

## WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

April 3

### MONDAY

Saul had taken the army home, and during the lull in the action, Samuel died. David went down to the wilderness of Paran, perhaps to mourn there. A man named Nabal, a descendant of Caleb, lived there, with his beautiful and wise wife, Abigail. He was extremely rich, but also selfish and wicked.

#### **READ: I Samuel 25:1-3**

How is it that a rascal such as Nabal made his way into Caleb's family line? He got into it by birth of course, but the point is this: great family lines assure nothing. They promote and foster faith, and they provide direction and hope. But in the end, each family member must stand alone - on the ground. No hanging from family trees! That's why, as parents, we pray fiercely for each child, one-by-one, asking God to soften the heart and open the eyes. That's also why we care in a special way for our own family members who are unsaved. That's why our 3x3x3 lists include unsaved family!

### TUESDAY

David heard that it was sheep-shearing season on Nabal's farm. He instructed ten of his men to approach Nabal and greet him in David's name. They were to pronounce a benediction on Nabal and his family.

#### **READ: I Samuel 25:4-6**

Think how desperate David and his followers must have been to go begging to a man such as Nabal. (It would be like you and me asking Bill Gates for a loan.) But think how wise David was in the timing. It was sheep-shearing time! With every snip of the scissors, Nabal could hear the cash register ringing! His mood would be as good as it gets. And think of the greeting which David authorized: "peace on you, your family, and all your domain!" I gather that this was a combination of courtesy and wisdom - a great combination when it comes to dealing with other people. with today!)

### WEDNESDAY

After greeting Nabal, David's men reminded him of the kindnesses which David had shown him in the past. They tell Nabal to ask his shepherds and verify that. Then they asked Nabal to give some supplies to David and his men, phrasing the request in such a way as to make it a sort of payback.

#### **READ: I Samuel 25:7-9**

David's men are his messengers. David had instructed them in what to say and how to say it. And actually, they understate the kindnesses of the past. For in verse 16, Nabal's own shepherds say that *they were a wall unto us both by night and day*, evidently meaning that they protected them from marauding bands of Philistines. What we see here is someone understating his own goodness! Is that not refreshing! Would it not be great for you and me to be understaters? David's example says, "Do not boast. Don't let the right hand know what the left hand is doing. And don't let others know what either hand is doing!"

### THURSDAY

Nabal answered curtly: who does David think he is anyway? Rebels such as he were a dime a dozen. (or maybe a shekel a score!) He added that all the provisions he had were his own, and that they were for his own family, and certainly not for David and his men about whom he knew little and cared less.

#### **READ: I Samuel 25:10-11**

Nabal is Dale Carnegie's antithesis. Worse than that, he is an enemy of God's own! He scorns David by asking about him in the way he does, and then by implying that he's just another useless fugitive. Had Nabal not known of Goliath? Had he not heard people singing, "...and David has killed his ten thousands!" Is it possible that he did not hear some kind of rumor about David's most recent rescue of the people of Keilah when Saul would not help them? Nabal, in fact, would have known all of this and more, as future conversations will reveal. It didn't matter. Nor did the good things which David had done for him in the past. Nothing mattered except his own selfish desires. Lord, help us always to be people to whom much matters: the goodness of others; their kindnesses; their needs; and their desperate condition.

### FRIDAY

David's men reported back to him concerning all that had happened. Unhappy with Nabal's response, David grabbed his sword and ordered four hundred of his men to prepare for battle. He left two hundred to guard the *stuff*.

#### **READ: I Samuel 25:12-13**

Here we see David at his worst. (We see him at his worst on other occasions as well!) We see him angrily reacting to Nabal's refusal to send him supplies. That's the point: he was just like us! The lesson is one of encouragement and hope. Just think, even David - the man after God's own heart - committed sins that we would never expect to come from him. Then don't be too surprised about the sins we see in other believers, nor shocked by the sins we see in our own lives. The believer's response to sin in his life must be one of remorse and repentance. David exemplifies that for us in other passages. A great hope we have is that even though we sin, we can respond as David did, and find ourselves pursuing the things of God.

### SATURDAY

A young man who worked for Nabal somehow learned of David's plans to battle his employer, and he runs straight to Nabal's wife, Abigail, and tells her. He includes a short explanation about how David's followers had been so good to him and others with him in the past. He tells Abigail that he would like to tell Nabal but that he cannot, and he pleads with her to act wisely, before it's too late for all of them.

#### **READ: I Samuel 25:14-17**

Does it seem that this young man is slandering Nabal? Well, think of these points: he would have preferred to speak with Nabal directly, but Nabal would not permit that; he reported what Nabal did without editorializing on how foolish or greedy he had been; in telling Abigail about the kindness of David's men, he was suggesting in a roundabout way that perhaps Nabal didn't know the whole story; he was telling Abigail about all this. Abigail, as Nabal's wife, would know the truth or falseness of his words better than anyone else; and finally, he was telling her not out of spite or for vengeance, but to spare the lives of those around Nabal who might also come to harm. Less than this could have been slander. This was not that. This was the boldness and bravery that comes from knowing one's motives are pure.