

**BOOK OF 1 SAMUEL
DEALING WITH ANGER
1 SAMUEL 25:1-44**

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Introduction

So, in chapter 24 we were given a glimpse of why David was called “*a man after God’s own heart.*” He had the opportunity to take revenge against King Saul and kill him too.

But instead of murdering his enemy and claiming the kingdom of Israel for himself, David exercised great grace and wisdom. He allowed Saul to live and then he reached out to his enemy in love and forgiveness and even sought reconciliation with Saul.

Chapter 25 finds David in a different set of circumstances and in an entirely different state of mind. In fact some might say, is this David the same one in the previous Chapter.

Chapter 25 shows what happens when anger is allowed to control our lives. The fact is that we all get angry from time to time. The problem comes though when we don’t control our anger as we should. In fact, too often, our anger controls us instead of us controlling it! Before we know it, our anger has caused devastation and destruction on a scale we never imagined.

Someone said, “*Anger like fire, finally dies out - but only after leaving a path of destruction.*”

That is the danger of anger. That is why the Bible has much to say to the believer about controlling the temper, anger, and wrath:

Ephesians 4:26 - “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

Psalms 37:8 – “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.”

Proverbs 14:29 - “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding: but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly.”

Proverbs 19:11 - “The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression.”

Ecclesiastes 7:9 – “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”

Matthew 5:22 – “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”

Let’s look at this episode from the life of David and notice a few thoughts on the matter of dealing with anger.

I. DAVID’S ANGER CONSIDERED. (vs. 2-13; 21-22)

A. The Reason For His Anger.

David had been on the run from Saul. He and his men had been hiding out in the wilderness. While they were there, they had been doing two things.

First, they had been fighting some skirmishes with some of the Philistines in the area. (1 Samuel 23)

Secondly, they had served as a protective force for the shepherds in that area. (1 Samuel 25:7)

They had preventing the enemy from taking the sheep and harming the servants. David and his men probably took on this sideline as a means to earn food and provisions while they lived in the wilderness.

It was customary, in those days, for the person who received protection to reward the person who provided the protection.

So, when David had heard that it was sheering time, (vs. 4), he sent some of his men to remind Nabal that they had provided protection and that, as a result, none of his sheep had been lost, (vs. 7). David sent his request at sheering time because that was when the shepherds sold their wool and made their profits from the flocks.

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So, David sent his men to Nabal with a kind and courteous greeting. (vs. 6)

He reminded Nabal of the effective service they had provided, (vs. 7) He made no demands, but simply asked Nabal to do the right thing. (vs. 8)

Instead of responding in gratitude, Nabal answered David's men with some harsh words. In verses 9-11, Nabal called David's integrity into question; he called him a rebel; and he refused to do right by David and his men.

Have you ever done something good for someone and they responded with ungratefulness?

When that kind of thing happens, our flesh tends to get all stirred up. We get angry and sometimes we say and do things we later regret.

Some anonymous writer said, "*Anger manages everything badly.*" They were exactly right!

It is recorded in history that although Alexander the Great conquered the known world, he couldn't conquer his own temper. On one occasion, Cletus, a childhood friend and a general in Alexander's army, became drunk and insulted the leader in front of his men. Alexander became enraged and hurled a spear at Cletus, intending merely to scare him. Instead, the spear killed Alexander's life-long friend. Remorse engulfed Alexander as he assessed the destruction of his uncontrollable anger. If we don't control our anger, it will control us!

So, we see *The Reason For His Anger...*

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B. The Reaction Of His Anger. (vs. 12-13)

When David's men returned to him and told him Nabal's response, David blew his stack and gathered his men together to exact revenge on Nabal.

He prepared 400 men to go after one man. You think that might have been overkill! Uncontrolled anger can make us do some pretty stupid things sometimes!

Most of us have said or done things in anger that we wish we had not said or done? Right? We need Gods help to manage our tempers for the glory of the Lord.

Aristotle said, "*It is easy to fly into a passion—anybody can do that—but to be angry with the right person to the right extent and at the right time and with the right object and in the right way—that is not easy, and it is not everyone who can do it.*" How true that is!

An old Chinese proverb says, "*He who flies off handle always makes bad landing.*"

Nabal's response should not have surprised David. Look at how the Bible describes this man. (vs. 3) He is called "**churlish.**" This word means that Nabal was **hard to get along with. He had a bad attitude!** We are also told that "**he was evil in his doings.**" This means that Nabal made a habit of doing others dirty in life and in business.

Verse 2 tells us that he was a rich man. The phrase "*very great*" means "*heavy*" and that tells us that Nabal was loaded. This also indicates that he was selfish. Even his very name gives us a glimpse into his nature. The name Nabal means "*Fool.*"

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So, David encountered this man named *Fool* who lives up to his name. David responded to Nabal by going off in a blind rage to get even with him.

Here is what we need to get into our hearts today: **we cannot always control what the other person does to us; but we are in absolute control of how we respond to what the other person does!**

The Reason For His Anger...The Reaction Of His Anger...

C. **The Results Of His Anger. (vs. 21-22)**

As a result of his anger, David became temporarily insane! He took a force of 400 men to kill one guy just because he felt insulted! That was insanity!

David had refrained from killing Saul, because he saw Saul as *“the Lord’s anointed”*, 24:6, and as his own superior.

Here, David sees Nabal as an ant that he can stomp into submission. David, after all, was going to be king someday; Nabal was a *“nobody!”* What right did this *“nobody”* have to treat King David in such a way? David wanted to make him pay. David was blinded by his rage!

