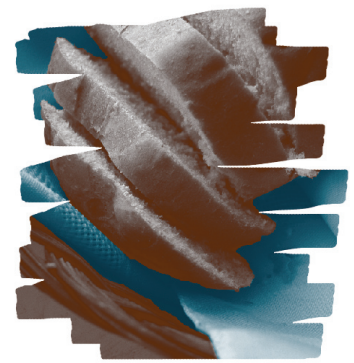


The Sentinel in Conflict

I SAMUEL 25:14-35

But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he shouted insults at them. **15** Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we never missed anything when we were in the fields, as long as we were with them; **16** they were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep. **17** Now therefore know this and consider what you should do; for evil has been decided against our master and against all his house; he is so ill-natured that no one can speak to him." **18** Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves, two skins of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. She loaded them on donkeys **19** and said to her young men, "Go on ahead of me; I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal. **20** As she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain, David and his men came down toward her; and she met them. **21** Now David had said, "Surely it was in vain that I protected all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; but he has returned me evil for good. **22** God do so to David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him." **23** When Abigail saw David, she hurried and alighted from the donkey, and fell before David on her face, bowing to the ground. **24** She fell at his feet and said, "Upon me alone, my lord, be the guilt; please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. **25** My lord, do not take seriously this ill-natured fellow, Nabal; for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him; but I, your servant, did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. **26** "Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, since the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from taking vengeance with your own hand, now let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be like Nabal. **27** And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. **28** Please forgive the trespass of your servant; for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD; and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. **29** If anyone should rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living under the care of the LORD your God; but the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. **30** When the LORD has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you prince over Israel, **31** my lord shall have no cause of grief, or pangs of conscience, for having shed blood without cause or for having saved himself. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant." **32** David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! **33** Blessed be your good sense, and blessed be you, who have kept me today from bloodguilt and from avenging myself by my own hand! **34** For as surely as the LORD the God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there would not have been left to Nabal so much as one male." **35** Then David received from her hand what she had brought him; he said to her, "Go up to your house in peace; see, I have heeded your voice, and I have granted your petition."



What kind of a person is Abigail?

What did Abigail do to change the outcome of this scene?

The Sentinel in Conflict

WHAT DID ABIGAIL DO TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT?	APPLICATION
<p>1</p> <p>Even before the conflict happens, Abigail is understood to be a person of action, who will not freeze up but will act to do the right thing. Her servant says (v.17), "Now therefore know this and consider what you should do"</p>	<p>Be ready for conflict. Think ahead; make commitments that you won't flee. Otherwise, while we waffle, we gossip, complain, become fearful and resentful.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Abigail is willing to intercede on behalf of her husband. She is willing to enter in and make peace. She spares no expense, of time or money. She understood the urgency. v.18 ; "Then Abigail hurried . . .</p>	<p>Don't be casual about relational tension. Matthew 5:25 stresses this as well ; "Come to terms quickly with your accuser..."</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Abigail sent someone on ahead of her to make peace, as an advocate. v.19 ; "Go on ahead of me" though she didn't decide not to come at all.</p>	<p>Find an advocate, someone who knows both parties to the conflict and who has a stake in a positive outcome.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Abigail puts herself in the one-down position. (Though in this case, she is the one in the right, while David is in the wrong.) v24 ; "Upon me alone, my Lord, be the guilt"</p>	<p>Often, our justification for our sinful response is the original sin in the first place. "S/he started it!" Be willing to look first at your own contribution to the conflict.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Abigail addresses the original need, the original complaint. She makes amends. v27 ; she makes a present. She addresses the injustice.</p>	<p>Start not with your own complaint, but with every way in which you were or could possibly have been in the wrong. Agree first; understand, and you may come to be understood.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>Abigail reminds David of the promises associated with his life and future — "when the Lord has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant." She speaks of the future as if it were guaranteed.</p>	<p>We need to see the results of our actions clearly — small choices now can make a huge difference later, for us, for others, for our fellowship or church, for folks who don't know God.</p>
<p>7</p> <p>v32 ; Abigail stops speaking and must trust in God: to calm David's anger, to save her life. She didn't flee the conflict, but rode right into it.</p>	<p>We need to have faith that God will come through for us. Ultimately, it is not up to our words, gestures, or schemes. Others' hearts are in God's hands.</p>

WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF ABIGAIL'S FAITHFUL CHOICE?

- David's reputation and conscience is kept clear from guilt.
- God responds to bring justice to the situation beyond what was in David's power. Nabal was going to die either way, but in this way it was an act of God's judgment, not David's anger. (v. 38)
- Through God's judgment of Nabal, David receives the confirmation of God's work in his life and as an advocate for him. (v. 39)
- Abigail ends up with a more reasonable husband. (v. 42)

CONFLICT CHECKLIST

- Conflict you are in or one that is typical :
- What will be the result if things are not addressed?
- Anyone who can act as an advocate? Someone you both trust?
- To whom can you confess without requiring initiative on their part?
- What would it take from you to address the original cause of tension?
- What risk do you need to take to speak truth in hope?
- What do you need to receive from God if this is to end well?
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For you :

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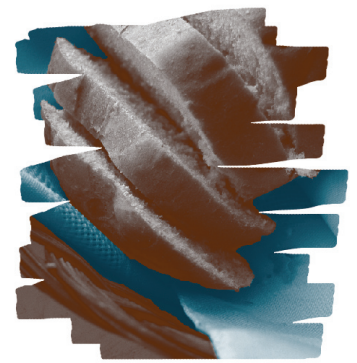
For others :

The Sentinel in Conflict

Background: Nabal has insulted David, who has sworn vengeance. He is coming to Nabal's house with a small army, intending violence.

I SAMUEL 25:14-35

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What kind of a person is Abigail?

- a person of action
- she responds to a sentinel's words about impending doom
- she prepares a gift
- she walks towards the conflict, not away
- she bows before David
- she apologizes for her foolish husband
- she takes the blame for the offense

What did Abigail do to change the outcome of this scene?

[see page 2]

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EDGE

WHAT DID ABIGAIL DO TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT?	APPLICATION
<p>1 COMMIT TO PEACE</p> <p>Even before the conflict happens, Abigail is understood to be a person of action, who will not freeze up but will act to do the right thing. Her servant says (v.17), "Now therefore know this and consider what you should do"</p>	<p>Be ready for conflict. Think ahead; make commitments that you won't flee. Otherwise, while we waffle, we gossip, complain, become fearful and resentful.</p>
<p>2 ACT IMMEDIATELY</p> <p>Abigail is willing to intercede on behalf of her husband. She is willing to enter in and make peace. She spares no expense, of time or money. She understood the urgency. v.18 ; "Then Abigail hurried . . .</p>	<p>Don't be casual about relational tension. Matthew 5:25 stresses this as well ; "Come to terms quickly with your accuser..."</p>
<p>3 SEEK AN ADVOCATE</p> <p>Abigail sent someone on ahead of her to make peace, as an advocate. v.19 ; "Go on ahead of me" though she didn't decide not to come at all.</p>	<p>Find an advocate, someone who knows both parties to the conflict and who has a stake in a positive outcome.</p>
<p>4 CONFESS FIRST</p> <p>Abigail puts herself in the one-down position. (Though in this case, she is the one in the right, while David is in the wrong.) v24 ; "Upon me alone, my Lord, be the guilt"</p>	<p>Often, our justification for our sinful response is the original sin in the first place. "S/he started it!" Be willing to look first at your own contribution to the conflict.</p>
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