

## WIDOWS OF THE BIBLE

### ABIGAIL: LESSON TWENTY-SEVEN

by Sandy Harber

**"For in very deed, as the Lord God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall." I Samuel 25:34**

Again David credits God with staying his hand in the slaying of Nabal and his servants. David specifically rejoices that he was kept from hurting Abigail. Not that he would have physically assaulted her. But he had every intention of making her a widow and depriving her of her servants. At least, this would have been the result of his actions. Abigail would have been left with the carnage to deal with.

David assures her that it was her quick thinking and the action she took in meeting him with donkeys laden with food and her own humble self that stopped the blood bath. Except for the intervention Nabal and his men would surely be dead.

God was so gracious to David in preventing him from causing the death of innocent men. David was a soldier. He had killed many in battle. But these were armed combatants. These were trained soldiers who had weapons and fought back. David's anger had led him to contemplate murdering unarmed, untrained civilians. He must have been horrified when he came to his senses and realized what he had intended to do.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment..." (Mt. 5:22). Anger can lead to murder. All of us have been angry about something at some point in our lives. Maybe justifiably so. But we did not murder anyone. David had cause to be angry with Nabal but not his family or servants. Nor was Nabal's offense such that David should seek to take his life. He simply overreacted. He let his anger control him and not the other way around.

Anger may not lead us to commit murder. But it can ruin relationships permanently. Things we say in anger can never be unsaid. We often regret the words as soon as they are out of our mouths. But it's too late then.

The Bible tells us that God is slow to anger: "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." (Psalm 103:8). Isn't our goal to be more like Christ? Twice this verse tells us that God is merciful. "Mercy" means that God does not give us what we deserve. We are all sinners and deserve to go to hell. In His mercy God provided a way for us to be saved from damnation.

The actions of a merciful man are the opposite of an angry man. A merciful Christ asked God to forgive those who were about to crucify Him. Jesus told His disciples to treat their enemies in a loving way. Perform good deeds for those who would cause you harm. Pray for those who mock you. These are not easy things to do. They go against our human nature. But that's the point. In Christ we are new creatures (II Cor. 5:17). Our reactions should be driven by the Holy Spirit and not our human nature.

Be on guard for those times when you are tempted to respond in anger. Think of it as an opportunity to show mercy.

*"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Micah 6:8*