

28. Anger management 101

5/11/2003

Anger is so debilitating, because it is shown in public and unpredictable. Of course, the answer to anger is self-control which is a part of aspect of the Fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Gal 5:22-23.

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Anger is a part of us and other people don't like about us. Anger is a choice and a learned reaction. According to psychologists, severe anger is a form of insanity.

Though God's mercies are new every morning, so are satan's schemes against us. Like the rest of us, David learned the hard way that we can't live today on yesterday's obedience. In the last chapter, he chose to leave vengeance in God's hands. But in today's scene, he is overcome by his own hotheaded nasty attitude and nearly commits murder.

However, this story doesn't end in the shedding of blood but in an outpouring of grace. Let's take a look at David in one of his most human moments - and at the woman God used to turn his hostile heart back to God Himself.

A. CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

1 Sam 25:1 Then Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

The Israel's last judge and preeminent prophet Samuel had died.

Tired and sad, David left the cool of En Gedi to scratch out some sort of living in the wilderness of Maon. There he and his men employ themselves in protecting the local ranchers and their herds from invading tribes and wild animals. This has nothing to do with Mafia style of "Protection Racket." Theirs is a volunteer force; no contracts are signed. But it's customary for ranchers to compensate their protectors with a small portion of the harvest and the herds.

1 Sam 25:2 Now there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel, and the man was very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

Like the time of harvest, the shearing of the sheep was a festive occasion. The sheep, however, aren't the only ones to get skinned off by Nabal.

1 Sam 25:3 The name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And she was a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man was harsh and evil in his doings. And he was of the house of Caleb.

1) Nabal – A wealthy man with no brain, but selfish, harsh and evil attitude toward everyone else. Nabal means "fool." I guess that his mama didn't like him. It doesn't mean that he was ignorant or retarded. He was living as if there is no God.

Psalms 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

2) **Abigail** – Stood in stark contrast to her husband, she was a smart individual and quick thinker with well groomed manner and godly attitude. To top it off, she had beautiful appearance which is rather rare combination according to Chuck Swindoll. Most likely, their parents decided their marriage before they were married as in their custom was.

There were three beautiful women mentioned in the Bible, Rachel-Jacob's wife, Queen Esther and Abigail. She must a knockout drop dead gorgeous like my wife.

3) **David** – He displayed a remarkable patience and obedience to God in spite of the once in a life time opportunity to finish off his enemy Saul. Instead of doing revenge with his own hands, he depends on God's sovereignty. What a man of God!

B. A VERY BAD MOVE

1 Sam 25:4-9 When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep, David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. And thus you shall say to him who lives in prosperity: 'Peace be to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have! Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.'" So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.

David's request was polite, very gracious and not demanding. His young men now standing in front of Nabal the Idiot with their hats in their hands and waiting.

1 Sam 25:10 Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David, and who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master.

"Who is David?" Many people might not know about a lot of things at that time, but they all heard about David and Saul's 'cat and mouse' situation for several years. Nabal didn't say this because he didn't know David, but to insult him. That was a very bad move of his part.

1 Sam 25:11 Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men when I do not know where they are from?"

Nabal used the words "my" and "I" for seven times in one sentence of his short conversation with David's men. Obviously he was not caring about anyone but himself.

C. LOCK AND LOAD, BOYS

1 Sam 25:12-13 So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred stayed with the supplies.

We may have a great victory in patience today, but it does not carry over to tomorrow. God doesn't give us patience on credit. Everyday is brand new day for God to train us for our patience and faith in Him. Our anger can be controlled by exercis-

ing God given and God honoring patience and forgiveness to that person as God forgives us.

Saul is after David's head. David could easily justify his killing of Saul as self defense, yet David showed his exceptional patience with Saul a few months earlier and spared his life. But because of a few insulting words from a pip squeak fool, David lowered himself to the same level with the fool, Nabal and Saul.

Mt 5:39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Sometimes, we act like David against Nabals of our lives. We may not put on our swords our sides, but in our hearts we prepare to revenge that person we want to get back with a special plan at the proper times.

By the way, four hundred one sword men on horseback against one idiot, that is a good fair fight, don't you think? It is like bringing an M1 Abram Tank to break an egg. Clearly, David is not thinking in godly manner.

D. NOT JUST ANOTHER PRETTY FACE

1 Sam 25:14-17 Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he reviled them. But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him."

Did you notice the servant came to her, not to Nabal? She was open to suggestions and had a teachable heart.

Abigail had her chance to get rid of this miserable pig, Nabal. If I was in her sandals, I would have said something spiritual, like this: "Lord, take him swiftly." But she was not like that.

1 Sam 25:18-19 Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys. And she said to her servants, "Go on before me; see, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

This is the first recorded catering service in the Bible.

E. THE BEAUTY AND THE HOT HEAD HUNGRY WARRIORS

1 Sam 25:20-22 So it was, as she rode on the donkey, that she went down under cover of the hill; and there were David and his men, coming down toward her, and she met them. Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belongs to him. And he has repaid me evil for good. May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who belong to him by morning light."

We may display our godliness we receive from the Lord Jesus so well to many. But at one small moment, we completely lose our cool and go berserk. It is no wonder why the Bible tells us to take captive of every thoughts of ours in 2 Cor 10:5.

