2, Mat 10:28] |
|  |  | Obey God in everything [v4, Deut 13:4] |
|  |  | Overcome worldly standard of king [v7] |
| **13** | David fled to Samuel [19:18] | Prayed for the needy and praised God [v19-24] |

**1-3) How are Nabal and Abigail described? (2,3)**

a) Nabal: [means fool] (v2,3b)

i) Very wealthy: Lived in Maon and his business/property at Carmel.

Being rich is not sin: but the love of money is a root of all evil.

(1Tim 6:9,10; 2Tim 3:2)

It is hard for rich people to be saved (Mat 19:23-24)

Because they trust the power of wealth, not God.

ii) Surly: bad-tempered [Hard/severe: cruel]

iii) Mean: [evil; wicked]

b) Abigail: (v3a)

i) intelligent [pleasant, delightful]: wisdom from God

ii) beautiful: physical appearance as well as her inner beauty as described later.

**1-4) What does David tell his men to ask of Nabal? (4-9)**

a) David requested a fair payment to Nabal because he provided service for him before.

i) he was very polite to Nabal. (v6)

ii) he waited until the time of [sheep] harvest. (v7a)

iii) he protected his flocks probably from the Philistine or robbers. (v7b)

iv) he appealed to Nabal’s generosity, not demanding. (v8a)

v) he humbled himself and his men. [your servants and your son David] (v8b)

b) By traditions, sheep shearing time was a time of hospitality towards others.

Not only Nabal owed David but also it was a time of hospitality.

Nabal should pay back to David without questions.

**1-5) How does Nabal answer David’s servants? (10-11)**

a) Nabal ignored David; disrespect and insult to David. (v10a)

Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse?

Nabal knew David because he was well known (1 Sam 18:5-7)

Therefore, it was huge insult.

b) Nabal accused David as a rebellious servant. (v10b)

Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.

It hurt David, because David was in refuge because of Saul.

c) Nabal showed his selfishness and ignorance. (v11a)

My bread and water, my shearers.

Everything is from the Lord, but he thought they were his.

d) Nabal ignored David’s servants. (v11b)

Men coming from who knows where.

**1-6) What does David say to his men after hearing their report? (12-13)**

a) Put on your swords

David was ready to fight and kill Nabal because of Nabal’s insult; disrespect. (v13)

And he also planned to wipe Nabal’s household (all males in Nabal’s household). (v13,

22)

b) David did not show kindness to Nabal.

David felt guilty even just to cut Saul’s robe despite Saul’s multiple attempt to kill him.

But here, he was ready to kill Nabal and all males because of single incidence.

David’s response to trying to kill him was neither his usual, nor the way of God.

Possibly, his long troubled life made him impatient.

**2. Read verses 14-22. What does one of Nabal’s servants tell Abigail? (14-17) What did Abigail do? (18-20) What does David say to himself about Nabal? (21-22)**

**2-1) Read verses 14-22**

14 One of the servants told Nabal’s wife Abigail: “David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. 15 Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. 16 Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them. 17 Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.” 18 Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs[[b](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Samuel+25&version=NIV1984#b)] of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. 19 Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal. 20 As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. 21 David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. 22 May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!”

**2-2) What does one of Nabal’s servants tell Abigail? (14-17)**

a) One of Nabal’s servants witnessed Nabal’s response to David’s men.

Nabal hurled insults at David’s messengers. (v14)

Nabal reviled them: Nabal treated them with contemptuous language.

b) The men were very good to us. (v15a)

They did not mistreat us. (v15b)

Nothing was missing because they protected us from the robbery. (v15c)

They were a wall around us all the time; day and night. (v16)

David’s men provided valuable service for them.

David and his men deserved compensation for their service.

c) Think it over and see what you can do.

Servant asked Abigail to do something about it.

“Please consider what you can do for this bad situation to protect us from David’s anger.”

d) Disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household.

Nabal’s servants assumed that David would not take this insult lightly.

His judgment was very correct.

e) The servant did not say to Nabal. (v17b)

i) Because Nabal was such a wicked man.

ii) He was a fool who cannot understand the basic ethics.

**2-3) What did Abigail do? (18-20)**

a) Abigail lost no time. (v18)

She knew that something had to be done quickly to protect her family.

She was a woman of good understanding. (v3)

b) She took bread, wine, sheep, roasted grain, cakes of raisins, and cakes of pressed figs.

Abigail is doing what Nabal should have done, but didn’t do.

**2-4) What does David say to himself about Nabal? (21-22)**

a) It’s been useless: (v21a)

David felt emptiness; his feeling was hurt.

b) He has paid me back evil for good. (v21b)

Humanly speaking, Nabal was wrong and David was right.

c) David vows to kill Nabal and his entire household. (v22)

i) David planned to kill Nabal and all the males of his household.

Planning to kill people because he was simply insulted was not from God.

His heart was not right before God, although he was a man after God’s own heart.

ii) But it was expected from Nabal’s servant and Abigail as well.

d) Here David was full of vengeance against Nabal so easily.

