



Church of God Ministries

Spanish Fort, Alabama

Abigail: The Fool's Wife

How does one handle being young and married to an immature husband? How about a true to life story of Abigail, who looked to God in faith. She eventually married David, the King of Israel, to become the queen over an entire nation!

It was the annual sheep shearing festival, and Abigail was overseeing the food preparations for feeding the workers. Being an industrious woman of integrity, she was capable of handling many responsibilities. She was compassionate, kind, understanding and wise. However, she was married to a very selfish man, Nabal. As a result, her marriage was very stressful. You may ask, "How would this young wife work out this challenging situation?" Read on for the true story!

In ancient Israel, women often married shortly after going through puberty. Abigail was most likely a young woman; perhaps she was in her teens to 30 years of age. Parents often arranged marriages and daughters had little say in who their parents selected for them to marry. Parents would have looked for someone who could provide a home for their daughters and someone who could provide a *mohar* or dowry, the price paid by the groom's parents to the bride's parents.

On the day of the annual sheep shearing festival, King David sent 10 of his men to visit Nabal. David's men greeted Nabal with courtesy and respect and reminded him of the protection that they had provided the shepherds throughout the year. They came on a day of cheerfulness and plenty and asked if Nabal would kindly compensate them for their deeds.

Unfortunately, Nabal lived up to his name, "fool," and refused to listen to David's young men; he acted in an ill-humored and dishonest manner. Nabal's servant, who witnessed this exchange, feared for the safety of Abigail and the entire household, for he knew that evil was determined upon them by David. He ran to Abigail to inform her of Nabal's rude behavior.

Meet Abigail

Abigail was a woman of high character. She had gained the respect of her servants by respecting them. Without this respect, Nabal's servant would have been fearful to address her. Abigail immediately grasped the situation and prepared a great amount of food to be taken to David (1 Sam 25:18). By providing provisions for David, she showed bravery, wisdom, and foresight. Her hope was to preserve her husband and household from destruction.

Sending her servant loaded down with food supplies back to David's camp, Abigail soon followed and met King David face to face. Abigail continued to show grace and humility. She immediately apologized for her insensitive and rude-behaving husband. She humbly begged forgiveness and took responsibility for Nabal's immature and selfish acts. Only a sincere and strong person would willingly suffer for the faults of another (1 Samuel 25:28).

Though she had opportunity to be belittling and bitter about her husband, she responded with words and actions to promote harmony. Her respectful attitude toward her husband promoted peace toward David. She reminded David that God is in charge of his life, and it would be foolish to avenge himself for the actions of a fool. God would deal with Nabal when He pleased (1 Samuel 25:31).

After returning home, Abigail had to inform Nabal about what she had done. Openness and honesty are essential qualities in a marriage. So is knowing when and how to address a situation. Nabal was merry with feasting and very drunk; thus, Abigail chose to keep silent until the morning. Later, after telling her husband how David was intent on killing him, and how she went to David to pacify him, Nabal was struck down by a heart attack or a stroke. God dealt with Nabal's arrogance and rudeness by a sudden illness, and 10 days later, he died (1 Samuel 25:37).

Abigail's qualities

After David heard of Nabal's death, he asked Abigail to be his wife. David realized the innate qualities that Abigail possessed. She was a woman of character and honor, and she exemplified true godly submission. She knew what God desired in a woman and a wife, and she fulfilled this role even in trying circumstances. We could say that she was a "Proverbs 31" woman.

Even though Nabal was a difficult man, Abigail fulfilled the role of a virtuous woman by working diligently (Proverbs 31:13). She took care of her household (Proverbs 31:27) and gave to the poor (Proverbs 31:20). She was honorable (Proverb 31:25) and kind (Proverbs 31:26). In addition, probably the most difficult of all, she was good to her husband all his days (Proverbs 31:12).

Abigail was respectful and submissive to her husband as God ordained that women should be (Genesis 2:18; 3:16). This means that they worked together, but Abigail was under Nabal's leadership. Even though Nabal was a poor leader, Abigail exercised her knowledge of God and His word, and responded to Nabal and others in a proper manner. She did not rule over her husband, but she was not a doormat either, since this does not glorify God. God expects women to fulfill their role in a godly manner even if the circumstances are difficult.

We are told that Abigail was a beautiful person. We can see that she was beautiful on the inside by how she lived her life. However, the scriptures also say that she was a physically beautiful person as well (1 Samuel 25:3). There is nothing wrong with physical beauty when it is accompanied by discretion (Proverbs 11:22).

What you can do

It is important to look at the character of a man before entering into marriage. Is he kind, helpful, generous, hardworking, and patient? Does he treat you now with respect and kindness? God expects husbands to love their wives to the same degree Jesus loved His Church (Ephesians 5:25). It is important to observe how a potential mate responds to different situations prior to marriage.

Do you as a godly young woman wonder about your future? Do you wonder who will be your husband? Now is the time to prepare yourself to have character like Abigail. Study the Bible to learn how to be a godly woman. Pray that God would prepare you to be a godly wife, and that He would prepare your future husband. Marrying someone who is living God's way of life is important as well.

Abigail was just like you. She had dreams for a happy and loving marriage. Yet, she found herself in a marriage to a foolish, immature man. She trusted in God and He blessed her in the end with a marriage to King David. Do not rush into marriage and find yourself in circumstances similar to Abigail. Seek God and prepare now to be a godly wife. Ask God to provide you with a loving husband living God's way of life at the right time.

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