

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, February 20, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

DAVID... A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART "What to Feed an Angry Man" *1 Samuel 25*

One of the most persistent and troublesome struggles the Christian faces is anger... both his or her own and that of others and how to react to it. Anger has a way of deflating a believer and frustrating one's faith, of taking away a believer's testimony, of affecting most every area of a believer's life. Some have even said, "I got so mad, I nearly lost my Christianity!" And indeed some have in so many ways. In wrestling with anger, our resolutions to improve seem as futile as our attempts to keep it in check. It comes in many forms... from irritation all the way up to rage and uncontrollable temper... from inner uneasiness to actual displays of violence. It can also come in our attempt to deal with the anger of another... we can get mad ourselves and quickly lose control. Anger!

Many Old Testament scholars believe that David was redheaded... as they interpret the verse that says "he was ruddy" (1 Sam. 16:12). Perhaps he was. Whether that contributed to his passionate style of life is uncertain, but we do know he, David, had a temper. On more than one occasion, he was prompted to retaliate in anger rather than remaining cool, calm, and collected. This remarkable man who for so long had modeled patience under "Saul's spear" finally lost control. The story contained in 1 Samuel 25 is extremely practical, showing us the humanity of this great man of God and illustrating the power of a woman who knew how to use her culinary art with wisdom.

I. SOME INITIAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT ANGER (Various Scripture)

Some Principles on Anger: *Write a corresponding principle in your own words based on the verse and its teaching on anger.*

1. **Job 5:2 – Principle:** _____

2. **Psalms 37:8 – Principle:** _____

3. **Proverbs 14:17, 29 – Principle:** _____

4. **Proverbs 15:1 – Principle:** _____

5. **Proverbs 19:11 – Principle:** _____

6. Proverbs 22:24 – Principle: _____
7. Matthew 5:21-22 – Principle: _____
8. Galatians 5:19-20 – Principle: _____
9. 1 Timothy 2:8 – Principle: _____
10. James 1:19 – Principle: _____

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is perhaps one of the most practical components of the New Testament. Chapter 4 offers us down-to-earth advice about the problem of anger. From the text (vv.26-27), three critical observation can be made.²⁶ ***"In your anger do not sin"***²⁷: ***Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*** – Ephesians 4:26-27 (NIV)

3 Three Observations About Anger from Ephesians 4:26-27:

- 1. Anger is a God-given emotion** – Just as God has given us the emotion of compassion, He has given us the motion of anger. Our pattern of emotions was designed by Him. Just as there is something inhuman about one who never shows love, so it is with the person who show no anger. The text says, ***"Be angry..."***
- 2. Anger does not necessarily have to lead to sin** – The text is qualified, ***"Be angry, and do not sin..."*** That means when there are actually times when the emotion of anger is appropriate and good... and even helpful. If we are angry (having just cause), we are not to carry that anger to the point of sin.
- 3. Anger should always come with precautions** – The apostle Paul put it this way, ***"... do not let the sun go down on your wrath (anger), nor give place to the devil."*** Thus we have two precautions we should always take with anger:

2 Precautions in Anger:

- 1. We must not prolong our anger into the night** - In Paul's day the closing of the day occurred with the setting of the sun, hence the idea "... do not let the sun go down on your anger..." We cannot afford to sleep on wrong feelings. Forgiveness must be in our heart at day's end. Why? In **Matthew 6:15** Jesus gave us this strong warning, ***"But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."*** (NIV) or as the New King James says it, ***"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."***
- 2. We must not express our anger in such a way that we are weakened and the devil produces his character through us** - Unchecked anger may lead to satanic involvement in our lives. In Matthew, the 16th chapter, just following Peter's great confession of Christ as the "Son of the Living God." Jesus begins to the disciples what is about to happened to him... he will suffer and be abused, and eventually killed at the hands of the Jewish religious leader. Peter becomes "angry" and in verse 22 Peter's perhaps "righteous indignation" turns from irritation to indignation and then to wrath,

