

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON TWENTY-TWO

by Sandy Harber

"And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord. I pray thee, forgive thine handmaid...." I Samuel 25:27-28a

Abigail had turned David back from his plan to kill Nabal and all males belonging to him. She assured him that this was the Lord's will for him to be innocent of shedding blood in revenge. She now turns the focus to the gifts she has brought with her.

The "blessing," or present, she had brought with her consisted of the very thing David had requested of Nabal through his envoy (vv. 5-9). Notice that Abigail takes sole credit for gifting the food, And, it is true that Nabal refused David's request but Abigail brought a literal feast with her to meet David. So, technically, the food was a gift from her alone. It just seems odd that she didn't give Nabal some credit since she was trying to save his life.

Abigail suggested the food be unpacked and given to the men right away. They had earned this special feast, why not let them enjoy it? The 400 men with David probably approved her suggestion. They would much rather eat than slaughter Nabal and his men.

She went on to request David's forgiveness for her "trespass," or sin. Since Abigail herself did nothing to David she must be referring to Nabal's sin of ingratitude, which she took upon herself (v. 24). She had just presented the food David had requested and suggested that he use it to feed his troops. She had made restitution for Nabal's lack of hospitality. Now she asked for David to formally forgive the wrong done to him. Everything Abigail had done so far had been for David's benefit. She provided the supplies his soldiers needed and had earned by their noble behavior. She had stayed David's hand in the shedding of innocent blood. Her request for forgiveness was actually for David's benefit as well.

When we hold a grudge against someone, we are hurting ourselves. It isn't the target of our anger that suffers. It's us. We let the hurt and angry emotions eat us up inside. We're the ones that lose sleep thinking about the wrong done to us. We're the ones that can't focus on other things because our minds are consumed with our perceived wrong. The remedy is to just let it go.

Forgiveness may come into play when we're dealing with grief and loss, tragedy, or illness and injury. Sometimes the person we need to forgive is ourselves. Satan loves the blame game. And his favorite ploy is to trick us into blaming ourselves. "If only I had done such and such...." There is no way to know what would have happened if we had made a different decision. Let it go. Forgive yourself and free yourself from guilt. Determine to do better next time.

"Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Luke 6:37