

Abigail



A Woman of Good Understanding (25:14-42)

“One hair of a woman draws more than a bell-rope” is an old German proverb which says much about the impact of women on society. The lovely Abigail is a fitting illustration of this proverb. From the Scriptures, we learn nothing about her parents or her genealogy. She had been brought up under godly influences, for she was acquainted with Jehovah and possessed a beautiful piety.

From 1 Samuel we are able to know these facts about her: Her name meant “cause of joy” and seemed expressive of her general outlook and impact upon others. She was married to an awful man. This marriage was probably not of her choosing since Oriental customs compelled a girl to marry whomever her father chose. She was “intelligent and beautiful” (25:3). Such a combination is often overlooked by many women today who focus entirely upon the outward beauty and neglect the brains! Only three other women are called “beautiful” in the Bible (Sarah, Vashti, and Bathsheba). In Abigail we find that physical beauty was enhanced with goodness and inner grace (cf. Psalm 45:13). She became one of David’s eight wives; the others were Michal (1 Samuel 18:27), Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:24), Ahinoam, Maacah, Haggith, Abithal, and Eglah (2 Samuel 3:2-5). Of these eight, Abigail was probably the source for the greatest good in David’s life.

First Samuel 25:3, 14-42 introduces us to an amazing woman. Abigail’s story left an indissolu-

ble mark upon David as well as upon all who read her narrative today. After reflecting on this wonderful woman, you can easily understand David’s appreciation and affection for her.

HER HISTORY

Abigail’s story is found in an episode that is filled with tragic emotions: ungratefulness, arrogance, stubbornness, hate, bitterness, anger, and foolish words. In this dark setting, Abigail’s presence is a bright spot which cannot fade.

David’s troops had guarded and protected Nabal’s herds. This was a generous service and had been rendered without pay. Foolish Nabal returned David’s kindness in a foolish and harsh way (25:3). The public humiliation of David was to be repaid with the blood of Nabal’s house (25:22). The setting was fixed for a bloody and bitter war.

Just when emotions had reached a fervent peak, Abigail entered and took steps to appease David (25:18ff.). She offered David a generous gift and an humble apology. She persuaded David to relent regarding his desire for revenge. After she had appeased David, she returned home to Nabal, for she was a loyal wife and a protector of a worthless partner. She continued with the man to whom she had sworn faithfulness.

Following Nabal’s death David proposed to Abigail (25:39). Abigail entered upon a happy

career as wife to David and mother of David's son (2 Samuel 3:3; 1 Chronicles 3:1). Abigail remained with David the rest of her life. It is not hard to imagine that David sought the wise advice and cool counsel of Abigail and that she proved him a worthy partner (25:33a).

HER QUALITIES

The qualities we find about Abigail's life and character can be an example to women today.

She was respected (25:17). The servants knew she would know how to handle the crisis over Nabal's scorn to David. The servants respected her reason and judgment (25:35).

She was able to soothe anger (25:33, 35). In all probability this was not the first time she had apologized for Nabal's rudeness. No doubt she had performed the role of a peacemaker often. She was able to use tact and wisdom to quiet the rage of David.

She had great faith in God (25:26ff.). She is presented in the narrative as a woman familiar with God. Her confident trust enabled her to remain a saint though she was in a miserable marriage. As she spoke to David, her words revealed that her faith was living and practical. In 25:26, 27, she used expressions which stated that the gift was not from her but from God in answer to her prayer. She saw God's benevolence in providing the food.

She was assertive and decisive (25:18ff.). The situation was urgent, and she moved in a decisive way. She knew what had to be done and did the best she could. As she approached David, she kept within the custom of the day, but she made certain that the task was carried out properly (25:24). She did not hesitate to tell David that his thirst for revenge was wrong. Later as she spoke to Nabal, she confronted him with the folly of his error (25:37).

She cared for the safety of her household (25:31). For Abigail, the top priority was the safety of her home. She did whatever was necessary to insure the safety.

She was humble and meek (25:41, 44). As she approached David she was assertive, yet humble. Humility characterized her entire conversation with the irate David. In this scene we are given a beautiful illustration of 1 Peter 3:2-4:

As they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be external

only—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, and putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.

She was a blessing to everyone she contacted (25:32). From her first meeting with David it seems that his life took on newer meaning and purpose. Whoever had the fortune of meeting and knowing Abigail understood well the sentiments of David.