Read: Mt. 16:21-23

fury and maybe even rage as he begins to rebuke Jesus in Matthew 16:22. Jesus words to Peter in **Matthew 16:23, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the thing of God, but the things of men.”** Do you see it? Why did Jesus use such a harsh rebuke of Peter as to essentially call him “Satan”? What did he see in Peter’s mind (heart) when he said “you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.”? Unchecked anger at it’s worst... perhaps in Peter’s mind was murder, “I’ll kill them first, before they kill you!” and at least an unwilling to yield to what might be God ultimate plan... Jesus’ death on all of mankind’s behalf, even those who would kill him. The point, anger out of control weakens who we are in Christ, obscures our perspective (Christian perspective)_ and brings us more in like with the enemy who came to “steal, kill and destroy” (Jn. 10:10)

A Principle to Remember About Anger: *“Getting angry is not necessarily the problem, rather what we choose to do with that anger becomes the problem!”* In other words... it’s how we react, how we act, how we respond to the anger we experience. There are some things we need to get angry about, but Paul said to be angry and sin not! It’s how we choose to act on that anger that become the problem... the sin. For David, a man after God’s own heart, he had to learn that. The God who look at the heart, wants to know what’s going on in here in our anger. Are we going to let it fest and grow into a heart full of wrath, hate and malice, or into a heart full of grace and mercy, and kindness, and restoration and highest good.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION (1 Samuel 25:1-2)

“Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon. ²A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.”

The basic problem in 1 Samuel is one of a fractured “employer-employee” relationship. David, the employee, didn’t go on strike when his “boss” failed to maintain an agreement with him, but made plans instead to kill him... anger got the best of him

1. **David and his men** – the 600 who gathered at the cave of Adullam had been trained by David to fight. They became a band of guerilla-like warriors who roamed the wilderness of Paran protecting shepherds from the predatory raids of the wild tribes of the desert.
2. **Sheep and the situation** – There was an unwritten understanding that when sheep-shearing time arrived, the sheep owners of the region would offer remuneration from their profits to those who had protected their shepherds (something like tipping, giving a gratuity). One instance is reported involving a wealthy man (v.2) who had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. Shearing time had come, which meant it was payday. The problem arose when Nabal wouldn’t pay up.

Some Observations About What Can Contribute to Getting Mad:

1. When we are tied and weary from life's struggles and trials we may be prone to anger.
2. When we are feeling particularly cheated and deprived of what we feel should be ours we may be prone to anger.
3. When we feel that others are being taking advantage of and put in harms way we may be prone to anger.

III. MAIN CHARACTERS (1 Samuel 25:2-4)

"²A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. ³His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings. ⁴While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep."

1. **Nabal (vv.2-3)** – He was from Maon, while his business was in Carmel. He was quite wealthy. In verse 2 the word translated as “wealthy” (rich) literally means “heavy”... we would say he was “loaded.” The Hebrew name – Nabal – mean “fool;” the man lived his life as if there were no God. Furthermore, he was “surly” (harsh, rude stubborn, belligerent, gruff, curt, impolite, discourteous) and “mean” (evil, dishonest, deceptive) in his dealings (v.3). ***How do you deal with people like this without getting angry?***

Some helps for dealing with anger prone and anger provoking people:

- (1) **Be gracious** – Tender each situation with grace... show grace where there is none. Sometimes this is easier said than done, but as a believer who has been shone much grace, be in the habit of extending it.
 - (2) **Use filters** – Use a filter on both what you hear and how you hear, and use a filter on what you say in response. In other words, we must consider the source in situations that involve an anger prone or anger provoking individual. If we know this about them or quickly discern it try not to take everything they say so hard given their personality and be very careful how you respond so as not to provoke them further.
 - (3) **Try empathy** – This is a tough one, but often if we can just see past a person's anger to the person and what may have created such an angry heart we may be much more capable of dealing with them or overlooking some of their angry temperament.
2. **Abigail (v.3)** – Nabal's wife was not at all like her husband. Two characteristics are mentioned of her in verse 3: (1) she was “intelligent” (of good understanding, wise); (2) she was “beautiful” (beautiful in appearance and form literally)... what a rare blend.

