

Running with the Big Dogs

Experiencing success in life by following God's lead from 1 & 2 Samuel

The Better Part of Valor

Introduction to 1 Samuel 25-27

As Shakespeare said in Henry IV, "the better part of valor is discretion", or wisdom. In this week's study we find this principle illustrated both positively and negatively. In the first instance, while all Israel was mourning Samuel's death, David and his 600 men went to Nabal and requested some food and drink. They had protected his flocks from raiders during shearing season, and now merely wanted a little sustenance. However, Nabal derisively rejected David's request, showing how foolish he was: not only had he received David's protection, but he also knew that David was to be the next king of Israel. Nabal's wife, Abigail, though, showed wisdom. She went to David and apologized for her husband's rejection, acknowledged David's position, and

humbly showed her gratitude by offering provisions for his men. David accepted this, and altered his plans to attack Nabal; and, when Nabal died ten days later, he took Abigail as his wife. Both her wisdom, and his discretion, was truly the better part of valor, as peace prevailed. In the next section, as Saul continued to pursue David, he unwittingly wound up in David's cave, vulnerable to his attack. David wisely realized, however, that it would be better to not harm "God's anointed", and chose to simply talk to Saul instead. He showed the wisdom of leaving vengeance in God's hands, and when he did, Saul's life was sustained, and Saul promised to stop his pursuit of David (a promise he later broke). In



When you run with God and follow His lead, you will have success in life.

the last story, though, David violated the wisdom principle, and, fearing Saul, fled to the Philistines and set up his base there. Had God not spared him, this would have led him to fight against his fellow Israelites; yet, if David had employed faith in God, his fear would have been subdued as God took care of him. In each of these cases, wisdom was clearly the better part of valor.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- **Worship**—You were planned for God's pleasure
- **Fellowship**—You were formed for God's family
- **Discipleship**—You were created to become like Christ
- **Ministry**—You were shaped for serving God
- **Evangelism**—You were made for a mission

Study/Discussion Questions for 1 Samuel 25-27

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources)

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| <p>1. Read 25:1-8. After Samuel's death, what did David and his men do (v1, 4-7)? What did he want in return (v8), and from whom (v5)? How would you describe those whom he asked (v2-3)?</p> | |
| <p>2. From 25:9-17 what was Nabal's response (v9-11), and how would you evaluate it? How did David react (12-13), and, based on v14-17, was David's anger justified?</p> | |
| <p>3. In 25:18-31 how did Abigail 1st act wisely (18-19, 23-25), and what did she know, that Nabal ignored (v28, 30-31)? Next, what was Abigail's request (v26-28, 29, 31), and why was this wise?</p> | |

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I Samuel 25-27 Study Questions (cont)

4. Looking at 25:32-38 what praise did David give God for Abigail's actions (v32, 34), and how did he praise Abigail (v33)? How was Abigail blessed (v34-35), and how did God resolve the situation (v36-38)? What does this teach us?

5. According to 25:39-44 how did David interpret Nabal's death (v39)? What else did this lead to (v39-40), and what was the response (v41-42)? Describe the rest of David's marital situation (v43, 44).

6. From 26:1-12 as Saul pursued David, what opportunity occurred (v5-7) and why (v12)? What request did David receive (v8), how did he respond (v9), and why (v9-10)? What did he do instead (v11-12) Apply David's response to us.

7. Based on 26:13-20 who did David taunt (v13-15), and what was his proof (v16)? When Saul answered, how did David respond (v17-20), and what was good about this response (v18, 19, 20)?

8. Using 26:21-25 how did David's words affect Saul (v21, 25), and how did David deflect the glory to God (v22-24)? How does David's wisdom lead to life, and how can we follow this example?

9. Read 27:1-7. Of what did David become fearful (v1), and how did he react (v1-3)? What was wrong with this (see 26:19)? What 2 things happened as a result (v4, 5-7)?

10. In 27:8-12 what occurred (v8-9), and what lie did David tell Achish (v10)? What did David have to do because of the lie (v11), and how did David start "living" the lie at this point (v11-12)?

11. How was Abigail wise in 1 Sam 25, and David in 1 Sam 26, and what were the results? What were the results of not following God's wisdom in chapter 27? What is the overall lesson to you?

Scripture to Remember

"The Lord will repay each man for his righteousness and faithfulness."

1 Samuel 26:23

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Restoring—Raising Up*

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Life Group Questions

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Share with the group the biggest debt you ever had to pay off. How did it feel while you were paying it, and after you paid it off?
2. Why do most people deal with guilt by denying it, or by deferring it (putting it off) until later? What do you think it does to us when we fail to deal with it?
3. Discuss the meaning of the 4 ways God forgives (instantly, completely, repeatedly, freely). Which is the hardest to accept, and which means most to you?
4. Share why the "guilt" reason is a compelling reason to forgive. How do the 2 types of God's forgiveness, judicial and relational, relate to this?
5. What do we usually think we will lose if we forgive others? Discuss whether or not that is true. On the other hand, what "gain" is there from forgiving others?
6. Discuss anything else that impressed you from the worship service if you have time.