

Now Samuel died, and all Israel gathered for his funeral. They buried him at his house in Ramah. Then David moved down to the wilderness of Maon.

There was a wealthy man from Maon who owned property near the town of Carmel. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats, and it was sheep-shearing time.

This man's name was Nabal, and his wife, Abigail, was a sensible and beautiful woman. But Nabal, a descendant of Caleb, was crude and mean in all his dealings.

1 Samuel 25:4 When David heard that Nabal was shearing his sheep,

he sent ten of his young men to Carmel with this message for Nabal:

"Peace and prosperity to you, your family, and everything you own!

I am told that it is sheep-shearing time. While your shepherds stayed among us near Carmel, we never harmed them, and nothing was ever stolen from them.

Ask your own men, and they will tell you this is true. So would you be kind to us, since we have come at a time of celebration? Please share any provisions you might have on hand with us and with your friend David."

David's young men gave this message to Nabal in David's name, and they waited for a reply.

"Who is this fellow David?" Nabal sneered to the young men. "Who does this son of Jesse think he is? There are lots of servants these days who run away from their masters.

Should I take my bread and my water and my meat that I've slaughtered for my shearers and give it to a band of outlaws who come from who knows where?"

So David's young men returned and told him what Nabal had said.

And David said to his men, "Get your swords!" And every man strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred remained to guard the equipment.

Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants went to Abigail and told her, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he screamed insults at them.

These men have been very good to us, and we never suffered any harm from them. Nothing was stolen from us the whole time they were with us.

In fact, day and night they were like a wall of protection to us and the sheep.

You need to know this and figure out what to do, for there is going to be trouble for our master and his whole family. He's so illtempered that no one can even talk to him!"

1 Samuel 25:18a

Abigail wasted no time. She quickly gathered 200 loaves of bread, two wineskins full of wine, five sheep that had been slaughtered, nearly a bushel of roasted grain,

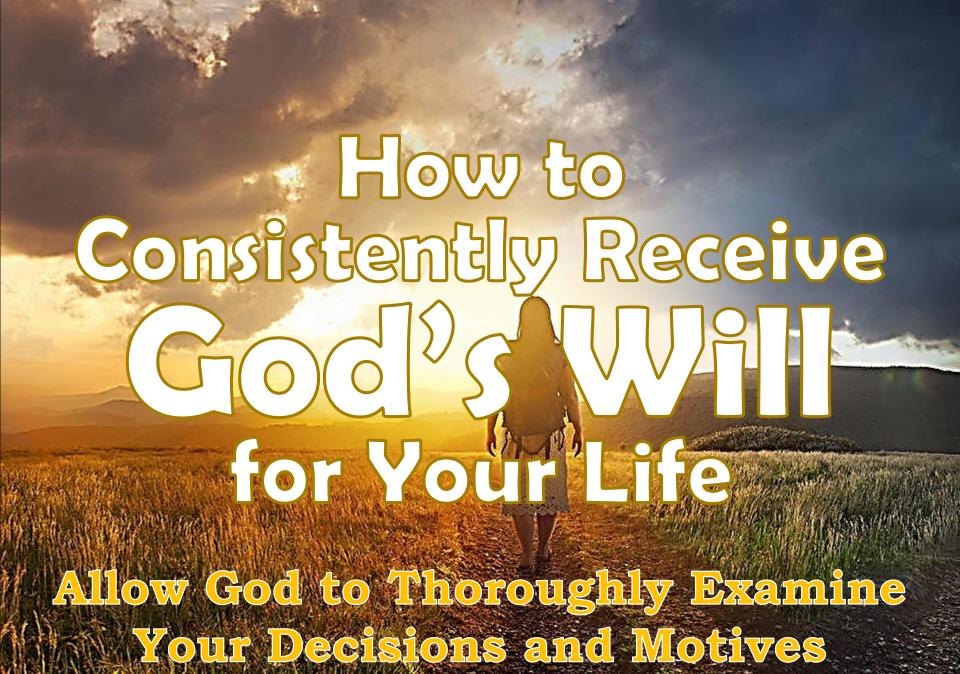
1 Samuel 25:18b 100 clusters of raisins, and 200 fig cakes. She packed them on donkeys

and said to her servants, "Go on ahead. I will follow you shortly."
But she didn't tell her husband
Nabal what she was doing.

As she was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her.

David had just been saying to his men, "A lot of good it did to help this fellow. We protected his flocks in the wilderness, and nothing he owned was lost or stolen. But he has repaid me evil for good.

May God strike me and kill me if even one male of his household is still alive tomorrow morning!"