What Abigail Did Right In This Story:

1. Was gracious
2. Used filters

3. Was empathetic

**Watch for it as the story unfolds*

3. **David (vv.4ff)** – David had sent his faithful men to protect Nabal’s men in the fields. David had done his job... Nabal had not. A conflict developed.

What David Did Wrong in This Story:

1. Was not gracious

2. Used no filters

3. Was not empathetic

**Watch for it as the story unfolds*

IV. NATURAL CONFLICTS (1 Samuel 25:3-13)

“³His name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.⁴ While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep.⁵ So he sent ten young men and said to them, ‘Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name.⁶ Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!’⁷ ‘Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing.⁸ Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.’⁹ When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited.¹⁰ Nabal answered David’s servants, ‘Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.¹¹ Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?’¹² David’s men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.¹³ David said to his men, ‘Put on your swords!’ So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.”

In addition to the conflict between David and Nabal, two others are necessary to consider: one involving Nabal and his wife, and to other involving David alone... an internal battle between anger and murder. All these were in some way related.

1. **Between a husband and a wife (implied in v.3)** – Nabal and Abigail were strikingly different in temperament, life-style, behavior, attitude, and philosophy. It’s likely that the two did not choose each other as marriage partners, since culturally and historically, parents did the choosing. There was serious conflict in this marriage and home.
2. **Between an employer and an employee (vv.5-12)** – David had sent his messengers to Nabal at shearing time, carrying a warm, gracious, and courteous greeting, *‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!’⁷* (v.6). After reviewing the services which had been rendered to Nabal’s men, the messengers asked on David’s behalf, *“...be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can*

find for them” (v.8). **Conflict:** Refusing, Nabal said, ¹¹ *Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?”* (v.11). Essentially this left David and his men hungry and mistreated.

3. **Between anger and murder (v.13)** – Up to this point, David had exercised restraint and patience. He had refused retaliation (revenge) against Saul earlier, but Nabal’s actions resulted in David’s temporarily losing a personal battle. In verse 13 we read, ¹³ *David said to his men, ‘Put on your swords!’* Pushed to the extreme and at his wits final end (he had finally had enough of the mistreatment) David’s anger turned into a consideration of murder.

V. CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT (1 Samuel 25:13-39)

With his plan in place and acting on his anger, David was headed for a tragedy...

1. **David’s order is given (v.13)** – ¹³ *David said to his men, ‘Put on your swords!’ So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.* Four hundred followed David, while two hundred remained to guard the baggage. There was no real match here (400 to 1)... a whole army against Nabal. The battle, however, was not so much been Nabal and David, as it was a battle within David’s heart. On one side... feelings of anger; on the other.. an intention to commit murder... to kill.
2. **Abigail is informed (vv.14-17)** – ¹⁴ *One of the servants told Nabal’s wife Abigail: ‘David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. ¹⁵ Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. ¹⁶ Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them. ¹⁷ Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.’* Perhaps hoping she would join David’s cause against her husband, a young man told her of David’s plan. Humanly speaking, she was ripe for taking up David’s cause given her tumultuous relationship with Nabal herself). Though he the servant accurately described Abigail’s husband as *“... a wicked man that no one can talk to...”*(v.17), Abigail chose to remain loyal to her husband, Nabal.
3. **Abigail reacts wisely (vv.18-19)** – ¹⁸ *Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs^[b] of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. ¹⁹ Then she told her servants, ‘Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.’ But she did not tell her husband Nabal.’* Instead of fighting Nabal, she protected him without his knowledge. She got busy and prepared a meal to take David (200 loaves of bread, 2 large jugs or barrels of wine, 5 roasted sheep, 5 measures or 2 bushels of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes.).

