

ABIGAIL'S GOOD JUDGMENT

1 Samuel 25:1-44 (Key verse: 33)

May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.

In today's passage we will learn from Abigail what it means to have GOOD JUDGEMENT. Also, we will learn why it is important, to at all times retain GOOD JUDGEMENT. I sincerely pray, that we may all learn from Abigail, on how keep good judgment to please God and be faithful to Him at all times. Amen!

Let's look at verse 1-2. David and his men moved down to into the desert of Moan, near the town of Carmel. Now.....in the area..... lived a certain man.....His name was Nabal. Nabal, was VERY wealthy..... He had a THOUSAND goats..... and THREE THOUSAND sheep! He also owned a large property in Carmel, where every year he brought his huge flocks for shearing.

It so happened, that Nabal's shepherds were herding his flocks in the fields near where David and his men resided. Actually, shepherds and their flocks in those days were quite vulnerable to loss.....not only because of preying wild animals.....but also because robbers and thieves.....who would often mistreat the helpless shepherds.....and steal from their masters' flocks! Yet, David and his men were different. In fact, they were very good to Nabal's shepherds. They did not mistreat them.....and the whole time they were out in the fields near themnight and dayDavid watched over Nabal's sheep. David as his men did such an excellent job that it was as if they were a wall of protection around them.....And consequently, nothing of Nabal's shepherds was missing....and not a single one of Nabal'sFour Thousand sheep and goats..... were stolen! (7, 15, 21)

One day, David heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. This was great news for him and his 600 hungry men!! Because by traditions, sheep shearing time..... was a festive time.....a time of hospitality towards others..... So David figured that Nabal had a lot of food prepared for a party, and thought that surely.....after forming a wall of protection around his shepherds and flocks.....Nabal would be more than willing to generously share delicious food with David and his 600 hungry men. Look at verses 5-9. So he sent ten young men and said to them; "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him warmly in my name. Say to him (Exclaiming): 'Long life to you!Good health to you and your household!And good health to all that is yours!.....(A bit more formal)'"Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore, be favourable toward my men, since we come at a festive time. Please..... give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for themWhen David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited.

What do you think..... how did these 10 young men..... expect Nabal to respond? Yes,.....of course.....they expected Nabal to welcome them with open arms.....thanking them warmly for protecting his shepherds and flocks out in the fields! And as a token of his appreciation, provide David and his 600 hungry men with delicious bread and meat....and even some wine.....Wonderful!!!!..... The ten young men could hardly wait!! Surprisingly, however, things did not go down like that all! Look at verses 10-11. (*Read with contempt and insult!*) Nabal [sneered] to David's servants..... "Who is this David?..... Who is

this son of Jesse?.....David's servants, were shocked..... Surely, Nabal knew exactly who David was! In fact, David was a household name in Israel! And everyone knew that he was the future king of Israel! Yet, Nabal treated David with the utmost contempt.....by pretending that he did not know who David was.....and that David was a nobody! Even worse, Nabal insinuated that David was a rebellious servant who must have done something terrible to cause his master, King Saul, to want to kill him. This greatly insulted David. To rub salt further into the wounds, Nabal exclaimed.....Why should I take MY bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for MY shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" The 10 young men could not believe their ears.....They simply did not understand why Nabal insulted David and treated them so badlyespecially after they went above and beyond to watch over his shepherds and flocks out in the fields!

Actually, unbeknown to the 10 young men, Nabal acted **true to his unfriendly and mean character. (3) Nevertheless, it was really foolish to** insult a powerful and important man like David...Also, it was so foolish to treat the future king of Israel with so much contempt.

The question is, why would Nabal act in this manner? Any sober minded person in Nabal's shoes would realise that the right thing to do.....was to generously thank David for his help by providing him and his men with some delicious food.....And even if he was too stingy to do that.....it is obvious that to insult David with so much contempt was tantamount to poking a sleeping lion with a stick. Then why do it? Was he mentally challenged? Was he just dull? Not at all. At that moment, Nabal merely lacked **GOOD JUDGEMENT**.....to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.....in God's eyes.....and then do what is right. The truth is, often.....you and I also lack GOOD JUDGMENT....just like Nabal..... when we do something.....or say something.....foolish.....to our own detriment.

Here we must ask ourselves. Why is it that **sometimes we have GOOD JUDGMENT.....and other times we don't? Or put differently, why is it that we sometimes lose our GOOD JUDGMENT. Let's find the answer in David's reaction to Nabal's insults.** Look at verse 12. When the 10 young men reported to David..... EVERY..... word spoken by Nabal.....David snapped!! Look at verse 13. David said to his men (Hot with anger and shouting) "Each of you strap on your sword!"So they did, and David strapped his on as well..... To get angry is one thing, but why did David tell his men to strap on their swords? What did he intend to do? Yes.....David was going to murder Nabal for insulting him. And not only Nabal.....but every single male family member and servant there!

