

General Church Education



David and the Wife of Nabal

1 Samuel 25:2-23, 32-42

Lesson 16

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is Our King

For ages 10-11

David and the Wife of Nabal

1 Samuel 25:2-23, 32-42

Teacher Background

David was a fugitive when he asked Nabal for food for himself and his six hundred men. It was sheep-shearing time and farmers were celebrating this with a big meal. While Moses taught that people should share with others, Nabal was a harsh man. Although David had protected his shepherds, Nabal refused to give his men food and insulted David. David was furious and vowed to take revenge. He set out ready to fight. When Nabal's beautiful wife, Abigail, heard what was happening, she gathered food from her storehouse and set out towards David and his men. Her wise deed protected David from committing a terrible act. Shortly after finding out what had happened, Nabal died and David married Abigail.

David's desire to seek revenge was a natural one. It was a commonly accepted response at that time, but it also reflects the response any person might have to insults and selfishness, especially after being kind to someone. Abigail's wise response was to take care of David's needs (food), and to convince him not to seek revenge, which is directly associated with the love of self. These are behaviors we can foster in children.

Focus Points

- The fugitive David, who had protected Nabal's shepherds, asked him for food.
- Nabal refused to help, so David planned to kill him and his household.
- Abigail brought David food and convinced him not to kill her husband, for which David was grateful.

Readings from the Writings

"The zeal of a good love conceals within it love and friendship, but the zeal of an evil love conceals within it hatred and revenge." *Conjugal Love* 357

"The end for the sake of which wealth is sought is called its use; and it is the end or use that gives to love its quality; for the love is such as is the end in view, and all other things merely serve it as means." *Heaven and Hell* 565

"The descendants of Jacob were such that they exercised cruelty on the nations...when it only entered their mind that a people was their enemy for some reason or other, they at once thought it permissible to exercise every cruelty against them, their women, wives, children, as was clearly the case with David against Nabal. They said to me several times that this had been commanded...for such people do not take it any other way than that they were commanded. This was not a Divine...command.... It is contrary or opposite to Heavenly Love, and that of one human being toward another...." *Spiritual Experiences* 2618, 2619

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord's Word by heart.

“Depart from evil and do good;
And dwell forevermore.
For the Lord loves justice.
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Those who wait on the Lord...shall inherit the earth.” (Psalm 37:27-28)

Projects and Activities (see back of lesson for answers)

David and Abigail Fill in the Blanks

Use phrases in a box to complete eight sentences.

Contrasting Nabal and Abigail

Even though Nabal and his wife Abigail were married, they were very different from each other. Think of ways in which they were opposites.

Additional Project and Activity Choices

Javelin Balloon Pop

Nabal was a selfish man. Encourage students to “fight” against selfishness by writing selfish words on balloons, large bubble wrap, or inflated plastic bags, and then pop them. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-balloon-pop-fighting-evil.pdf>

Discussion: Angels in Our Lives

Abigail protected David from making a foolish mistake just as angels protect us. Extend discussion of this story to the angels who are around us, protecting us at every turn. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-discuss-angels-in-our-lives-1-samuel25.pdf>

David and the Wife of Nabal

1 Samuel 25:2-23, 32-42

Vocabulary

fugitive—a person who has escaped or is in hiding

urged—encouraged to do something quickly or urgently

scoundrel—a person with no moral values

This story is about a man named Nabal and his wife Abigail. Nabal was wealthy. He owned three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, but he was a harsh man. Abigail was different. She was beautiful and caring. This story takes place while Saul was hunting for David. At this time, David was a fugitive with six hundred fighting men and their families to feed. They had no money and could not stay in one place and grow their own food. So David's supporters often gave him food. But sometimes David's men took what they needed, which bothered David.

David Asks Nabal for Food



David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep. He knew that when farmers finished shearing their sheep they celebrated by holding a feast. The Law of Moses taught that during feasts the Israelites were to be generous to people who were less fortunate. So David sent ten young men to Nabal. They greeted him in David's name, blessed him, and delivered David's message asking for food:

“Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.” (1 Samuel 25:8)

David's people had been kind to Nabal's shepherds. They had protected the shepherds while they were grazing Nabal's sheep in the wilderness. They had not harmed them or stolen anything from them. So David expected Nabal to treat him kindly.

Nabal Refuses to Help David

But Nabal refused to give the young men any food. Even though Nabal was rich, he behaved selfishly and rudely. Not only did Nabal refuse to share his food, he insulted David. That was not wise. Nabal's name means "fool."

