

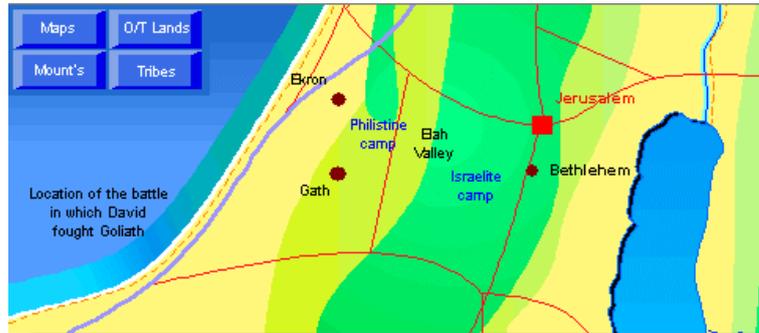


No.19 Abigail - her husband's helper!

1 Samuel 25:1-42

What do you do when life is not working out according to your brilliant plans? When all the carpet is pulled out from under you? When your exciting dreams are all shattered? When the people in your family are destroying everything and there seems as if there is nothing you can do about it? Then the Holy Spirit has made sure that this woman has been written about for our learning (**2 Timothy 3:16**) so we can know God's heart in our situation and how He wants us to behave.

Abigail came into David's life at a time when he was going to ruin God's plan for his life and his impetuous reaction may have blown his Kingship and certainly would have delayed it. David had been anointed as the next king (**1 Samuel 16**) but had to wait his time! He then showed his passion for and trust of God Almighty by killing the giant Goliath (**1 Samuel 17:45-51**). David then goes into the service of the present king, Saul (**1 Samuel 18:2**) where Saul kept a jealous eye on David (**1 Samuel 18:12**). David loved and married Michal, Saul's daughter (**1 Samuel 18:27-28**) Saul uses every opportunity to destroy David but God certainly protects him and gives him friends who support him through this very trying time. David had even been in a position to kill the king but chosen not to harm God's anointed (**1 Samuel 24:6**) just as we should choose today.



David is still living with his 600 men as gypsies and outcasts, so at a time of celebration he has none of his own sheep to provide for his men. He asked Nabal for food, which was quite normal, as David and his men had formed a wall of protection around the Nabal's shearers so no harm had come to them from robbers during the shearing. Part of Nabal's prosperity was due to the security work of David's men (**1 Samuel 25:21**). David was very respectful but Nabal retaliated with insults and rudeness. Without doubt Nabal would know who David was. He would have heard what everyone was saying about him and his popularity, but his behaviour was really offensive to David. Even Nabal's servants recognised the exceptional behaviour of David's men (**1 Samuel 25:15-16**). David who had showed such amazing self-control with Goliath and now with King Saul nearly loses it at this personal attack, but God places a woman in a key position to save the day for David and her own household (**1 Samuel 25:17**). David was about to take revenge into his own hands when Abigail came to meet him in a mountain ravine. Abigail had not had long to plan what she would say or take advice but she had sent gifts ahead with servants.

She immediately acknowledged him, as her lord in true humility and that she was aware of his rightful position. She requested a moment of his time and obviously the gifts she had sent ahead had given her the listening ear of the king-in-waiting. She firstly took full responsibility for all the wrong that had been done to David and his men, suggesting that if she had seen the messengers she would have intervened to provide the needs of David's men and used her influence to protect her bad-tempered and moody husband. She acknowledged that God had indeed chosen David as king over Israel and if he does not go ahead with his plan to kill every male working for Nabal (**1 Samuel 25:21**) then he would not have revenge on his conscience. This does bring David up short and he realises what a risk Abigail has taken and what she has saved him from. She reminds David that he fights God's battles and so God will fight his (**1 Samuel 25:28**)! She shows him that there is a bigger picture that he needs to refocus on, and not get taken up in the offence of the moment. David is very grateful to Abigail but also aware that God has protected her as he could have killed her along with the men (**1 Samuel 25:32-34**) David accepts the food and drink gifts that she had brought and promises to do what they had agreed.

Abigail returns home to find her husband in a drunken stupor so she wisely waits till morning to tell him what she had done. She knew he was foolish by name and foolish by nature so felt she had to protect him from himself. She tells him in the morning when, no doubt under a hangover, he has a heart attack and dies

ten days later. David hears of Nabal's death and sees how God has avenged him so much better than if he had taken revenge himself. David calls for Abigail to become his wife, she does not linger but immediately comes to him promising complete servant-hood even to his servants (**1 Samuel 25:41**)

What can we learn from this amazing woman?