Nabal did not try to kill David; he just despised David.

Of course Nabal was wrong to despise David.

But it was also wrong for David to plan to kill Nabal for verbal insult.

e) Even if we are believers for a long time; even if we are men of God, [church leaders]

We are easily tempted by evil and committ sin so easily.

That’s why we need Jesus, Jesus only. [Rom 7:24]

**3. Read verses 23-35. What does Abigail do when she sees David? (23-24a) How does Abigail begin her appeal to David? (24b) What does Abigail ask David? (25-27) On what basis does she appeal forgiveness from David? (28) What does she say to David regarding his situation? (29-31) How does David respond to Abigail’s words? (32-35)**

**3-1) Read verses 23-35.**

23 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: “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. 25 May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent. 26 “Now since the Lord has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. 27 And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. 28 Please forgive your servant’s offense, for the Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the Lord’s battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. 29 Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. 30 When the Lord has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, 31 my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord has brought my master success, remember your servant.” 32 David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. 33 May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. 34 Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.” 35 Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.”

**3-2) What does Abigail do when she sees David? (23-24a)**

a) Abigail bowed down and fell at his feet. (v23,24a)

i) She humbled herself and showed highest respect to David.

ii) She did not come as a rich and privileged superior woman.

She came to David as his humble servant. (v24a)

She called David as a lord: 13 times, called her as a servant; 5 times.

b) From David’s perspective;

Unknown woman suddenly bowed down before him.

It was a little startling to David.

**3-3) How does Abigail begin her appeal to David? (24b)**

a) My lord, let the blame be on me alone. (v24b)

She takes the blame on herself.

She put herself in the place of David’s punishment.

b) Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. (v24c)

She requested for permission to speak

She did not take control of the conversation.

She was humble and careful, not to provoke David.

**3-5) What does Abigail ask David? (25-27)**

a) Abigail appealed David not to pay attention to Nabal.

Because Nabal was wicked and foolish. (v25a)

She implied “paying attention to the wicked and foolish man does not match with you,

David.”

In general, openly criticizing a husband was not desirable and vice versa.

Wife should be submissive and respectful to her husband. [Eph5:22-24,33]

But, it could be justified in this case because it was a life or death situation.

And objectively, her statement was accurate and correct.

b) She was saying, it was mistake because she did not see the men. (v25b)

If she could see the men, this kind of insult would not happen to you.

c) She implied that her appealing was God’s guidance. [spiritual gift]

The Lord has kept you from bloodshed.

The Lord has kept you from avenging yourself with your own hands, (v26a)

d) She implied that David’s enemy would be judged like Nabal by the Lord. (v26b)

Although Nabal was not judged by God, she said it as if it happened already.

e) Abigail brought David the gift [physical gift] to pacify him. (v27)

She was wise to say that the gift was for his men as well as for David.

In general, we are vulnerable to gifts especially when you are in need.

How hard it is to reject the gifts [even bribes] in life.

**3-6) On what basis does she appeal forgiveness from David? (28)**

a) She simply asked for forgiveness. (v28a)

After receiving the spiritual/physical gifts, it is hard to not to forgive anyone.

b) Based on the certainty of the promise of God for David. (v28b)

i) She reminded David of the promise of God for David:

The Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for you.

ii) She reminded David of the meaning of David’s trials: Lord’s battle.

You are fighting Lord’s battle; not human’s revenge.

iii) She reminded David of ‘no wrongdoing’

Killing the foolish man like Nabal is wrongdoing for David. (v28b)

iv) She reminded David to think about the bigger picture; whole plan of God.

Do not stick to the words of the foolish man but to the grand plan of God.

**3-7) What does she say to David regarding his situation? (29-31)**

a) She encouraged David practically and spiritually. (v29)

She understood the hardship which David had been suffering from.

David’s life would be secure in the Lord.

His enemies would be judged by the Lord.

b) She reminded David that God would fulfill his promise in his time. (v30)

God would appoint David leader over Israel.

c) Abigail asks David not to do something he will later regret. (v31)

She wisely asked David to consider the outcome of his present course.

She asks him to let the Lord settle the matter, instead of revenging by his hands.

d) She asked David’s favor when the Lord fulfilled his promise for David. (v31b)

e) Ultimately, she changed David’s focus from Nabal to the Lord.

It reminded David of the time when he won the victory through God.

Casting a stone out of a sling and killing Goliath. (1Sam 17:48-49)

**3-8) How does David respond to Abigail’s words? (32-35)**

b) David praised God who sent Abigail. (v32)

i) He thanked God because Abigail reminded him of God’s promise upon David.

Reign over Israel in righteousness.

ii) David was humble enough to learn from a woman.

