

# WALKING WITH INTEGRITY IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY

## STUDY FOUR

### The Integrity of a Wise Wife

*Selections from 1 Samuel 25*

*Wisdom isn't afraid to act alone and do something courageous.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**W**HEN jewelers show off a high-quality diamond, they place it on a black felt pad and shine a bright light on it. The diamond sparkles as the gem's facets, like a hundred tiny prisms, refract the light and array it in brilliant colors. The diamond's integrity—clarity, flawlessness, and the precision of its cuts—glistens for all to see and admire.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* study, we showcase Abigail, a gem of a woman who appears only briefly in the grand narrative of Scripture but who sparkles with wisdom and faith.

She came to light through an encounter with David, who had been anointed king-elect of Israel but was still on the run from King Saul. The dark backdrop in her life was her marriage to Nabal, a brutish man who kept her in his shadow until a crisis allowed her true value to shine. Let's take a closer look at this grand woman and the exceptional integrity she displayed when adversity struck her world.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## The Integrity of a Wise Wife

*Selections from 1 Samuel 25*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

What do you hope to learn from this *Searching the Scriptures* study? Anytime we turn to God's Word we must first turn to the God of the Word to ask for guidance and blessing on our study. So, turn your hope into a prayer by expressing to God your need for Christ to work in your heart and mind.



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

We meet Abigail in 1 Samuel 25, where the account unfolds like a play in three acts. The curtain is rising, so let's take our seats and view the dramatic action in God's Word.



### Observation: The Drama in Three Acts

Use your observation skills to follow the action as it unfolds, beginning with an introduction of the main characters as they step on stage.

#### The Main Characters—1 Samuel 25:1–3

Read *1 Samuel 25:1–3* where the action immediately centers around Nabal, Abigail, and David. In the space below, write down what you learn about each individual.

Nabal:

Abigail:

David:



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Samuel had anointed David as king when the Lord rejected Saul. So Samuel's death likely delivered an emotional blow to the would-be king. Saul refused David's newly received divine right to Israel's throne, so he frequently sought to kill this young shepherd whom God favored.

Taking the high road by refusing to fight back, David often fled as a fugitive from King Saul to the rugged wilderness where he scratched out a living. Look up the locations mentioned in your Bible maps or find the town of *Maon* at [bibleatlas.org](http://bibleatlas.org). What do you observe about this region?

As you follow the action, picture each scene as if the action is happening in front of you. Listen for the hoofbeats of the horses and the rattling of the swords. Feel the intensity of the emotions in each of the characters, beginning with *Act 1: David's Conflict with Nabal*.

### Act 1: David's Conflict with Nabal—1 Samuel 25:4–13

What service did David do for Nabal, and what did David ask in return, according to *1 Samuel 25:4–9*?



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How did Nabal, whose name means “fool,” foolishly respond to David’s request, according to *1 Samuel 25:10–11*?

What was David’s rash reaction in *25:12–13*?

*David loses it! He throws all restraint to the wind and tells his men to put on their swords. Four hundred of his men strap on their swords and gallop down the hillside to the camp of Nabal. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

### Act 2: Abigail’s Wise Intercession—1 Samuel 25:14–35

What actions did Abigail take that displayed her wisdom, according to *1 Samuel 25:14–19*?



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Abigail had learned from years of marriage to her foolish husband that trying to change his mind was a waste of time. So she rushed to David in a spirit of diplomacy and selflessness.

According to *1 Samuel 25:20–22*, what was David’s mind-set when Abigail found him?

How did Abigail display wisdom in softening David’s heart and changing his mind, according to *25:23–31*?

Summarize David’s response in *25:32–35*.

If not for Abigail coming to David’s rescue at a particularly vulnerable moment—just after Samuel’s death—David might have irreparably tarnished his good name. Abigail saved David not from an enemy but from himself!

*David melts! He was a man after God’s heart, and God used Abigail to reason with David.  
Wisdom always finds a way. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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### Act 3: God's Surprising Conclusion—1 Samuel 25:36–42

Tired and emotionally spent, did Abigail return home and fall into the arms of her grateful husband? No! She stumbled onto an appalling scene. Nabal was “very drunk” and oblivious to the fact that his wise wife had just saved his foolish neck (1 Samuel 25:36)!

In the end, however, God set things right. What surprise concludes the drama with a blessing for Abigail and David, according to *1 Samuel 25:37–42*?



### Interpretation: The Theology in David's Response

In the interpretation phase, we seek to understand the theology taught in the biblical narrative. Let's look closer at the account to see what it reveals about God and His plan.

How did David understand God's hand moving through Abigail's actions, according to *1 Samuel 25:23–35*?



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What principle about hearing God's voice through others does David's response model for you?

God preserved David—and not merely for David's sake. God protected David from shedding innocent blood because God had a kingdom for David to govern and a chosen people for the king-elect to bless through his upcoming God-centered rule.



### Correlation: The Wisdom of God

The biblical authors address the topic of wisdom from beginning to end.

#### Lady Wisdom

Review the passages below and record what they teach about wisdom versus foolishness. Interestingly, in Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a woman, just like wise Abigail!

*Proverbs 4:5–9*



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*Proverbs 4:14–23*

### Christ, the Wisdom of God

Jesus personifies wisdom in a unique way. He not only acted and spoke with wisdom; He was the perfect expression of wisdom in the flesh. What does [1 Corinthians 1:18–25](#) say about Christ as the power and wisdom of God? What “foolish” thing in the world’s eyes did He do to display divine wisdom?

How do we participate in His wisdom, according to [1:30–31](#)?

Through the power of Christ within us, we can do what David failed to do at first: forgive those who have offended us and wait on the Lord. Let’s see how we can put wisdom into action in our lives today.





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*For you who carry grudges, who keep your sword sharp, waiting for your moment to get revenge, please learn from David. Don't jump in, take revenge, and regret it for the rest of your life. Wait for the Lord. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### Application: What Wisdom Can We Learn?

Abigail and David's happy ending warms our hearts, but it also teaches valuable lessons.

From David we learn that **rash and angry reactions lead to regret**. We are wise to cool our thoughts of retaliation and trust the Lord to handle the Nabals of our lives.

From Nabal we learn that **insensitive and selfish people make miserable marital partners**. If you are a Nabal, wake up! Break the proud habit of turning a deaf ear and thinking your way is the only way. Humble your pride and learn to appreciate the Abigails in your life.

From Abigail we learn that **wise and patient partners make the best use of timing and tact**. The Lord intervened in Abigail's life and blessed her with marriage to David. But had God not stepped in, Abigail's wise spirit would have helped her through many difficult years.

Which character in the drama of 1 Samuel 25 do you most identify with? What aspect of their positive or negative example are you taking with you?



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Specifically, do you need Abigail's brand of wisdom to navigate a difficult relationship? What can you ask the Lord to help you with today?

Abigail wisely confronted David, but David also acted in wisdom. He took Abigail's advice to ignore foolish Nabal and trust God to work. Try that approach next time you're offended. Wait patiently and act wisely. In so doing, you'll be trusting the Lord to resolve the problem—a much better scenario than taking matters into your own hands.



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, help me to be like Abigail in my relationships, to be the peacemaker to pour oil on troubled waters and soothe hurt feelings. All wisdom has its source in You, so I come to You for the words to say and the actions to take in the heat of the moment. Give me the grace I need to show grace to those I love. In Jesus' name, amen.*

