

## WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

### ABIGAIL: LESSON SIXTEEN

by Sandy Harber

**"... and he hath requited me evil for good." I Sam. 25:21b**

David's complaint: Nabal returned evil for good. David and his men had protected Nabal's sheep and servants. Nabal, in return, had insulted David and refused to extend even basic hospitality to the soldiers. What kind of person receives good at the hands of another and then treats them like dirt? This is not even basic human nature. The natural response to a good deed would be to say, "Thank you," at the very least.

To respond to a good deed with ingratitude, anger, and unkindness reveals a deep spiritual problem. Nabal was a fool. The Biblical definition of a fool is someone who does not believe there is a God (Psalm 14:1). If there is no God, then there is no accountability. A person can do and say whatever he/she wants to with no consequences. That is what the arrogant Nabal thought.

The problem with Nabal's viewpoint is that God does exist and we are accountable to Him. Sometimes God allows a person to live a long life doing as he will before the end finally comes. Other times, God ends a life early. In both cases God had allowed sufficient time for repentance. God will not turn away anyone willing to confess and forsake their sins.

Nabal did not see himself as a sinner. He was rich and things were going well in his life. He believed that he was better than other people. He probably didn't treat his servants very well based on their reaction to him. He thought he was better than David, a nobody who had worked for King Saul.

Many people don't believe they are sinners. They look at their neighbors and conclude that they are just as good as Joe next door - maybe better. The problem with comparing yourself to another person is that you are comparing one sinner to another sinner. You're using the wrong yardstick. The standard is God. You must measure yourself against a Holy God. No one can measure up to this goal (Rom. 3:23). Only when you have accepted that you are a sinner and can never measure up to God's standard can you be saved. Step one is recognizing your status: sinner.

David and Nabal were both sinners. But David recognized himself as such. He believed in the Creator God, worshipped Him, and humbly attempted to live in obedience to God's will and Word. When he failed, he sincerely repented and tried to do better the next time. When he succeeded he gave God the glory. Nabal didn't recognize an authority higher than himself. He did whatever he pleased. He didn't care how his actions affected others because it was all about him. He had no standard to measure himself against.

The difference in their viewpoints came out in their actions and attitudes. David saw an opportunity to help another sheep owner by protecting his property. He assumed the sheep owner would do the right thing and repay his soldiers with food. It was common hospitality. David believed Nabal to be a good person until he learned otherwise. Nabal, on the other hand, was greedy and refused to use his food to feed others. He was ungrateful. He saw David as a lowly servant of King Saul who overstepped. Nabal rejected the fact that the Prophet Samuel had anointed David to be the next king. He ignored the good service David's men had done for him. He refused to acknowledge his debt to these men.

We meet all kinds of people in this life. If we belong to Christ we will follow David's example of doing good to others when it is in our power to do so. But when we receive evil in return, God expects us to love our enemy, do good to him, and forgive him. That reaction is a whole lot harder than David's desire to get revenge. God's way is harder. Our "enemy" doesn't deserve forgiveness, love, or good turns done

to him. But that's the point. He doesn't deserve it, but he's the recipient of good things anyway. It's called "grace." God gave it to us when we didn't deserve it. Now, it's our turn to give it to others.

*"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."  
Ephesians 2:8*