It would be a black mark for David to be a righteous king.

b) David blessed Abigail for her good judgment. (v33)

David realized that God sent Abigail to keep him from bloodshed.

c) David accepted gifts from Abigail. (v35)

Spiritual blessing and gift kept David from sin. (v33)

Physical blessing: gift of food. (v35)

Abigail paid David what was owed to him.

d) Comparison to David’s attitude toward Saul and one toward Nabal.

i) David and Saul

Saul tried to kill David multiple times. (1Sam 18:10-11,25; 19:1)

David’s men encouraged him to kill Saul. (1 Sam 24:4)

But David resisted the temptation to take vengeance against Saul

because of fear of God. (1Samuel chapter 24) Saul’s is the Lord’s

anointed.

ii) David and Nabal

Naval did not try to kill David; he simply insulted David just once. (v10,11)

David’s men did not encourage him to kill Nabal. (v12)

But David was angered to kill Nabal. (v13)

God intervened David through Nabal’s servant and Abigail.

Abigail changed David’s focus from Nabal to God: His kingdom.

Abigail pleaded to David not to kill Nabal.

David listened to Abigail’s advice.

iii) In two different situations, we can see the handy work of God in the life of David.

To make him a godly man to fear God and be humble before Him.

**4. Read verses 36-38. What is Nabal doing when Abigail goes to him? (36) When does Abigail tell Nabal about David? (37a) What happens to Nabal’s upon hearing what his wife tells him? (37b) What does God do to Nabal? (38)**

**4-1) Read verses 36-38**

36 When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak. 37 Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. 38 About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

**4-2) What is Nabal doing when Abigail goes to him? (36)**

a) He was holding a banquet.

He eats and gets drunk.

He was in high spirits and very drunk.

He had no idea what was going on; what he did wrong.

b) Like the banquet of a king.

He was rich like a king; but foolish like a fool.

**4-3) When does Abigail tell Nabal about David? (37a)**

a) She did not tell Nabal when he was drunk.

She waited in the morning until he was sober.

b) She told him all these things when he was awake.

How Nabal angered David.

How David planned to kill him and his household.

How she pleaded David not to kill him.

**4-4) What happens to Nabal’s upon hearing what his wife tells him? (37b)**

He became like a stone because of fear of David.

Nabal was not only fool but also the weak.

**4-5) What does God do to Nabal? (38)**

a) The Lord struck Nabal, and he died

Abigail saved Nabal from David, but not from God’s judgment.

Jesus’ parable of the rich fool is similar to Nabal’s case. (Lk 12:15-21)

b) God judged him according to His justice.

Nabal had committed so many sins.

Nabal did not fear God; nor repented of his sins before Him.

**5. Read verses 39-44. How does David admonish God after the death of Nabal? (39a) What does David ask Abigail? (39b-40) What is Abigail’s response to David’s proposition? (41-42) What is described concerning David’s wives? (43-44)**

**5-1) Read verses 39-44.**

39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Praise be to the Lord, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal’s wrongdoing down on his own head.” Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. 40 His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, “David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife.”

41 She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, “Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master’s servants.” 42 Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David’s messengers and became his wife. 43 David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives. 44 But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David’s wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

**5-2) How does David admonish God after the death of Nabal? (39a)**

a) Praise be to the Lord,

David Praised God for His righteous judgment.

b) The Lord has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt.

David knew that God is just.

David knew that revenge belonged to the Lord. (Deut 32:35; Rom 12:19)

c) He has kept his servant from doing wrong

David realized that God kept him from sinning through Abigail.

d) He has brought Nabal’s wrongdoing down on his own head.

David knew that it was God’s judgment against Nabal.

**5-3) What does David ask Abigail? (39b-40)**

David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.

He remembered Abigail’s request (v31) and did more than what she asked him.

**5-4) What is Abigail’s response to David’s proposition? (41-42)**

a) She humbly accepted David’s word.

Probably, she was not happy with Nabal because he was a fool.

b) Abigail quickly got on a donkey and became his wife. (v42)

She did not show any hesitation to be married again.

Probably, she was excited to be David’s wife.

**5-5) What is described concerning David’s wives? (43-44)**

a) David’s wives:

i) Ahinoam of Jezreel: not described in the Scripture

ii) Abigail: widow of Nabal

iii) Michal; Saul’s daughter (1Sam 18:27); betrothed to David (2Sam 3:14)

But Saul gave Michal to Paltiel to break their marriage. (v44)

David got Michal again later as his wife. (2 Sam 3:13-16)

b) David’s Polygamy

Polygamy was not God’s design (Gen 2:24) but prevalent in that culture. (Deut 21:15-17)

And after becoming the king, David had more wives. (2Sam 3:2-5)

His family caused a lot of trouble for David later.

It is not biblical nor ethically appropriate to have multiple wives.

In conclusion,

God trained David as a leader through Nabal and through Abigail. When he was insulted by Nabal, David was full of anger and vengeance. But through Abigail’s wise advice, David realized that he should humbly focus on the will of God for him and trust God regarding vengeance. May God grant us to wisdom to avoid the sin and to be humble before Him always!