Wow!!! This is extreme!!! And definitely not how one expect David, a man of God and future king of Israel.....to react, right? I mean, Nabal did not try to kill David.....; he just despised and insulted David.....Of course Nabal was wrong to treat David in this manner.....Yet for David to now go and murder him and every male in his household.....was a huge over reaction.....and completely out of character for David.....Then why did David respond this way? Yes.....at that moment, David also lacked **GOOD JUDGEMENT**.....to distinguish between right and wrong..... in God's eyes.....and then do what is right.....just like Nabal!

Here, let's think about what caused David, a man usually behaving with extremely good judgment.....to suddenly act so foolishly. Most probably, David was worn out after years of running and hiding from Saul. During this time, David suffered much.....At the same time he was responsible for taking care of 600 hungry men and their families. It was emotionally and physically draining.....with Nabal's insults just being the final push..... as David reached his breaking point!! In a moment

of weakness.....David was unable to control his hot anger.....that clouded his GOOD JUDGMENT to such an extent that he shouted: "Each of you strap on your sword!And then rushed down with 400 armed men to kill Nabal and all the men belonging to him. Here we can see that **when David gave in to his fierce anger, he lost his sense of GOOD JUDGEMENT.....to instead act purely on raw emotion! This is something that happens to everyone.....including believing men and women.....and including you and me. In times of weakness..... our raw emotions pushes us to behave.....not in ways that please God.....but in ways that pleases our sinful nature! In times like these.....when our emotions take hold of us..... we do not care about what is right or wrong.....In fact..... we lose perspective to simply act according to our flesh!! Regardless of the damage we cause to others.....even to ourselves! And regardless of whether it is wrong in the eyes of God.....There and then we become fools.....just like Nabal and David!** But it does not have to be this way! Indeed, even in our weakest moments, we can overcome our emotions to maintain **GOOD JUDGEMENT and still act in a way that pleases God! We see this in Nabal's wife..... Abigail!**

Look at verses 18-19. When Abigail was told what had happened, she did not allow her emotions.....especially her anger at Nabal for acting so foolishly.....to get in the way of doing what is right. Instead, with GOOD JUDGMENT she wasted no time to do what Nabal was supposed to do. She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys. Then she told her servants, "Go on ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal, because she knew he would foolishly try to stop her.....and so bring disaster on himself and his household.

Look at verse 20. As Abigail came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her.....What a scary and intimidating sight it must have been for Abigail to see! Four hundred angry men on horses.....each with a sword.....and filled with vengeance.....rushing to murder her husband, Nabal, and every innocent male belonging to him. Surely, that moment great fear crept into her heart..... But again she did not allow her emotions..... to get in the way of doing what is right.....and so prevent needless blood shedding. Instead, with GOOD JUDGMENT, she stood her ground and met them.

To stand her ground was one thing. But it was quite another for Abigail.....to woman alone.....approach David.....still hot with anger.....and surrounded by 400 bloodthirsty men..... Yet, in that difficult situation, Abigail with GOOD JUDGMENT, found God's way to calm David down. The first step was to engage David on an **emotional level**

Look at verses 23-24.When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey..... and bowed down before David..... with her face to the ground to show him the highest respect. She then with great humility fell at his feet and said: My lord, let the blame be on me alone. (NIV 1984) Being a man, who have countless of times been overcome by my anger.....I can truly say that if any woman.....even a man.....approach me in my anger.....with such respect and humility.....(even when I do not deserve it) my heart would cool down very quickly..... Don't you agree? What wisdom Abigail had.....and what GOOD JUDGMENT, to set her human pride aside and humbly approach an angry David in this manner!! We are amazed!!

She was then very careful to not provoke David any further as she humbly requested for his permission to speak, saying, please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. (v24) At this point, I am sure many of our sisters might cry out.....but why did she have to be so humble! She did nothing wrong! She had every right to challenge David, for he was in

the wrong! Indeed, this is true. However, with GOOD JUDGMENT Abigail accepted it was not about her.....or about who was right and wrong.....instead it was about how best to please God.....by calming David down. We truly respect Abigail for her GOOD JUDGMENT.

Look at verse 25. Please pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name means Fool, and folly goes with him. In general, to openly criticise your husband or wife is not desirable.....! But, in this instance, it was a life or death situation.....and calling her husband a Fool was something that David needed to hear to calm down.....and regain his GOOD JUDGMENT again. By now.....David's emotions surely had calmed down.

After breathing a sigh of relief.....Abigail changed her approach to help David regain GOOD JUDGMENT. She began to engage David on a logical level....by explaining that this whole situation could have been avoided if she only saw David's 10 men coming to their house (25b) Then David would not have been insulted..... and she would have immediately express her appreciation for their help with the gifts of food and wine she now brought him and his men. (27) Logically, this makes good sense, right!? At this, David visibly looked much calmer.....and with his anger cooling down, his sense of GOOD JUDGMENT returned. It is then that Abigail again changed her approach, to help David regain GOOD JUDGMENT. She began to engage David on a spiritual level by turning David's focus towards God. Look at verse 26. She reminded David that the LORD his God lives....and that He was the one who now keeps David from bloodshed and from avenging himself with his own hands. What wisdom! What excellent JUDGEMENT!! To first approach David on an emotional level.....then a logical level and finally and effectively softened David's heart on a spiritual level.....In this way, Abigail wisely averted David's wrath and so save her husband and every male in their household.