She was a gracious and hospitable hostess (25:4). The sheep shearing festivities were marked with feasts and mirth. The preparations for such festivals were hard and trying. But Abigail accepted the chore and did well.

These are the wonderful qualities that distinguished this beautiful and intelligent woman from the man from Maon. She was indeed "all glorious within" (Psalm 45:13).

HER CHALLENGES

In her example, Abigail issues three definite challenges to modern women and invites modern Christian ladies to accept them.

First, she challenges women to become the kind of woman whose disposition and presence is a blessing to all. Abigail's name meant "cause of joy," and it is a fitting commentary on the impact she had on others. Her name indicates that she was a sunny, glad-bringing, winsome personality. When she walked into a room all would change for the brighter! Wherever she walked the sun shone, the birds sang, and smiles broke out! Her presence was a blessing because joy was her steady companion (25:32).

She was a blessing in her ability to soothe the angry and irritated. With calm words and quietness of spirit she soothed David. She was able to "pour oil on troubled waters" (25:33; Zechariah 8:19; 1 Peter 3:11). Proverbs says, "Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have joy" (12:20) and "Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken in right circumstances" (25:11).

She was a blessing as she helped others find greater meaning and purpose in life. She helped David remember he was God's anointed. She said, "Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; for the Lord will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is

fighting the battles of the Lord, . . ." (25:28). She also helped him remember that he was the object of God's care and love (25:30). Probably in later years she helped David learn patience and forbearance. But she helped many more than just David. Wherever she was she was willing to help others achieve greater service!

Second, she challenges women to have faith undergirding their lives! One factor was responsible for Abigail's beauty—faith! Her meekness and generosity, concern and sympathy, grace and charm all sprang from her faith in God (25:26-31).

If women today would emulate Abigail's faith, they would be a source of untold blessings. Ladies, let your faith undergird your lives just as it did Abigail's!

Third, she also challenges women to possess joy in God so they can overcome the most adverse and trying circumstances in life! Abigail's homelife and marriage were worse than the worst! There was no joy and peace, only the darkness that came from a "churlish husband." She had to put up with a drunkard for a husband who was godless and insensitive. She was constantly explaining his evil ways and apologizing for his fits of arrogance. Yet she remained a saint!

Some Christian women face this same challenge. They are daily exposed to a home and husband just as bad as Nabal. They are brave and unmurmuring. In spite of a rude and crude spouse they remain faithful to God. This challenge is not easy. Ladies, if you are tempted to give up because you are struggling with a "Nabal" at home, do not give up! Remember godly Abigail.

CONCLUSION

Abigail was beautiful, not only in a physical sense but more importantly because of her character and faith. She retained poise in the face of great challenges; she soothed a raging heart and rebuked an irate drunk. She was indeed a strong woman! Her strength came from one source, her faith in God!

Ladies, apply these thoughts carefully to your lives. Look at your influence and make sure it is used in ways that will bring peace, purpose, and faith to others. Adopt "Abigail" as your unspoken name and become the "cause of joy" in this world!

—John Kachelman

The Secret to True Beauty (1 Samuel 25:3)

Abigail was admittedly a beautiful woman. She was also a beautiful person inwardly.

1. One reason explains why Abigail was lovely inwardly: her faith!
2. Because of her faith, Abigail's beauty is seen in her sunny disposition and cheerful presence and her ability to quiet the irritated and angry.
3. Because of these qualities, she was a true blessing to all whom she contacted (25:32).

Inner beauty will enable the godly woman to fulfill God's purpose for her life. She will find the secret to true beauty.

Bound with God (1 Samuel 25:29)

Abigail stated that David lived in such a manner that his life was bound (tied, wrapped) with God. This close association yields many grand fruits:

1. He will listen to the words of those who have offended him (25:27).
2. He will be an enduring house (25:28).
3. He will fight the Lord's battles (25:28).
4. He will guard his life so evil will not be found in his acts (25:28b).
5. He will be protected from evil men (25:29).

The faithful life brings rewards in this life and the one to come.

Providential Protection (1 Samuel 25:29)

God will providentially protect those who are in fellowship with Him.

1. The condition of divine protection: We must be "bound" with God.
2. The action of divine protection: Evil will be thrust from us.

This protection is a fact; there should be no question regarding it.