When the men returned empty-handed and told David what Nabal had said he became angry. He was so angry that he decided to take revenge. He set off with four hundred armed men and left two hundred men at his hideout to protect the women, children, and supplies. He planned to kill Nabal and all the males in his household.

David had not behaved badly until this time but he was very angry! He had been kind to Nabal and thought that Nabal should have been nice in return. David felt that he was justified in killing Nabal and his men for saying what he had said.

Do you ever feel the way David did? When you do something nice for someone, do you feel angry if they are not nice to you? At times most people respond this way! But part of the work

we have to do to get to heaven is to learn to serve others without wanting a reward.



Abigail's Plan to Save David

A servant told Abigail what was happening. He thought that it was no use trying to convince Nabal to act differently:

"For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him." (1 Samuel 25:17)

The servant told Abigail about David's kindness. He mentioned that David had protected Nabal's shepherds, and described how Nabal had refused to give David any food. He urged her to think of something to do to avoid the harm that David intended to do.

Abigail knew she needed to act quickly. David was already on his way. She ordered her servants to gather food from her husband's storehouses, load it on donkeys, and take it to David. She sent her servants ahead of her with this gift for David. She did not tell Nabal what she was doing.

Abigail Meets David

When Abigail met David she bowed to the ground and begged David to listen to her. She admitted Nabal was a scoundrel, but begged David to take his anger out on her, not her household. She reminded David that the Lord had chosen him to be king, would protect him and provide for him.

David was moved by Abigail's words. He was grateful that the Lord had used her to prevent him from doing something he would regret.

“Blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand.” (1 Samuel 25:33)

David accepted Abigail's gift of food and sent her home in peace.



The Death of Nabal

When Abigail reached home her husband was enjoying the feast. He was drunk so she did not tell him that he had been in danger of losing his life! However, when Abigail told Nabal everything the next morning, he was struck with fear so that,

“...his heart died within him, and he became like a stone.” (1 Samuel 25:37)

Then, days later, the Lord struck him dead.

David's Gratitude

When David heard that Nabal had died he praised God for keeping him from doing evil. It was not David's job to punish Nabal, it was the Lord's, and in the end the Lord punished him.

“For the Lord has returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head.” (1 Samuel 25:39)

Later, David sent servants to Abigail asking her to become his wife. Abigail rode to David on a donkey with five of her maidservants, and married David. Nabal was too selfish to share his wealth and possessions with others. The Lord has given us “wealth” too. This wealth is our abilities and the things we love to do. The Lord gives us the choice of whether to be like Nabal and use our gifts selfishly, or to be like Abigail and share them wisely to serve the Lord and the neighbor.

Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“Depart from evil and do good;
And dwell forevermore.
For the Lord loves justice.
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Those who wait on the Lord...shall inherit the earth.” (Psalm 37:27-28)

Projects and Activities (answers are at the back of this lesson)

Choose one or two.

David and Abigail Fill in the Blanks

Use phrases in a box to complete eight sentences.

Contrasting Nabal and Abigail

Even though Nabal and his wife Abigail were married, they were very different from each other. Think of ways in which they were opposites.

David and Abigail Fill in the Blanks

1 Samuel 25

Use the phrases from the box to fill in the blanks for questions 1-8. Answer questions 9 and 10 on your own.

guard the supplies	become his wife
the Lord God of Israel	heart died within him
feast day	fool
ten days	3000 sheep and 1000 goats

1. Nabal was a very wealthy man and owned _____.
2. It was a _____ when David sent his ten young men to Nabal.
3. David took four hundred men with him and left two hundred to _____.
4. Nabal's name means _____.
5. David said to Abigail, "Blessed is _____ who sent you this day to meet me!"
6. When Abigail told Nabal what she had done his _____.
7. After about _____ the Lord struck Nabal so he died.
8. David asked Abigail to _____.
9. How did David feel about not getting revenge on Nabal?
10. How did David get the supplies he needed to feed his men?

Contrasting Nabal and Abigail

1 Samuel 25

Nabal and Abigail were very different from each other. In fact in many ways they were opposites. Think of as many pairs of opposites that you can to describe Nabal and Abigail.

Nabal	Abigail
proud	humble

Answers

Lesson 16

David and Abigail Fill in the Blanks

1. 3000 sheep and 1000 goats. 2. feast day, 3. guard the supplies, 4. fool, 5. the Lord God of Israel, 6. heart died within him, 7. ten days, 8. become his wife.