

WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

ABIGAIL: LESSON ELEVEN

by Sandy Harber

"Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do: for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him." I Sam. 25:17

After warning Abigail about the way Nabal had responded to David's men, the servant concludes with this advice: consider what you are going to do. The Hebrew word translated "consider" means "to take heed to." In other words, think carefully. Consider all your options and make a plan. This was not a situation where it would be safe to simply fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants. We have already observed that Abigail is held in high regard by the servants. She had probably solved numerous issues successfully in the past. She was also in a position of authority. The servants were helpless to act against the decrees of their master. But, his wife was in a position to mitigate, or possibly negate, the damage Nabal caused.

The prophet Haggai warned the people five times to "consider your ways" (Haggai 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18). The people who returned to Judah after seventy years in exile in Babylon had begun the work of rebuilding God's temple. But they allowed opposition from their enemies to interfere to the point that work had ceased altogether. God used Haggai to encourage the people to complete the work. He warned them to take stock, recognize their failings and repent, and then do the right thing (finish the temple).

We, too, need to stop and take stock every now and then. What direction has my life taken and is this where God wants me to be? Perhaps you have a major problem dropped in your lap as Abigail did. Where do you go from here? Consider - think about it - what is the best course of action? What is your goal? What outcome do you desire? Now, what steps do you need to take to reach your goal?

Abigail's goal was to save the lives of her household. The servant understood that Nabal's abuse of David's soldiers would result in retaliation. He had seen the power of David's army in the field when he and others were protected by the warriors. He feared that the foolish words of Nabal would inspire David to turn his army against them.

The servant was so agitated that he did not hesitate to speak disrespectfully of his master, calling him a "son of Belial." The word "Belial" indicates a worthless person, with the connotation of evil and wickedness. By the time of Christ, this Hebrew word "Belial" had come to be used as one of the pagan names for Satan. In II Cor. 6:15, Paul uses this word in comparing the things of Christ with the world system of Satan.

What a legacy this man had: foolishness and worthlessness wrapped together in the same package. He had no redeeming qualities. He had no common courtesy. His servants did not respect him. His wife did not even try to defend him or reprimand the servant. You can be sure his neighbors avoided him whenever possible.

This was probably not the first mess that Nabal had created that Abigail had to clean up. But it was by far the most serious. Lives hung in the balance. We shall see that Abigail acted swiftly and wisely. What had occurred in Abigail's life that prepared her for this situation? The Bible doesn't tell us. But we can speculate that Abigail had dealt with numerous issues caused by Nabal's selfish, arrogant, and foolish behavior. Each problem successfully handled prepared her to meet the next crisis.

It may be that God is doing that for you and I as well. Nothing happens to us by chance. God brings people and circumstances into our lives so that we may grow more like His Son. We grow spiritually when we meet trials with faith and trust in God. The harder the trial, the greater the need for faith. The good news is that we learn from our failures as well as our successes. Sometimes we learn more and it stays with us longer when we fail!

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16