

Matters of the Heart

A Discerning Heart

DEVELOPING CHARACTER

- ▶ Character is a matter of the heart... it's what we do, or won't do, when no one is looking
- ▶ Character is not something that we consciously put into our lives; it's rather what unconsciously comes out of our lives... particularly in times of pressure and testing

HISTORICAL BACKDROP OF THE STORY OF ABIGAIL

- ▶ Saul - anointed king of Israel circa 1050 BC
- ▶ David - anointed as king-elect of Israel circa 1025 BC
- ▶ David the fugitive – leading 600 dirty, hungry, tired, short-tempered men
- ▶ David, the mourner – his spiritual mentor, Samuel, just died (v.1)

PRINCIPLE: No matter how strong you think you are, you need others in your life to maintain character & spiritual balance.

THREE MAIN CHARACTERS

① NABAL

- ▶ Character description:
 - Calebite = "dog" • Nabal = "fool"

② ABIGAIL

- ▶ Character description:

③ DAVID

- ▶ Character description:
 - King-elect; leader of 600 rugged men; fugitive; being shaped & prepared by God on his way to the throne of Israel
 - Discouraged & weakening
 - Sending for a "gift" in "payment" for his "protection services"

CONFLICTS IN THE STORY

- ① Husband - Wife (Nabal & Abigail)
- ② Employee - Employer (David & Nabal)

ABIGAIL'S INTERVENTION

- ① Fast Response
- ② Quick Thinking
- ③ No Panic
- ④ Wise Acting
- ⑤ Discernment
- ⑥ Billiant Diplomacy (vv.23-24)
- ⑦ Future Vision (vv.26-31)

OUTCOME (OF ABIGAIL'S FEMALE DIPLOMACY)

- ① Abigail preserves Nabal's life & David's future reputation
- ② Abigail glorifies God & protects the future of her country
- ③ We have a beautiful picture of an oasis of female diplomacy
- ④ God vindicates Abigail & puts Nabal to death
- ⑤ David marries an incredible woman! She gets the future king! He gets the diamond !!

CONCLUSION

- ▶ When there is discernment, there need not be a great display of strength.
- ▶ When there is discernment, wisdom is rewarded with relief from above.

LifeGroup Questions - Doing Life Together

Week of May 14-20, 2017

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Sermons can be viewed online at creeksideeg.com/sermon

Questions are based on the NIV translation of the Bible

PRAYER

Begin your time together by thanking God that He gives the gift of discernment to those who seek it. Ask Him to give you discernment so you will know what to do in every situation.

MY STORY

Describe a time in your life when you were upset but used discernment to keep the situation from going from bad to worse.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. What new insight did you gain from Sunday's message regarding discernment?
2. Put a check mark by each of the following phrases that is true regarding discernment.
 - discernment is the ability to understand a situation or issue and to take steps to achieve a positive outcome.
 - discernment, wisdom, and understanding are closely connected.
 - people with discernment often make knee-jerk decisions that get them into trouble.
 - discernment can be helpful in choosing the right friends or in determining God's will.
 - knowing God's Word can be a great help in discerning which way to go in life.
 - people with discernment will often show little discretion or wisdom in their actions.
3. Define discernment in your own words and then give an application of it in everyday life.
4. Read **1 Samuel 25:1-42**. How did Abigail show discernment in the following?
 - Losing no time in taking David and his men provisions of food v.18
 - Having her servants go ahead of her as she went to see David v.19

- Not telling her husband, Nabal, that she was going to try to appease David's anger v.19
- Getting off of her donkey quickly and bowing before David and calling him her master and herself his servant throughout the encounter vv.23-31
- Saying to David that she alone was responsible for what had happened to David, that Nabal was a fool, and that she had never seen David's men when they made their request... vv.24-25
- By sharing with David that God had kept him from more bloodshed... vv.26
- By giving the food to David and his men as a gift v.27
- By asking for forgiveness v.28
- By saying that God was going to protect and bless David in the future, and destroy David's enemies vv.28-31

5. According to **1 Samuel 25:21**, why was David so upset with Nabal? Has anyone ever repaid you with evil for something good that you did? Explain.
6. In your opinion, did David's angry response regarding Nabal's refusal to give provisions to David's men show discernment or lack thereof? Explain. When has anger gotten you in trouble?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER

7. What are some of the things that discernment is helpful for according to the following verses? What would you add to the list?

1 Kings 3:9,11-12

Psalms 119:125

Proverbs 17:10

TAKING IT HOME

8. Read **Proverbs 1:1-6**. Why is the book of Proverbs such a great place to learn discernment?

PRAYING TOGETHER

Pray for the needs of your group and ask God to help you have a greater degree of discernment in your life.