

Let Me At 'Em!

Taken from 1 Samuel 25-26

Foundation

As you approach the end of 1 Samuel, come with an open heart desiring to learn from God's Word. Ask Him to help you apply what He shows you, that you might make wise choices in your life.



Have you ever wanted to get revenge?

Nabal smiled to himself as he considered all his wealth and the festive atmosphere surrounding him. It was sheep-shearing season and a time of great celebration! Food and meat for all would be generously provided for those busy at the task of shearing his many sheep. This particular season had been good, as only a very few of his sheep or goats had died or been stolen.

Perhaps it's because my shepherds have finally learned to keep better watch over them, Nabal reasoned in his heart.

Whatever the case, this sheep-shearing time was the best it had ever been.

As Nabal watched the shearers go about their duty, he saw ten men who had come from the desert on the outskirts of Carmel.

"Greetings from David, the son of Jesse! May you, your household, and all you own enjoy continued good health!" they said respectfully. "We heard you were shearing your sheep and goats and that this is a festive time for you. Please, do you have anything that you could spare to give us? When your shepherds were out

in the desert watching your livestock, we didn't harm them. In fact, we protected them so that none of your sheep or goats were stolen or killed. Ask your servants themselves, and they'll tell you the same!"

Nabal looked up skeptically. He eyed the ten men standing before him, then chose to ignore their request.

"Who is David, the son of Jesse?" he said in a mocking tone of voice. "A lot of servants are leaving their masters ..." Nabal let his voice trail off so David's men wouldn't hear the sting of his words. Nabal enjoyed the powerful feeling of denying people something they wanted. He was a man of means and authority. "I have no idea who you are or where you're from. What possible reason would I have to share with you the hard-earned bread, water, and meat that has been prepared for my servants?" Nabal added for emphasis. Having said all he pleased, Nabal simply returned to his work and left David's men empty-handed and full of insults.

"Abigail!" one of Nabal's servants said in a concerned voice. "David sent ten of his men to request supplies from your husband, Nabal, but I heard Nabal refuse and insult them! These men have taken good care of us while we were in the desert with Nabal's sheep. I'm afraid ..."

Abigail heard the servant's words and knew she must go into immediate action. Her husband not only foolishly broke the custom of providing for travelers, but also insulted men who had shown only kindness to him. Without telling her husband, Abigail loaded up 200 loaves of bread, wine, meat, grain, raisins, and figs and had the servant lead her to David. Abigail hoped it wasn't too late ...

Meanwhile, when David's men came back empty handed, David was surprised.

Nabal was a wealthy man who owned 1,000 goats and 3,000 sheep! Jewish custom required sharing of food with travelers, regardless of how many there were – something Nabal could have easily done. His refusal to do so was a huge insult.

“Nabal did what?!” David responded angrily after hearing about Nabal’s refusal and insults. “It was for nothing! He doesn’t appreciate that I helped watch over his men and personal property while they were in the dessert! After all the good I’ve done for him, he pays me back with evil? Just who does this Nabal think he is? Let me at him!” David threatened, picking up his sword. “We’ll pay Nabal another visit. By morning, not even one male of his household will be left alive!”

At the sight of David and his men coming in her direction, Abigail panicked. Her greatest fears were confirmed. Nabal had acted foolishly and brought harm upon them. She hoped her gifts would smooth over the matter. Dismounting from her donkey, Abigail bowed before David and spoke humbly and sincerely.

Abigail became David’s second wife after her husband, Nabal, died.

“Please pay no attention to my husband’s words, for he is a foolish man. Just as his name, *Nabal*, means ‘foolish,’ he often acts in folly. I had no idea you had sent men to us,” she said. “Please don’t plan on taking revenge.”

David listened to Abigail’s words and heard the truth of what she was saying. Even when he had the opportunity to take revenge on Saul and kill him, he didn’t. He wisely knew needless bloodshed would only be a blot on his own conscience.

Abigail went on, “These provisions I have are for you and your men. Please accept them and turn from your anger,” she requested.

David agreed with her good advice and returned home. Seeking revenge would not be worth it.

That night, Abigail went to tell Nabal what she had done, but he had been celebrating too hard and was drunk. Waiting for the next day, Abigail told him of David’s intent to kill him for the cruel insults he had cast. Hearing this, and being shocked at the thought of losing all he had, Nabal had a heart attack. A few days later, he died. When David heard this, he knew God had honored his decision not to take revenge into his own hands. God had taken care of the matter Himself.

Footwork

Quickly turn to I Samuel 25:39 and read it—go on! What three things does David recognize God did for him when he chose not to take his own revenge?



Revenge is something that promises much but delivers very little. As a matter of fact, it even “steals” from the person getting revenge! It steals part of his or her character, robs peace of mind, and takes away the opportunity to see God working. In Deuteronomy God says, “Vengeance is Mine!” And God can do a far better job than we can! The next time someone insults you, will you take your own revenge, or turn the situation over to God?