Responsibility: Abigail took her responsibility to her husband, her household and her leader very seriously. Nabal obviously did not appreciate his wife. He treated her as a second class citizen and of little value but she did not respond to this. She had **not** taken her self worth from her husband's attitude to her and although she was confident in herself as a person she was not arrogant.

Humility: This was seen when there was a problem the servants knew where to come and they tried to do what they could to help their master having learnt respect for him from Abigail despite his own behaviour. She too had a humble respectful relationship with the servants as when they saw there was a serious problem with David's men she did as they suggested (**1 Samuel 25:17**) she did not hesitate or procrastinate.

Emotional stability: She used her confidence in her own ability, her communication skills, wisdom and attractiveness and took the opportunity she is given to save her household. She must have felt the fear but did it anyway and did not allow it to cause her to curl up in a corner saying "well it is not my responsibility it is that drunken man I am lumbered with!!" She did all she could in her circumstances dominated by her head not her heart and the outcome was beyond her wildest dreams.

At all times we have to keep our attitude right before God who knows all things. God was able to work in Abigail's life for her good as she had kept her heart right through years of bad treatment being treated like dirt but at all times she respected her husband, submitted to him and gave him the position as head of the household. She relied on God and so was not self-centred or full of self-pity but was modest and very balanced seeing the bigger picture. Even at a time of great acute stress she shows her true self. She firstly points David to God and what He is saying about the situation for David and she sees that God is going to bless David more abundantly than he can imagine

Whatever situations we are in today God is saying to every woman in any situation 'with Me you can do everything if you respond by My Word, follow My instructions and walk in the power of My Holy Spirit'. If we have problems with relationships with our husband, partner, ex, child, relative or friend we can talk to God, obey His leading, giving Him space to move divinely and turn the whole situation around, which may easily save lives, relationships, finance and health.

When you are in a situation with close people, where your mind and emotions are all over the place – they seem to go together- go straight to God, pour out your emotions, write a journal if it helps, and then put it before God and ask Him if that is Truth or just your emotional response from not seeing the big picture like your heavenly Father does. Then take the Truth, as this is what will set us free and deal with the feelings with God. No human can help us so quickly and truthfully which will have a positive outcome and restore any broken relationship and heal any wounds. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring verses to remembrance and then walk in the Spirit and **not** the flesh.

It is our responsibility to enable and encourage any man to walk with God and obey His way just as Abigail did. This is unlike Bathsheba (**2 Samuel 11:1-17**) who encouraged David into serious sin, which had consequences for the rest of his life.

No.9 Abigail - her husband's helper - Challenge Questions

Read the notes about Abigail

1. What do you think about Abigail's attitude towards her a) husband? b) the servant? c) David? and d) God?
2. How would you encourage a woman who is married to a 'fool'? What would you say to her after you have read this story?
3. In what way was Abigail wise?
4. How does the outcome for Abigail show the faithfulness of God? Can this encourage you?

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-17; 24-27

5. What time of year was it? What was happening in the nation and who stayed in Jerusalem? Why was this a problem? (**2 Samuel 11:1**)
6. What does David do and what is Bathsheba's situation at the time? (**2 Samuel 11:2-4**)
7. What are the immediate consequences of their behaviour? (**2 Samuel 11:5**)
8. What did David do immediately after the news from Bathsheba? (**2 Samuel 11:6-8**)

9. What was David's aim in trying to persuade Uriah to go home to Bathsheba? What does Uriah show in his character by not agreeing? (**2 Samuel 11:8-13**)
10. As a result of Uriah's strong behaviour what does David decide to do? What are the results? (**2 Samuel 11:14-18**)
11. How does Bathsheba feel after the death of her husband? What is David's reaction to the messenger? What does David do to put it right for Bathsheba? What do you think is God's opinion? (**2 Samuel 11:25-27**)

Read 2 Samuel 12:9-25 and Psalm 51

12. What is David's change of heart after the challenge of Nathan the prophet? What does David do when his son is sick? And how does his behaviour change after the baby's death? Why?
13. What happens to Bathsheba to cheer her up? (**2 Samuel 12:25**) What name did she give him? And what did Nathan call him?
14. What do you find most challenging about Bathsheba's behaviour? Can you identify with any of her story?
15. Choose a verse from **Psalm 51** and learn it.