

Face to Face

with

Abigail

First Day

Her Story

“But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transformed in ever-increasing splendor into His own image, and this is the work of the Lord who is the Spirit.” (II Corinthians 3:18 PHILLIPS)

This week we will be looking at the beautiful and wise Abigail; third wife of Israel's greatest king, David. There are many adjectives that come to mind when we look at her story: faithful, perseverant, discerning, charming. Actually, it's hard to find anything negative about her, and if we only read the end of her story, we would think she lived a fairytale life. But the fact is, she didn't!

We will begin by looking at what Scripture tells us about Abigail. *This is her story.*

Open your Bibles to **I Samuel 25**. Read the verses listed below and, in a few sentences, summarize the events described there:

verses 2-13

verses 14-22

verses 23-35

verses 36-42

What was Abigail's *sorrow*? _____

What was her *blessing*? _____

What did she *learn*? _____

- In a few sentences, contrast the end of Abigail's life with its beginning.

Second Day

Her Manner

Abigail?

“...Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.” (II Peter 1:5-7)

Abigail's name means “my father is joy,” or “cause of joy.”

Today we will be looking at the *character* of Abigail. Reread the I Samuel 25 account and use the following words to describe her:

- *Her strength*
- *Her weakness*
- *Her perseverance*
- *Her wisdom*

Because of the relationship she had with the Lord, what was Abigail able to do for Nabal? _____

Because of the relationship she had with the Lord, what was Abigail able to do for David? _____

How did Abigail's *character* make a difference in the way she handled her difficult situation? _____

From the perspective of *your* difficult situation (perhaps you too are in a challenging marriage to a difficult person, or it may be a difficult employer or family member), describe *your* character:

- *Your strength*
- *Your weakness*
- *Your perseverance*
- *Your wisdom*

How does *your* character make a difference in the way you handle your difficult situation? _____

Third Day

Her Hope

"And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1:45 NASB)

Today we will focus in on Abigail's *hope*. From what you have studied about her this week:

What was her *need*? _____

What was her *hope*? _____

What was her *promise*? _____

Because Abigail lived in a difficult and loveless marriage, she quickly learned that she could not place her hopes in her foolish husband Nabal and what he would do for her. She learned instead to place her hopes in the One who *did* love her and who always had her best interest at heart. She placed her trust in **God**. Even her name implies this: *my father is joy*. Although there was little joy to be found in her marriage, this wise woman found her joy in God.

Many women today find themselves in a position much like Abigail's - in a loveless and lifeless marriage. Maybe you are one of these women. Let Abigail's life be an example to you.

One of the most commendable things about her is her faithfulness. She *stayed* in that difficult marriage and *faithfully* fulfilled her duty as a wife. We might think of the saying, "*Bloom where you are planted.*" Are you planted in a thorny field? Let God nourish you *there* and watch and see how you will bloom. Abigail bloomed in the midst of her difficulty and great blessing followed her.

Although Isaiah 54:5a is speaking of God's relationship with Israel, what does this verse mean to you? _____

With the example of Abigail in mind, how can you bloom where you are planted today? _____

Memory Verse:

Psalm 37:3 NASB teaches us to, "*Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land and cultivate faithfulness.*" This is our memory verse this week – begin memorizing it today!

- Is there a way you could be more faithful in the place where you are planted at this time?

- What hope does Abigail's story give you about your own life?

Fourth Day

Her Gifts

We can determine from our story that the home life of Abigail and Nabal was not a very happy one, partly because of their differences in temperament, but also due to the dissimilarity of moral behavior and religious beliefs. A man prideful of his wealth and prone to drunkenness and sensual indulgences could not but embitter a woman of "good understanding" whom God had gifted with spiritual perception and great wisdom. While Nabal's advantages were great, his character appears worthless, unchanged by his wife's example, counsel, or prayers.

The Bible tells in Proverbs 24:3-4, "*Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*" Abigail no doubt exercised her God-given gift to create a home that exemplified a righteous lifestyle. But one can only imagine that Nabal's foolishness put his household at risk repeatedly and tested the patience and resourcefulness of his wife on more than one occasion.

Look again at Proverbs 24:3-4. See if you can determine what each of the following means....

Through wisdom a house is built _____

By understanding it is established _____

By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches _____

Using the above as your standard of measure, would you say that *your house* is being built through wisdom; being established by understanding; and through knowledge is being filled with all precious and pleasant riches? Please comment.

Through it all, Abigail's character shines brilliantly amidst her trying circumstances. She is remembered for having a generous heart, humble spirit, and for displaying the voice of reason when it counted. We do not know whether or not she had the advantage of an educated upbringing, but it doesn't matter; the Spirit of God endowed her with the ability to become a skilled orator. God put wisdom into her heart and it flowed out in words that not only restrained wrath, but also brought life.

Let's remember from whom the gift of wisdom comes. James 1:5 says, "*If any of you lacks wisdom, let [her] ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to [her].*" God wants us to be wise. If we are lacking in this area, all we have to do is to ask Him and He will grant it!

Would you take a moment right now and ask God to give you the gift of His wisdom? James 1:6 goes on to say, "*But let [her] ask in faith, with no doubting, for [she] who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*" Take God at His word – believe it and it is yours!

Look up the following verses and rewrite them in your own words. Be ready to share your personal paraphrase with your group:

Ecclesiastes 5:2 _____

Proverbs 10:19 _____

Proverbs 10:20 _____

Proverbs 15:23 _____

Proverbs 25:11 _____

Abigail had a way with words that encourages us to seek God's wisdom every day of our lives. Her words made the difference between life and death. Ask God today to help you make your words count for good. Immerse yourself in the Word and let it take hold of your heart and your mind. Your responses will reflect the One whom you represent with your life!

Fifth Day

Her Legacy

“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

How will you be remembered? How would you like to be remembered? What will you leave behind of benefit for others? What you do and say today will leave imprints for others to view tomorrow.

Taking a closer look...

- What impression did Abigail leave with you this week?

- How might her example impact women in today's world?

Abigail was able to exert great influence using just her words and a spirit of humility. She remains an enduring example to us of the power of a right response in a difficult situation.

Taking a personal look...

- Next time you encounter a crisis (or perhaps you're there now) what bit of wisdom from Abigail do you want to apply to your life?

- What have you learned this week about the value of words that will help you in your personal relationships?

Passing it on...

- What advice would you like to pass on to someone else about the importance of being a peacemaker?

- What steps would you suggest that person take the next time they find themselves in a confrontational situation?

Sixth Day

Your Prayer

Each day this week you have examined up close – face to face – a woman of the Bible: her *story and manner; her promise and hope; her gifts and legacy*. Throughout the process, as you learned about her, you also learned about yourself.

Now the focus shifts to *Your Prayer*. Each week during your group time you will have the opportunity to pray in agreement with the other ladies for the things you write down on this personalized page. Keep an updated account in the *Praise* list each week as God answers your petitions. This year let's come boldly to His throne and learn to pray the **BIG PRAYER** with expectancy! The only prerequisite for such boldness is being *humble and real* in His presence.

Prayer: Write out your prayer for each of the following...

I praise God for (an aspect of His marvelous character) _____

I confess to God _____

I thank God for _____

I ask God for _____

Promise: Write out this week's *promise* in the space provided...and learn to pray this promise from Scripture.

Praise: If God has answered a prayer request for you this week or fulfilled a desire of your heart, please write it out and date it as a stone of remembrance.

Notes

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