Mission accomplish, right?! For most people, but not for Abigail. She could see that David was sorry that he decided to do something so evil. At that crucial moment.....where David's sinful nature was vividly exposed....Abigail in GOOD JUDGMENT comforted David with the warm love of God.....by reminding him of God's bigger picture for his life. Look at verses 28. In this verse she reminds David of God's certain promise to make a lasting dynasty for him. She also reminds David of God's higher purpose for him to fight the LORD's battles. Look also at verse 29. Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. She understood the hardship which David had been suffering from because of Saul. Yet, with compassion she comforted David that his life was secure in the Lord and that the LORD would surely fulfill every good thing he promised concerning David. This included being appointed ruler over Israel (30) What great spiritual insight Abigail had! What a GOOD if not excellent sense of JUDGMENT strengthen David's weary heart in his time of need.

If you were in David's shoes, how would you feel at this moment? Me too.....I would feel so thankful to God and to Abigail. Look at verses 32-33. David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me..... May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. David was so relieved that God, in love sent Abigail in his time of weakness, to stop him from making a huge mistake. And the reason God could use Abigail in this way...was because she was able to maintain GOOD JUDGEMENT under very difficult and dangerous circumstances.

There are times when we you and I find ourselves in similar situations as David.....times of weakness when our emotions almost get the better of us.....and start to cloud our GOOD JUDGEMENT..... to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong.....in God's eyes.....and then do what is right. In these times, what should we do? Yes, we need to remember Abigail....and how she helped David to overcome his emotions. Indeed, emotions are good as far as we can control them. Yet the moment we lose our grip on our emotions we open the door for sin to come in and tempt us to act foolishly.....and sinfully. Just like Nabal and David.

The question then is, how we can keep a hold on our emotions.....and how can we resist the strong temptation to act according to our fleshly desires! The best way is to remember that **the LORD our God lives**and that just as he did not want David to act foolishly and sinfully.....so also God does not want us to sin against him.....based on our emotions. So, in times of weakness we need to take a time out. We need to think of God, of what pleases God. We need to remember that we belong to God.....that we serve the Lord.....That He appoints us as leaders over His people and that God himself would deal with our conflicts. When we remember even one of these.....God's Holy Spirit will work in our hearts and help us cool down our emotions.

But what if it is too late, and we already started to descend into a path of destruction, like David. **Then we need help from a spiritual friend, like Abigail.** At those times it's vital to not be a stubborn fool like Nabal, who refused to listen to anyone! But instead be humble and teachable, to really listen. Just Like David!

It might be, that you find yourself in the position of Abigail, where have an opportunity.....if not a spiritual obligation.....to help someone regain GOOD JUDGMENT. At these times, we can remember how Abigail first came in on an emotional level.....then a logical level.....then a spiritual level.....and finally comforting David with God's love and promises. Many times when we try to help someone we come in straight with the spiritual.....but the person is still so emotional they could not care less!! So we must learn from Abigail, and address the emotional and logical needs first.

Personally, in times of weakness, I have given into my anger many times and did what was wrong in the eyes of God. Both at home and in the ministry. I can honestly say, that after each incident I deeply regretted what I said or what I did. Especially, since most of the times I am quite patient, friendly and kind.....it really comes as a surprise to those who know me when in a moment of weakness.....I lose my sense of Good Judgement. Also, it makes me deeply ashamed. But I thank God for allowing me to prepare this message. Because I could learn from Abigail on how to maintain Good Judgement.....even in times of weakness.....by remembering that the Lord my God is living and does not want me to act foolishly, like Nabal or David. Also, I was very much encouraged by how Abigail helped David, after his sin was exposed.....by helping him remember God's bigger picture for his life. Indeed, I too am a sinner! In times of weakness I too want strap on my sword and destroy the person who insult me or treat me unfairly. Yet, it does not change the fact, that God has a bigger plan for my life also. And will surely make it come to pass! I praise God for also sending Abigail to me today, through this message. Amen!

In conclusion: In today's passage David was on the verge of making a BIG mistake, after Nabal's insult provoked his anger. David God so upset that he lost all sense of Good Judgement...and was ready to go and kill Nabal and take vengeance with his own hands. But God, in love, send Abigail to help David in his time of weakness, and so prevented David from making this big mistake. I sincerely pray, that as God's sons and daughters, we learn from Abigail how to retain Good Judgement and please God at all times! Each time we are tempted to sin in our emotions.....let's remember Abigail! Each time we see our spouse, our

friends or family members in times of weakness.....let's remember Abigail.....and likewise help the loved ones around us with the same GOOD JUDGMENT as Abigail, so they too can be faithful to God at all times. I thank and praise God for Abigail! Amen.