Principle #1

Allowing God to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives is about taking the time to process why you are tempted to cut corners, to repay evil with evil, or to do something that is outside of God's universal will.

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David's Known Motives

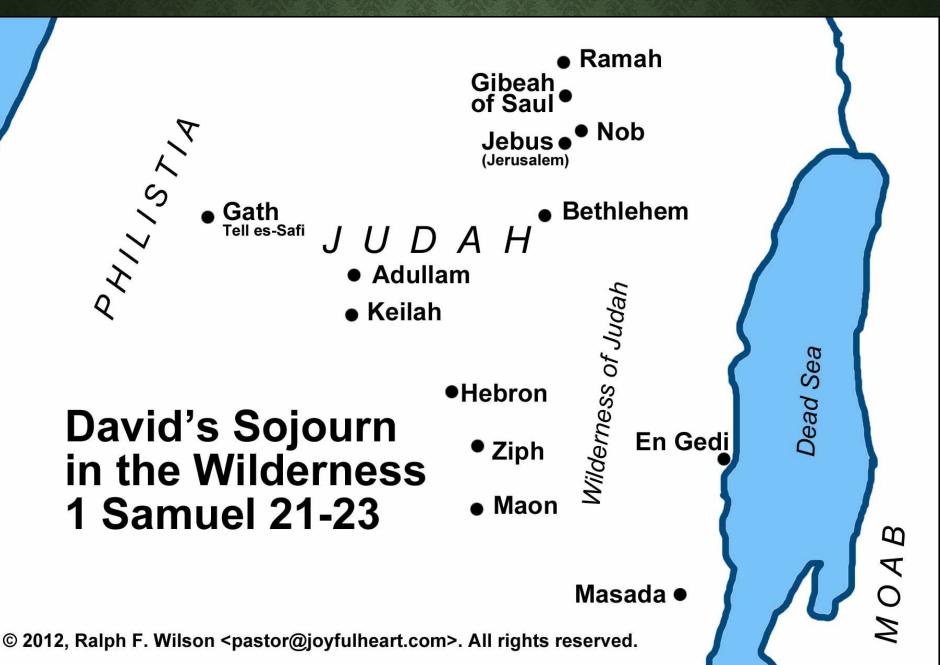
- Ancient Near East customs and OT laws dictate that Nabal should help David and Nabal refuses.
- Nabal does not just refuse, he is also a jerk who insulted David, his family, and his men after they voluntarily protected Nabal's sheep herders.

David's More Than Likely Unknown Motives

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The Death of Samuel

- Probably no one valued Samuel more than David.
- Samuel dies at a time when David is in one of his most difficult seasons.
- Was David able to attend the service?
- Did he have to observe from afar?
- What does Samuel's death mean for the futures of David and Saul?



David's Other More Than Likely Unknown Motives

David Let Saul Live

- Did I do the right thing?
- Did I miss out on God's will when I let Saul live because God said he would deliver my enemies in my hand?
- I did the right thing and yet my men and I are still living like outlaws.
- First Saul and now I have to deal with Nabal, who is just like Saul.

Allowing God to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives is about taking the time to process why you are tempted to cut corners, to repay evil with evil, or to do something that is outside of God's universal will.

Allowing the Lord to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives can never be done in the context of a vacuum.

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Allowing God to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives before you act on them will usually prevent you from making rash decisions and from having to endure the long-term consequences they bring.

When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before him.

She fell at his feet and said, "I accept all blame in this matter, my lord. Please listen to what I have to say.

I know Nabal is a wicked and ill-tempered man; please don't pay any attention to him. He is a fool, just as his name suggests. But I never even saw the young men you sent.

Now, my lord, as surely as the Lord lives and you yourself live, since the Lord has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands, let all your enemies and those who try to harm you be as cursed as Nabal is.

And here is a present that I, your servant, have brought to you and your young men.

Please forgive me if I have offended you in any way. The Lord will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the Lord's battles. And you have not done wrong throughout your entire life.

Even when you are chased by those who seek to kill you, your life is safe in the care of the Lord your God, secure in his treasure pouch! But the lives of your enemies will disappear like stones shot from a sling!

When the Lord has done all he promised and has made you leader of Israel, don't let this be a blemish on your record.

Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance. And when the Lord has done these great things for you, please remember me, your servant!"

Allowing God to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives before you act on them will usually prevent you from making rash decisions and from having to endure the long-term consequences they bring.

Allowing God to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives is a great belief to have but it means nothing if you are not eager to listen, teachable, humble, and obedient when the Lord reveals that you are wrong.

David replied to Abigail, "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you to meet me today!