2 Cor 10:5 We take a captive every thought to make it obedience to Christ.

1 Sam 25:23-24 Now when Abigail saw David, she hastened to dismount from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, on me let this iniquity be! And please let your maidservant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant.

Abigail was waiting for David with a clog pot in her hands. She already planned what she was supposed to say to this angered man who was about to dismember her stupid husband.

1 Sam 25:25-31 Please, let not my lord regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name is, so is he: Nabal is his name, and folly is with him. But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, since the Lord has held you back from coming to bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hand, now then, let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal. And now this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For the Lord will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord fights the battles of the Lord, and evil is not found in you throughout your days. Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the Lord your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall sling out, as from the pocket of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you ruler over Israel, that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. But when the Lord has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

Her intercession is tactful, acknowledging Nabal's fault and respectfully addressing David as "my lord". She also displays her faith, crediting the Lord with both restraining David from murder and forming a new dynasty through him.

By now, David's men smelled the yummy foods enough, they are starting to whisper to David, "Just say, "Thank you," and take the foods. We are hungry."

F. DAVID'S TEACHABLE SPIRIT

1 Sam 25:32-35 Then David said to Abigail: "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! And blessed is your advice and blessed are you, because you have kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. For indeed, as the Lord God of Israel lives, who has kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hastened and come to meet me, surely by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!" So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and respected your person."

David had a teachable spirit from a woman whom he'd never met before. It is no wonder why God called him "A man after His own heart." May we forever be flexible and teachable. As long as we have that teachable attitudes and hearts, God will teach us and lift us up.

James 4:6 But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

So, what is the moral of this story? Ladies, feed us when we are hungry. When we are hungry, we cannot think clearly, we become unreasonable.

1 Sam 25:36-37 Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light. So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became like a stone.

Abigail just saved her stupid husband's worthless life from the hands of 401 angry and hungry men, what does she get for that? A drunken stupor. She poured out her soul to save his little life and property, she got another slap on the face.

Guys, as husbands one of our consistent ministries should be encouraging our wives in the Lord. In regular base, we should thank our wives for their dedications to us and putting up with all the mess we make.

Abigail didn't tell Nabal about David's raiding party. Does it mean she was a bad wife by not informing the situation to her husband and submitting to his decision? Sometimes, it is wiser for a wife to act before she discusses with her husband for his benefit. This is a case in point. She literally interceded for him.

Suddenly and ironically, the one who had a heart of stone, "became as a stormed" and died.

G. THREE QUALITIES OF A PEACEMAKER

In light of Mother's day today, ladies, as you all know already, we men in general don't think everything thoroughly. For everything God created, He said, "It is good." After He created a man, He said to Himself, "I am gonna create a woman to help him." We men need a lot of help. To give that help, you need to be teachable to the Lord and His Word.

Not just ladies, but we all can learn a lot from this lady peacemaker Abigail.

1) Tact: She called herself as "maidservant" for six times and addressed David as "my lord" for eight times during her conversation with him.

Prov 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

2) Loyalty: Abigail took the responsibility of Nabal's stupidity on herself. Even though she knew Nabal was a jerk and fool who deserves to die, she kept her commitment to him. Especially, over half of marriage is going down the drain nowadays, this kind of commitment is rare and special.

3) Faith: From v. 26 to v. 31, Abigail knew and acknowledged that David would be a king someday.

Isn't it amazing when we please the Lord in spite of the difficult situation, God will do wonderful things to show His approval on our choices of actions?

H. HAPPILY EVER AFTER?

1 Sam 25:38-44 Then it came about, after about ten days, that the Lord struck Nabal, and he died. So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept His servant from evil! For the Lord has returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head." And David sent and pro-

posed to Abigail, to take her as his wife. When the servants of David had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her saying, "David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife." Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, "Here is your maidservant, a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." So Abigail rose in haste and rode on a donkey, attended by five of her maidens; and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them were his wives. But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

It ends almost like a fairy tale story.

I. APPLICATIONS

1) Yesterday's victory does not guarantee today's battle against satan.

David was so gracious to Saul and extended his mercy upon him and spared him from death. But now, David flew off handle at the insult of a fool and chose to wipe out the entire males in the house of Nabal. What happened to David? He let his guard down. He was listening to his own sinful nature.

2) If we handle conflicts in fleshly manner, we will fall.

Pray that you may get God's perspective in every situation.

3) Let's restrain ourselves from anything hasty.

I seldom make wise decisions in hurry. And I've never regret from not saying the things I wanted to say. I don't even recommend to sleep on it. Because with our sinful nature, in most case, it would increase the pressure of the steam cookers of ours. I highly recommend all of us to take it to the Lord and leave at His feet and walk away. Let Him handle it. As we learn in last week, let's not pay back evil with evil. Remember, vengeance is the Lord's. Let Him do it.

4) Sometimes God puts insulting things in front of us to test us and to teach us to wait upon Him.

There is nothing we can do or we should do except waiting upon God. While we wait upon God, the situation may not change, but we get to be changed. We get to have His perspective. Waiting upon God itself is wise.

Psalms 40:1-3 To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth-- Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the Lord.

Isa 40:31 But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

5) When conflict arise, be tactful, be wise, be loyal to do what is right, and be faithful to God.

And God will take care of the rest. Even if the result is not something you and I would like to have, we wouldn't be shamed in the presence of God if we behave in His way.