

## WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

### ABIGAIL: LESSON SIX

by Sandy Harber

**"And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there aught missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel. Ask the young men, and they will show thee. Wherefore let the young men find favor in thine eyes: for we come in a good day; give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David. And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased." I Sam. 25:7-9**

David's 10 soldiers faithfully repeated the words of David to Nabal. David's message was simple: during this time of celebration include my men in your festivities because they treated your employees with kindness. David's army had rendered Nabal a service by protecting his flocks and shepherds. They had earned the right to be included in the shearing time celebration.

David did not make any demands upon Nabal. He left it up to the owner of the sheep to determine what reward the soldiers had earned by their actions. How much was it worth to Nabal to have his flocks preserved intact and his employees unharmed? David and his soldiers had willingly assisted the shepherds in the fields by protecting them against thieves and poachers. He expected Nabal to willingly reward his men for their kindness.

By coincidence they had come "in a good day," that is, the soldiers had performed their good deeds during the days leading up to the annual shearing. This joyous event included feasting with friends and neighbors. They could reasonably have expected Nabal to issue a blanket invitation to join the festivities. At the very least he should have set aside provisions for the men who had preserved his flock and, thus ensured a good outcome from the shearing of his 3,000 sheep.

It is an unfortunate fact of life that kindness is not always rewarded. Good deeds are sometimes met with ingratitude. Most people don't willingly help others expecting a reward. We do it out of the kindness of our hearts. Even sinful man has a tendency within him to lend a hand now and then. We see a need and pitch in to help. No ulterior motive. And, while we don't do it for gain or glory, we do appreciate a simple, "Thank you."

Paul warns us that in the last days one of the characteristics of the ungodly is that they are unthankful (I Tim. 3:3). Ingratitude, as we see, is not reserved for the end times. David was about to encounter it with the return of his 10 men.

Does this mean that we should stop helping others just because we run into a few ungrateful people? If we are offering our help in order to put the other person under an obligation to us then, yes, we should stop. That is the wrong motivation. Jesus urged people to do their good deeds in secret, not to gain recognition or a reward (Mt. 6:1-4).

God expects us to have a thankful heart. We are commanded to give thanks in every circumstance of life (I Thess. 5:18). That means we are to have our attitude of thanksgiving during (in) our trials, too. God didn't tell us to be thankful "for" the trial we are enduring but to be thankful "in" (during) the trial. God doesn't expect me to be grateful that He took my husband home to heaven. But He does expect me to find reasons to be thankful during my time of grieving and adjusting to my "new normal."

I can do this. And, so can you. I'm thankful for the people who have prayed for me, sent me cards and notes, flowers and food and other gifts. I'm thankful I know that my husband is with Jesus. I'm thankful

that I know we'll be together again some day. I'm thankful for my children who have been such a support and encouragement to me. I can go on and on. You can do it, too. When your situation threatens to overcome you, start making your own gratitude list. It will change your perspective.

*"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."  
I Thessalonians 5:18*