



19: TRUST vs VENGEANCE (1 Sam 25)

When life feels unfair and anger rises, will you trust God's justice or take matters into your own hands? Today we see how David nearly traded faith for fury—and how trusting God instead of taking vengeance can free your heart and protect your future.

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* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

1 Samuel 25:1

Samuel died, and all Israel assembled to mourn for him, and they buried him by his home in Ramah. David then went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

Samuel's influence over Israel was vast. As all national heroes do, Samuel passes away as **all Israel assembled to mourn for him**.

1 Samuel 25:2-3

A man in Maon had a business in Carmel; he was a very rich man with three thousand sheep and one thousand goats and was shearing his sheep in Carmel. The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name, Abigail. The woman was intelligent and beautiful, but the man, a Calebite, was harsh and evil in his dealings.

Nabal, while very wealthy, was not wise. In fact, his name means "fool". Regarding his treatment of others, Nabal is considered to be a **harsh** and **evil** man. Despite him being a **Calebite** - in the family of Caleb - 1 of the 2 heroes who trusted and obeyed God, thinking of others, & leading the Hebrew people into the promised land - Nabal is selfish & harsh. And while Saul isn't mentioned by name in this story, Nabal's character mirror's Saul's character.

His wife **Abigail**, however, was **intelligent and beautiful**. Her name means "Joy of my father".

1 Samuel 25:4-8

While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep, so David sent ten young men instructing them, "Go up to Carmel, and when you come to Nabal, greet him in my name. Then say this: 'Long life to you, and peace to you, peace to your family, and peace to all that is yours. I hear that you are shearing. When your shepherds were with us, we did not harass them, and nothing of theirs was missing the whole time they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. So let my young men find favor with you, for we have come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have on hand to your servants and to your son David.'"

This was at the time of **shearing sheep** - a process that usually occurred in Spring - with mature sheep producing more than 2 pounds of wool¹ - used to create clothing and other items. This man had 3,000 sheep (1 Sam 25:2), so that's a lot of wool! This shearing would bring Nabal much wealth, a time of abundance when it should be easy to provide for the needs of others.

Notice the kind words and blessings: "**Long life** and **peace**." David, the future king, is gracious toward a man that he would one day reign over. Further, David and his men have not just blessed in word but have blessed in deed. David's fighting men **did not harm** nor **harass** Nabal's shepherds, but they were certainly deterrents to anyone who wanted to.

As has been the case before, being on the run often left David and his men quite hungry. Remember when David approached the priest to ask for bread for his men - men who were later slaughtered by Saul (1 Sam 22)? David is once again seeking food for he and his men. And during this festive time should be a likely time for Nabal to answer his request.

1 Samuel 25:9-11

David's young men went and said all these things to Nabal on David's behalf, and they waited. Nabal asked them, "Who is David? Who is Jesse's son? Many slaves these days are running away from their masters. Am I supposed to take my bread, my water, and my meat that I butchered for my shearers and give them to these men? I don't know where they are from."

Nabal knew who David was. The question, "**Who is David?**" was not ignorance, but **INSULT**. Nabal even infers that David is just a **slave** that has run away from his **master**, Saul. Despite having plenty to feast on, Nabal denies payment to those who had protected his servants and flocks.

¹ John A. Beck, The Baker Illustrated Guide to Everyday Life in Bible Times (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 234.

1 Samuel 25:12-22

David's young men retraced their steps. When they returned to him, they reported all these words. He said to his men, "All of you, put on your swords!" So each man put on his sword, and David also put on his sword. About four hundred men followed David while two hundred stayed with the supplies. One of Nabal's young men informed Abigail, Nabal's wife, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed at them. The men treated us very well. When we were in the field, we weren't harassed and nothing of ours was missing the whole time we were living among them. They were a wall around us, both day and night, the entire time we were with them herding the sheep. Now consider carefully what you should do, because there is certain to be trouble for our master and his entire family. He is such a worthless fool nobody can talk to him!" Abigail hurried, taking two hundred loaves of bread, two clay jars of wine, five butchered sheep, a bushel of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. Then she said to her male servants, "Go ahead of me. I will be right behind you." But she did not tell her husband, Nabal. As she rode the donkey down a mountain pass hidden from view, she saw David and his men coming toward her and met them. David had just said, "I guarded everything that belonged to this man in the wilderness for nothing. He was not missing anything, yet he paid me back evil for good. May God punish me and do so severely if I let any of his males survive until morning."

In the midst of being *MAD*, David makes the sort of statement that ungodly, quick tempered men make, essentially swearing to God that he *WILL* exact *his* revenge, and if not that God would punish him. In other words, David is saying, "If Nabal and his men don't die before the morning, may God kill me."

1 Samuel 25:23-25

When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off the donkey and knelt down with her face to the ground and paid homage to David. She knelt at his feet and said, "The guilt is mine, my lord, but please let your servant speak to you directly. Listen to the words of your servant. My lord should pay no attention to this worthless fool Nabal, for he lives up to his name: His name means 'stupid,' and stupidity is all he knows. I, your servant, didn't see my lord's young men whom you sent."

Abigail calls her husband **a worthless fool**, but her quick thinking & humble heart is about to save his life. Notice Abigail's humility, calling David "**lord**" - a person who has authority over her. She kneels and speaks kindly, asking forgiveness for the way David has been treated.

But next she speaks not just about protecting her husband and servants, but about protecting David's character.