Thank God for your good sense!
Bless you for keeping me from murder and from carrying out vengeance with my own hands.

For I swear by the Lord, the God of Israel, who has kept me from hurting you, that if you had not hurried out to meet me, not one of Nabal's men would still be alive tomorrow morning."

Then David accepted her present and told her, "Return home in peace. I have heard what you said. We will not kill your husband."

Allowing God to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives is a great belief to have but it means nothing if you are not eager to listen, teachable, humble, and obedient when the Lord reveals that you are wrong.

Thoroughly believing and trusting in the Lord and in His ways, will allow you to fully entrust Him to work things out the right way, the best way, and a way that will honor and glorify Him.

When Abigail arrived home, she found that Nabal was throwing a big party and was celebrating like a king. He was very drunk, so she didn't tell him anything about her meeting with David until dawn the next day.

In the morning when Nabal was sober, his wife told him what had happened. As a result he had a stroke, and he lay paralyzed on his bed like a stone.

1 Samuel 25:38 About ten days later, the Lord struck him, and he died.

When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise the Lord, who has avenged the insult I received from Nabal and has kept me from doing it myself. Nabal has received the punishment for his sin."

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When you consistently reject pursuing your own personal will for the sake of obediently honoring and glorifying the Lord's will, it will usually result in unanticipated and unforeseen blessings.

Then David sent messengers to Abigail to ask her to become his wife. When the messengers arrived at Carmel, they told Abigail, "David has sent us to take you back to marry him."

She bowed low to the ground and responded, "I, your servant, would be happy to marry David. I would even be willing to become a slave, washing the feet of his servants!"

Quickly getting ready, she took along five of her servant girls as attendants, mounted her donkey, and went with David's messengers. And so she became his wife.

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If allowing God to thoroughly examine your decisions and motives becomes your lifestyle, your desire and appetite for seeking and discerning the Lord's will in every situation and facet of your life will significantly increase.

1 Samuel 30:8

Then David asked the Lord, "Should I chase after this band of raiders? Will I catch them?" And the Lord told him, "Yes, go after them. You will surely recover everything that was taken from you!"

2 Samuel 2:1

After this, David asked the Lord, "Should I move back to one of the towns of Judah?" "Yes," the Lord replied. Then David asked, "Which town should I go to?" "To Hebron," the Lord answered.

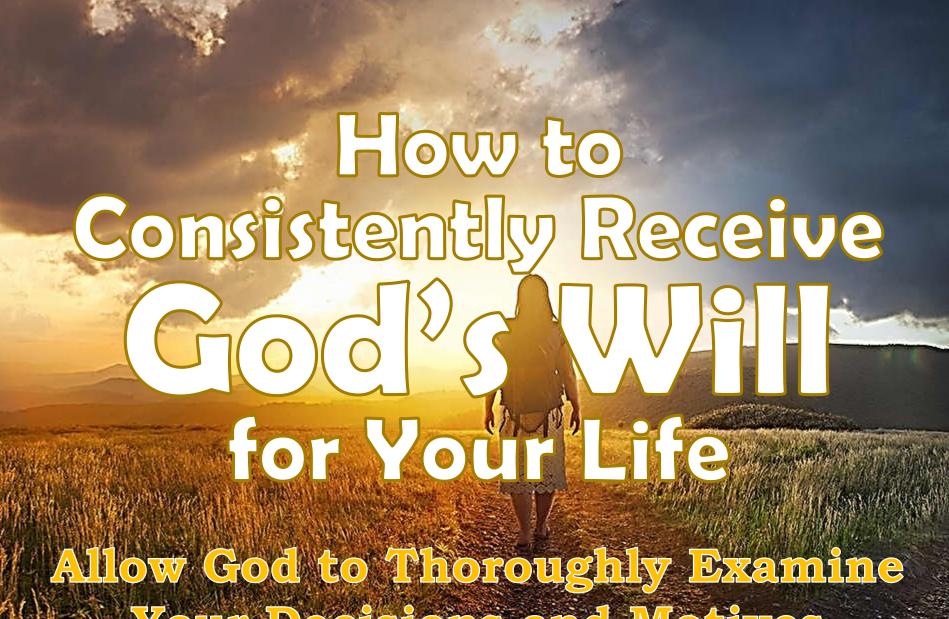
So David asked the Lord, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The Lord replied to David, "Yes, go ahead. I will certainly hand them over to you."

And again David asked the Lord what to do. "Do not attack them straight on," the Lord replied. "Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar trees.

When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, be on the alert! That will be the signal that the Lord is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistine army."

So David did what the Lord commanded, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

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Your Decisions and Motives