

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON THIRTEEN

by Sandy Harber

"And she said unto her servants, Go on before me, behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal." I Sam. 25:19

Abigail and her servants hastily gathered food supplies for David's army and loaded them on donkeys. It appears that Abigail sent out the donkeys as soon as they were loaded. Some of the servants taking the donkeys out to meet David and his men, while other servants continued to gather supplies and pack more donkeys. Thus a supply train set out with Abigail at the rear. No doubt she stayed home until she had verified that all the food was packed and on its way to David's army.

Abigail may also have stayed behind until last in case Nabal should suddenly show up demanding an explanation of the departure of his servants, donkeys, and supplies. She was protecting the servants from his wrath. But she was also putting herself in a precarious situation. Nabal was not a reasonable man. He would certainly be furious that his wife went behind his back and provided supplies to the very men he himself had refused. Surely it was not above this man to strike his wife. Nabal was a bully.

Abigail hoped that David's men would be content with the provisions she sent out and, therefore, would not attack Nabal or his servants. So she sent the servants forward to meet David's army. Meanwhile, she remained at home until the last donkey was loaded so that she could stop, or at least, delay any action from Nabal. Fortunately, she was able to complete her activities and set forth herself to meet David and beg for her husband's life.

From what we are told of Nabal it does not seem as though he could have been a very good husband. Yet Abigail risked her life to save his. Why? She did not defend his actions to the servant or reprimand him for calling Nabal a "son of Belial." In fact, she called him basically the same thing herself (v. 25)! It does not seem as though she held her husband in high regard. Yet she immediately set out to preserve his life and the lives of their servants.

From the speech she made to David (see vv 24-31) it is obvious that Abigail knew that God had chosen him to be king over Israel. And it also appears that she was concerned for David's reputation so that he would not shed the blood of Nabal. It may be that such an act would have resulted in resentment from some of the people of Judah. Remember, it was Judah that made David king after Saul died, while the other tribes chose Saul's son instead. David was king of Judah for seven years before he became king over all Israel. Is it possible that the murder of Nabal and his servants would have caused the people of Judah to turn against him? God had used Abigail to keep David from making a critical mistake.

Abigail was a woman of good understanding (v. 3). She was a godly woman who loved the Lord. She was a helper to her husband. The servants respected her. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31 could well be named "Abigail."

Do you have any of Abigail's good qualities? She was courageous. She reacted calmly and efficiently in a crisis. She thought about the well-being of others and was even willing to put herself at risk to protect them. She knew the Lord, understood what His will was regarding David, and acted in accordance with God's will for the future king. Abigail was also fair and generous. She recognized that her family was under an obligation to David's soldiers who had done them a service and earned a reward. The least she could do was to provide the men with food.

Which of Abigail's qualities do you possess? Which do you lack?

*"Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."
Proverbs 31:30*