

I reluctantly wade into precarious and potentially shark infested dark gulf waters with this one, but let's take a few minutes and talk about ... the behavior of women. ☺ In fact, one woman in particular. She is a wonderful example of godly character and should serve as inspiration and perhaps direction for all women of all ages. I am talking about Abigail, from I Samuel 25. For the sake of the wives, and those who will become wives, I want you to see the true character of a wonderful woman.

Solomon once wrote:

“An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.” (NASB)

“Who can find a virtuous wife?” -- I contend that one of those priceless virtues is found in Abigail.

I Samuel 25:3 – She is described as “intelligent (good understanding) and beautiful in appearance.”

However, for the rest of this story, only one of these two is described for us. Which one?

Only one was commented on by King David after the events unfold. Which one?

I Samuel 25:33 – “blessed be your DISCERNMENT” – This is the quality that drew David to her.

Okay, simple truth. Women of discernment are amazing. They are beautiful in a way that only increases with years. They are attractive on a heart and soul level. They are lovely. They make life better. Thank God for discerning women. But what does that word mean?

I Samuel 21:13 – “disguised his sanity” (NASB) – “behavior” (NKJV) -- So, she must be sane.

Exodus 16:31 – Literal translation would be “taste.” The flavor, the substance, what makes it good.

Proverbs 11:22 – It is the substance of beauty. Like a gorgeous dish that tastes bland. The substance is in the flavor. The true beauty of a woman is in her discerning spirit!

“The quality of being able to grasp or comprehend what is obscure.” “Having insight and understanding”

(Webster's) She is patient. She is thoughtful. She has character that takes in information and makes decisions that are prudent and beneficial to those around her. But the key is in her constancy. And that is where our story will show the true beauty of discernment.

- 1) It does not require a good husband – **I Samuel 25:3-12**. This guy is a fool. He is shortsighted and selfish and undisciplined. Certainly a good husband is very helpful, but not required.
- 2) It does not require drama-free living – **I Samuel 25:13-17** – David is coming to kill! This is a serious and scary situation! Certainly wisdom is good in times of peace, but prepares for more.
- 3) It does not require others do the work – **I Samuel 25:18-20** – She didn't sit back and hope it worked out. She was wise enough to know to take action and make things better.

In fact, throughout Bible history, and even in the lives of people around us, I suspect you have observed that some of the strongest, most wonderfully wise and life-changing women, have been those who have dealt with one, two or maybe even all three of these elements! A discerning spirit is forged in fire, but handles it with forethought and planning. And her wisdom benefits those whom she loves.

Maybe the greatest part of the story is that Abigail shows us, in practical terms, the way a discerning woman behaves. Now, some of this is hard to say with confidence, like when she hid things from her husband. And to some extent, we need to beware of direct application of OT stories. However, there are few super rich displays of wisdom by this godly wife.

1) Listen Carefully

- a. Godly women, wives and mothers, can be emotional and passionate. This is powerful and good for everyone... when they first can listen to all the facts.
- b. **I Samuel 25:14-17** – She heard the whole story from someone, apparently, that she could trust. She didn't immediately defend her husband or accuse him. She LISTENED.
- c. Because she knew the situation and heard the story, the rest of her behavior was productive and made a real difference.
- d. **Psalms 119:66** – Combination idea of learning and understanding and “JUDGMENT.”
- e. Discerning women should not hide emotion or reaction, but should be interested in gathering knowledge and understanding the situation first.

2) Acts Decisively

- a. Discerning women are women of action. They decide what will best protect their families, honor God, and make the best difference, and they act.
- b. **I Samuel 25:18-20** – I know we will key in on her not telling her husband. Stand by for more explanation of that, but the point is: it was time to act!
- c. She did not sit back and stress about it. She did not complain to her friends. She did not have a busy mind and idle hands. She acted decisively and in the best interest of others.
- d. Discerning women are doers. Wise, selfless, doers. And they don't wait for it to get worst. And they rarely wait for it to get better. They want to make a difference and do.

3) Proceed Humbly

- a. Now just because Abigail knew what was going on and had pursued a plan to make things right, DID NOT mean she was going to represent herself that way.
- b. **I Samuel 25:23-31** – This. Is. Awesome. This is strength under control. This is knowing how to deal with a man in a way that facilitates change, changing his thoughts and emotions and mind, and making him like it!!! This is discernment at its best!
- c. Though this was not yet her husband. He never forgets her wisdom in this matter.
- d. I have joked with people about my good wife's manipulation skills. That is not a fair term. But she is a better listener than I am. And she has better ideas than I do. But she rarely represents herself that way. She knows how to make me think it's my idea.
- e. Discerning women effect change, but they do so through submission, respect, and a gentle and quiet spirit. (Ephesians 5:22, 33; I Peter 3:4).

4) Communicate Wisely

- a. "But how can you say she is godly when she didn't tell her husband?" Well, actually she did. But she did so with wisdom and judgment.
- b. **I Samuel 25:36-37** – She knew her husband. Perhaps he was drunk the day before when all of this was happening. To talk to him then would have been a waste of time. She knew what was best. No, she had no respect for him as a man. But she acted to save him!
- c. So, when the time is right and he can hear her clearly, she tells him everything! She is not deceiving or hiding, she is using sound judgment and godly wisdom with her husband.
- d. Discerning women act without telling their husbands, at times, and in moments, because the action is important and right! But they do not deceive or hide. They wait for the right times, calm times, times when he can focus, and they explain their actions with respect.
- e. When and How a woman addresses a man is often more important than What is said.

I pray we have good wives and mothers in this room who can learn from Abigail. No, life will not be easy. No, he will not always do the right thing. No, it will not always just work itself out. But discernment doesn't need circumstances to be easy. Discernment finds its true purpose in the challenging times.

NOTE TO HUSBANDS:

1) **DON'T BE A FOOL -- I Samuel 25:3,25** – Nabal has this amazing wife. How many times in the past has she saved his hide? Who knows. And she and everyone else sees this. He is a fool. He does not deserve her. He is subject to the judgment of God (**25:38**). Do you have a wife who listens? Do you have a wife who acts in the best interest of God and your family? Then you have a beautiful bride! Appreciate that. Compliment her. Support her. And for our good Lord's sake, make it easier on her from time to time!

2) **BE KING DAVID – I Samuel 25:32-35, 39** – He didn't comment on how she looked, though she was attractive to him. He commented on the substance of her heart, her character. "Blessed be your discernment." He was attracted to her nature, her goodness, her strength. As we get older, beauty on the outside changes, for guys and girls alike, but this: this only intensifies in beauty. Appreciate that, men.

Oh, and guys. You realize we too can learn from Abigail. We too can utilize these 4 qualities and make our home lives better, and bring more glory to God in our relationships, our home, our marriage.

May her example live in us all. And if such has not been the case for you:

-- Know what to do. Act decisively and with humility, confessing who you want to be for the Lord.