That is what anger can do! It can take control of the mind and turn sane men and women into raving lunatics. Anger can cause you to say things you wouldn’t ordinarily say. It can cause you to do things you would not ordinarily do. Anger can make you act like a fool! Anger can make you do things that you’ll need to repent of! (Can I get a witness?)

If we are honest, most of us would probably have to admit that anger is a problem we find that we have to deal with all too often. Thankfully, there was a solution for David and there is one for us as well.

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II. **DAVID’S ANGER CONFRONTED. (vs. 14-31)**

A. **Abigail’s Appraisal Of The Situation. (vs. 14-20)**

Nabal was a fool, but **his wife was everything that he was not.** Her name, **Abigail, means, “My father is joy.”** She was a beautiful woman physically, and she was a wise woman spiritually She was as lovely of heart as she was of appearance.

When she heard what her foolish husband had done, **she took the necessary steps to make matters right.** She got together the food and things David and his men needed and she went out to meet David **with the hope that she could change his mind.**

Look at verse 19. We are told that she did this without consulting her husband. She wasn’t working against him, **she was actually working on his behalf!**

Some women might have selfishly used this opportunity and said, *“This is what I have been waiting for. I’ll just sit here and wait and let David take care of that old fool for me.”* But, Abigail didn’t do that. She went to work behind the scenes trying her best to protect her husband. In fact, she very literally saved his life!

Why didn’t Abigail tell Nabal what she was doing? The same reason the servants did not talk to him. *(Vs 14-17)*

Nabal was totally unapproachable. He was probably so stubborn that when he made up his mind, **he would not listen to reason. Being a stubborn man is dangerous...being both a stubborn and angry man can be even more dangerous!**

Let me just say this and move on. Fellows, most of the time it would pay for us to listen to our wife a little more. **God gave our wives to us as our “helpmeet” ... our completer.** Wives will often have wisdom and insight that we do not have in certain situations of life.

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Abigail's Appraisal Of The Situation.

- B. Abigail's Appeal In The Situation. (vs. 23-31)**
When Abigail met David, **she humbled herself at his feet. She referred to herself as David's "handmaid" six times and called him "my lord" fourteen times.**

She came into his presence humble, open, and honest. She admitted that David and his men had suffered wrong at the hand of Nabal. She admitted that her husband was a wicked man and a fool. (vs. 25)

She asked for forgiveness and pled with David to accept her gift and to spare Nabal and the rest. (vs 27-28)

She told David that God sent her to stop him from murdering a man in anger. (vs. 26) She told David that **if he killed Nabal in anger it would hang over his legacy like a dark cloud. If he did what his anger was telling him to do, he would have regretted it forever.** She appealed to the spiritual side of David!

Thankfully, **we have the Holy Spirit who does the same thing in our lives if we will listen. When the flesh gets its anger stirred up, the Spirit of God will remind us that we need to act slowly, and sensibly.** He will remind us of *James 1:19-20*, which says, "*Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*"

- C. Abigail's Achievement In The Situation. (vs. 32)**
Abigail's wisdom overcame the anger in David's heart and he backed away from his plans. Disaster was averted because David was willing to listen to reason!

Sadly, the loud cry of anger in our hearts sometimes is so strong that we cannot, or will not hear!

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If we will listen, the still, small voice of the Spirit of God will bring some reason to us!

If we could just learn to calm down, listen to what the Spirit is saying to and respond to Him instead of the flesh, it would save us a lot of heartache in every relationship in our lives.

DAVID'S ANGER CONSIDERED...CONFRONTED...

III. DAVID'S ANGER CONQUERED!

The closing verses of this chapter show us how and why David was able to overcome his anger. There are some lessons here that I believe we all can use.

- A. David's Anger Was Conquered By Being Open To The Working Of God. (vs. 32-35)**

David backed down because he saw that God had worked in the situation to send Abigail to him to prevent him from committing a terrible sin. David accepted the things Abigail brought and allowed her to return home with his promise that all was well.

What would have been so wrong if David would have taken matters in his own hand and gave old Nabal what he deserved? The wrong would have been in the fact that God, not us, is the One authorized to right all our wrongs! Anytime we take matters into our own hands and seek to get even with one who has wronged us, we sin against the Lord. But, as usual, God has a better way, *Romans 12:17-21*— "*Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good,*"

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David conquered his anger because he was open to the Lord and willing to do things God's way. That is a plan that will work for any of us!

B. David's Anger Was Conquered By Letting The Lord Take Care Of His Problems! (vs. 36-42)

When Abigail returned home, she found her husband drunk. She knew that if she told him what she had done while he was in that state, that he was liable to do something really foolish.

So, she waited until the morning and then she told him what she had done. When she did, Nabal experienced what many believe to have been either a heart attack or a stroke.

Either he was overcome by anger at what Abigail did and what David threatened to do; or he was overcome by fear. Either way, he stayed in that condition for ten days and then he died.

Now, because **David was willing to allow the Lord to take care of his problems for him**, he enjoyed the victory over Nabal. Instead of taking revenge and getting his hands red with the blood of an enemy; David's hands were clean.

In the end, David married Abigail and thereby came to possess all that had belonged to Nabal. In other words, David got it all simply because he refused to allow his anger to rule!

David proved by his actions in this encounter why he was called "*A man after God's own heart.*" David responded properly to the voice of the Lord and his anger was kept in check.

May that be a lesson to each of us! No matter how strongly we may think that we have a right to get revenge against those who have hurt us, it is never right to violate the Word of God by allowing anger to rule our lives!