

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON EIGHT

by Sandy Harber

"So David's young men turned their way, and went again; and came and told him all those sayings. And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff" I Sam. 25:12-13

David's soldiers returned to him to report Nabal's response to David's request. They were probably angry at the way Nabal spoke of their leader. And he completely dismissed the service David's men had performed in protecting his animals and his servants. The man was an ingrate.

When David heard his men's report his response was entirely predictable. He gathered his army, armed himself and his men, and went after the ungracious Nabal. Angry as he was David did not neglect to ensure the safety of the women and children that traveled with them. He divided his army into two groups: 400 men were armed and ready for battle with him and 200 men were left behind to guard the supplies and families of the soldiers.

David reacted in anger. James reminds us, "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:20). He did not take time to pray and seek God's guidance. He was probably influenced by the reaction of his men, who were no doubt angry at Nabal's ingratitude and holier-than-thou attitude toward David, Saul's "servant" (see v.10).

When we let our emotions take control we can say and do unwise things. Emotions are not logical and reasonable. They are not trustworthy. How many times have you cried over something you saw in a movie? Why? The actor that stirred your emotions was not personally known to you. He didn't actually die. He was just playing the part of a non-existent character. The story manipulated your emotions.

Our emotions can be manipulated by the emotions of others around us. That is what happens when groups of angry people turn violent and become a mob. The emotions of an individual reacts in sympathy to the emotions of those around him so that the individual is drawn into actions he would never have taken on his own.

God made man in His image. He gave us intellect, emotions, and will. Emotions were never meant to be in the driver's seat. God gave us intelligence, the ability to reason. He gave us commandments and guidelines and examples from the lives of others so that we can know how He wants us to respond in any given situation. We are encouraged to meditate on His Word. That is, we are to spend time studying and digesting the words of God. We are to make it a part of us so that we can make logical, reasonable responses to the circumstances of life.

David reacted the way most of us would have when insulted by an ungrateful wretch. But he was in a position of power. Six hundred armed, seasoned warriors would carry out his orders without question. David had the power to crush Nabal and everything he had.

We may not have 600 men at our command, but we have one tongue. And, sometimes that's all it takes to crush someone. We respond in anger and say words that hurt or demean another. Once out, those words cannot be recalled. James warns, "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity" (James 3:6).

David's emotions almost caused him to commit murder, but God intervened. Our emotions may not take us that far but they can lead us into sin. They can cause us to hurt others. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), evidence that the Holy Spirit is in the driver's seat. Don't let your emotions take control.

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Romans 8:14