1 Samuel 25:26-31

Now my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live—it is the LORD who kept you from participating in bloodshed and avenging yourself by your own hand—may your enemies and those who intend to harm my lord be like Nabal. Let this gift your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD is certain to make a lasting dynasty for my lord because he fights the LORD's battles. Throughout your life, may evil not be found in you. Someone is pursuing you and intends to take your life. My lord's life is tucked safely in the place where the LORD your God protects the living, but He is flinging away your enemies' lives like stones from a sling. When the LORD does for my lord all the good He promised you and appoints you ruler over Israel, there will not be remorse or a troubled conscience for my lord because of needless bloodshed or my lord's revenge. And when the LORD does good things for my lord, may you remember me your servant."

Abigail **KNOWS** that, despite David having enemies who want him dead, Yahweh will appoint David as the king, the ruler over Israel. And when that day comes, when David remembers God's hand protecting and providing for him, when David remembers Abigail's words coming true, she hopes and asks that David will simply, **remember me your servant**.

Luke 23:42-43

"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

And he said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

This man believes Jesus has a **kingdom**, and therefore believes Jesus IS a KING, even though He has yet to be crowned on Earth.

1 Samuel 25:32-35

Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, Who sent you to meet me today! May your discernment be blessed, and may you be blessed. Today you kept me from participating in bloodshed and avenging myself by my own hand. Otherwise, as surely as the LORD God of Israel lives, who prevented me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, Nabal wouldn't have had any males left by morning light." Then David accepted what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. See, I have heard what you said and have granted your request."

What a wise woman, who calmed down hot-headed David from doing something he would have later regretted.

David didn't have to listen to the words of this woman, **BUT** he did! In contrast, Saul didn't respond to Godly correction & neither to Nabal.

May we become **WISE PEOPLE**, who graciously speak the truth to others who need correction while also being willing to receive and respond to correction when **WE** are in the wrong!

1 Samuel 25:36-38

Then Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was in his house, holding a feast fit for a king. Nabal's heart was cheerful, and he was very drunk, so she didn't say anything to him until morning light. In the morning when Nabal sobered up, his wife told him about these events. His heart died and he became a stone. About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal dead.

This **feast** could of been for his future king, David. But instead, Nabal - *the FOOL* - was more interested in being king of his own kingdom. And while getting drunk, Nabal's heart was **cheerful**, but that was about to change! Once again, we see Abigail's wisdom. Why discuss a matter of importance with a drunk man who isn't thinking straight? That conversation will happen in the morning.

After awaking from his drunken evening and hearing how his wife disobeyed his commands, Nabal's cheer dried up and he became like a **stone** - angry, cold, & hard-hearted.

And **10 days later**, Yahweh dropped him **dead**.

Deuteronomy 32:35-36

Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay. In time their foot will slip, for their day of disaster is near, and their doom is coming quickly." The LORD will indeed vindicate his people and have compassion on His servants when he sees that their strength is gone...

Romans 12:19

Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord.

1 Samuel 25:39

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD who championed my cause against Nabal's insults and restrained his servant from doing evil. The LORD brought Nabal's evil deeds back on his own head."

Yahweh has taken vengeance on Nabal. David didn't have to lift a finger, or a sword. Further, David sees how God used Abigail to keep him **from doing evil**. And David is grateful. David respects Michal. David is attracted to Michal. So...

1 Samuel 25:40-44

Then David sent messengers to speak to Abigail about marrying him. When David's servants came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, "David sent us to bring you to him as a wife." She stood up, paid homage with her face to the ground, and said, "Here I am, your servant, a slave to wash the feet of my lord's servants." Then Abigail got up quickly, and with her five female servants accompanying her, rode on the donkey following David's messengers. And so she became his wife. David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and the two of them became his wives. But Saul gave his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Palti son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

How wicked and cruel is King Saul, to take David's wife from him?

While no mention is made of polygamy being sinful, this did violate God's original play for 1 woman & 1 man for life (Gen 2:24). Anytime a man had multiple wives in Scripture, the result was NEVER good. Note that this is a description of what did happen, not a prescription of what should happen.

David isn't perfect. But **the ONE whom all the Scriptures point to...IS**.

While we can learn from the good & bad examples in the Scriptures - Samuel, David, Saul, Nabal, & Abigail - *our Ultimate Example*, the One whom God is conforming us to look & act more like (Rm 8:29), is who we are to model, teaches us to...

TRUST God instead of take VENGEANCE.

1 Peter 2:21-23

For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He did not commit sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth; when he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted himself to the One who judges justly.

We are to **TRUST God instead of take VENGEANCE**, as modeled by our KING.

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156).

Discussion questions

These discussion questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

1. When was a time you were deeply wronged or insulted? How did you initially want to respond, and what did you learn about your own heart in that moment?
2. David had shown mercy to Saul but was ready to kill Nabal. Why do you think it was harder for David to show restraint this time? What does that teach us about how quickly anger can resurface—even in godly people?
3. How does Abigail's response demonstrate wisdom, humility, and faith? What might it look like for you to be an "Abigail" in a tense or unjust situation?
4. **Read 1 Peter 2:21–23** again. What specific things did Jesus not do when He was mistreated, and what did He do instead? What does that show us about trusting God's justice?
5. Why do we often confuse justice with vengeance? What's the key difference between the two in light of Scripture? (See Romans 12:19–21.)
6. What dangers come when we take vengeance into our own hands? How does bitterness or "getting even" ultimately hurt us more than it heals us?
7. How can remembering God's sovereignty help you respond with patience and grace when you're wronged?
8. Think of a current situation where you've been mistreated, ignored, or spoken against. What would it look like for you to entrust yourself to the One who judges justly this week?
9. Abigail's wisdom kept David from regretting his actions later. Who in your life has been a "voice of wisdom" for you, and how can you cultivate that kind of teachable heart?
10. David eventually praised God for handling Nabal's situation. How have you seen God bring justice or peace in His timing—and what did that teach you about waiting on Him?