4. **David expresses his anger (vv.20-22)** – *“²⁰As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them. ²¹David had just said, ‘It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good. ²²May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!’”* Upon encountering David, she found a man brooding with deep anger and resentment as reflected in his statement in verse 21.
5. **Abigail appeals graciously (vv.23-31)** – *“²³When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground. ²⁴She fell at his feet and said: ‘My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say. ²⁵May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent. ²⁶Now since the LORD has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal. ²⁷And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you. ²⁸Please forgive your servant’s offense, for the LORD will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he fights the LORD’s battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live. ²⁹Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the LORD your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. ³⁰When the LORD has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel, ³¹my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD has brought my master success, remember your servant.’”* This wise appeal reflected the woman’s tact, faith and loyalty. Dismounting her donkey, she fell at David’s feet. She used disarming words to break through his hostility... she called herself his “servant” or maidservant six times and referred to him as “my lord” or “my master” at least 11 times in the NIV. She asked that all blame be credited to her alone.
6. **David responds humbly (vv.32-33)** – *“³²David said to Abigail, ‘Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. ³³May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.’”* Acknowledging God’s working through the woman, David said, “Blessed by the Lord your worship” (vv.32-33). Later, giving further recognition to God’s intervention he added these words in verse 39, ... “Praise be to the LORD, who has... kept his servant from doing wrong...”

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUPERNATURAL SOLUTIONS

1. **When possible... WISDOM** – Whatever you do when conflicts arise, be wise. See the whole picture. Restrain yourself from hasty actions. Pray and get God’s perspective.
2. **When impossible... WAIT** – Whenever you realize there is nothing you can do, wait. Allow the power of God to work (see Psalm 40).

VII. EXHORTATIONS ON DEALING WITH ANGER (Selected Proverbs)

In his book “Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Back,” by Dr. Charles Swindoll, he has a chapter on anger that is subtitled, “The Burning Fuse of Hostility.” That is a pretty good picture of anger isn’t it? Anyway, in the chapter Dr. Swindoll give us four way to win over anger. Let’s look at them briefly in closing:

4 Ways To Win Over Anger:

1. **Learn to ignore petty disagreements (Proverbs 19:11 & 20:3)** – The old saying, “Chose your battle wisely” hold true here. There are something that is better to just let go so “Let it go!” *“The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger, and his glory is to overlook a transgression.” – Proverbs 19:11 (NKJV)* *“It is honorable for a man to stop striving, since any fool can start a quarrel.” – Proverbs 20:3 (NKJV)*
2. **Refrain from close association with anger-prone people (Proverbs 19:19 & 22:24-25)** – Anger-prone people, friends, family and associates can quickly spread their disease. A person prone to easily anger may cause the same reaction in you. *“A man of great wrath will suffer punishment; for if you rescue him, you will have to do it again.” – Proverbs 19:19 (NKJV)* ²⁴ *Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go,* ²⁵ *Lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul.” –Proverbs 22:24-25 (NKJV)*
3. **Keep close check on your tongue (Proverbs 15:1 & 21:23)** – Not only should we be careful that our words don’t stir up anger, but also that we lean to put the fire out rather than to stoke the flames. This in not just about not speaking, but being careful when you do speak... speaking wisely, with careful words. It is sometimes helpful to check yourself that your words are not a knee-jerk reaction in a given situation. We say, “Stick and stone may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” That is simply not true! Words do hurt and sometimes are the surest kindling for the fires of anger. *“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” –Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV)* *“Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.” – Proverbs 21:23 (NKJV)*
4. **Cultivate honesty in communication without letting anger build up (Proverbs 27:4-6)** – Say what you mean and mean what you say. As scripture says, “Let your yes be yes and your no, no!” (James 5:12) Cultivate honesty in your communication *“⁴ Wrath is cruel and anger a torrent, but who is able to stand before jealousy? ⁵ Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. ⁶ Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” –Proverbs 27:4-6 (NKJV)*