



# Finer Grounds Bible Study

## 1 Samuel

### Lesson 12: 1 Samuel 24-26

By now, we have seen that even though David was the man after God’s own heart, he was by no means perfect. In today’s lesson, we will see that David was tempted three times to sin against those who had wronged him. In each situation, his trust in God helped him to make the right decision.

#### Read 1 Samuel 24:1-7

David happened upon the seemingly perfect opportunity to destroy the man who had done terrible things to him.

#### Take a minute to list all the wrongs Saul had committed in pursuit of David.

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Saul had made David’s life miserable. He had attempted to kill David by sending him to battle against the Philistines, by throwing spears at him, and by sending his own soldiers to capture him. He had destroyed the priestly town of Nob and threatened Jonathan because of their support of David. David now had an opportunity to end Saul’s life. Saul just so happened to relieve himself in the cave in which David and many of his men were hiding. David’s men saw this situation as divine intervention. To them, it was inconceivable that David would not take this opportunity to rid himself of the man who had caused so much sorrow. David had even prayed for this moment to come!

#### Read Psalm 35

#### List David’s curses on his enemies (v. 4-9)

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#### Who did David rely on for vindication?

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In this Psalm, David asked God for deliverance from his unjust pursuer (most likely Saul). He even prayed that the Lord would permit his destruction. However, when confronted with the chance to take Saul’s life, David, whose heart followed God, realized that this was not the way to do it. While this seemed like a perfect opportunity, it would have been a sin for David to kill Saul in this situation. Saul was not an enemy in battle and he was not attacking David; he was completely defenseless. If David had killed Saul, David would have been known as a usurper and murderer throughout Israel.

While most of us are not running for our lives, we have opportunities like David’s all the time. Perhaps you are low on cash and maybe even pray for help. That afternoon, you happen to find a \$20 bill on the ground of a parking lot. It is tempting to think, “God is answering my prayer!” However, that \$20 bill is not yours and keeping it without first trying to find its owner is still stealing. We can trust



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that God will not ask us to sin to answer our prayers.

**Have you ever been in a situation like David's? Did you make the right decision? If so, how did you discern the right decision?**

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**Read 1 Samuel 24:8-15**

**How did David humble himself in the eyes of Saul? List some of the names that David called Saul and called himself in this passage.**

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**To whose judgment did David appeal?**

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**How did David prove his innocence?**

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At this time in Israel, a person in dispute with another had to bring his or her case before the king of Israel. For David, his dispute was with the king. Therefore, he laid the evidence of his innocence before the highest power, God, using the swatch of Saul's robe as proof of his good intentions towards the king. David asked God to carry out judgement against Saul but refused to be the one to raise his hand against "the Lord's anointed."

**Read 1 Samuel 24:16-22**

**What was Saul's reaction to David's speech?**

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**What did Saul say he (Saul) was guilty of?**

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Saul had a moment of godly inspiration and confessed David's innocence. He even went so far as to admit that David would one day be king. In return for admitting his wrong, Saul asked that David not wipe out his family after Saul's death. David had already made a similar promise to Jonathan; here, he confirmed that promise directly to Saul.

Although Saul confessed David's innocence, he did not stop his pursuit of David. It was not long before he came after David again. It may have been that Saul felt he could not kill David at that moment as he would lose the respect of his 3,000-man army. His men saw that David obviously was not a threat to Saul and killing David at that moment would have been cold-blooded murder. The two parted ways in peace, although David continued to stay in the high mountains as he knew from experience that the king would not easily overcome his jealous thoughts and desires.

**Read 1 Samuel 25:1**

Samuel died, and the only prophetic voice in the nation was silenced. David had lost a powerful ally and spiritual advisor. Perhaps fearing that in Samuel's absence Saul would be emboldened to attack, David put some physical distance between his men and Saul by moving to the southern most part of Judah.



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## Read 1 Samuel 25:2-8

This chapter introduces Nabal and Abigail. Note that Nabal sounds the same as the Hebrew word for “foolish,” while Abigail means “my father was delighted” (Tsumura 577). Notice the contrast between the actions of these two people and how their character reflects the meaning of their names.

Nabal would have been considered a nobleman due to his vast wealth and perhaps his status as a descendent of the Israelite hero, Caleb. His best asset, however, was his beautiful and wise wife, Abigail. In contrast to Abigail’s upright character, Nabal was a scoundrel.

David and his men had protected the shepherds of Nabal as they wandered the wilderness of Paran together. When the time came to shear the sheep, which would have been a time of celebration for Nabal and his family, David felt that his actions towards Nabal’s workers warranted some hospitality on Nabal’s part. He sent representatives to ask for provision in exchange for his protection.

## Read 1 Samuel 25:9-13

**How did Nabal respond to David’s request? What does Nabal’s response tell us about his character?**

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**Why did Nabal’s response anger David? How did David respond?**

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David had politely asked for help after treating Nabal’s servants and possessions with respect. In

return, David received a rude response, one that not only was unappreciative, but insulting. Angered by Nabal’s insolence, David prepared his troops to seek revenge on Nabal for the offense.

## Read 1 Samuel 25:14-22

After hearing of Nabal’s actions, Abigail responded immediately. She prepared a significant feast as a gift for David and his men. She bravely delivered the gift herself, knowing that a servant offering an apology was not enough in this situation.

When Abigail met David’s army, she and her caravan were in more danger than they might have realized. David already had determined to kill all the men of Nabal’s household.

**Was David’s devised punishment a proportional response?**

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**Whose “house” had David sworn to protect in 24:21-22?**

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**Compare David’s response to Nabal’s actions with his response to finding Saul in the cave unprotected.**

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While Nabal surely had insulted David in this matter, David’s response was overkill, literally. He planned to wipe out Nabal, his household, and his



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descendants. His response to Nabal contrasts his actions towards Saul in the cave. Saul had attempted to kill David several times, and yet David refused to murder him when he had the opportunity. With Nabal, one insult caused David to impulsively attempt to take extreme vengeance. Ironically, his intended punishment for Nabal, destruction of all the men in his house, was the same punishment that he vowed to withhold from Saul and his family.

### Read 1 Samuel 25:23-31

Abigail's plea to David was masterful. She apologized for her husband's actions while at the same time pointing out David's ungodly reaction in a loving way. First, she humbled herself before David (v. 23-24). Second, she apologized for Nabal's actions, using wordplay on his name (Nabal meaning foolish and Nabal acting the fool) (v.25). Third, she pointed out David's error in a way that gave glory to God (v. 26-27). Finally, she made amends (v. 27-28) and then blessed/suggested the blessings that David would receive for relenting from his anger (v. 29-31).

**How can we use Abigail's plea as a model for times when we must apologize?**

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**How should we talk to a brother or sister about their bad intentions?**

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**What other scriptures can guide us through these types of interactions?**

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**Who did Abigail say would give David victory over his enemies?**

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### Read 1 Samuel 25:32-35

David recognized his error and thanked Abigail for speaking the truth in love. She had saved him from the sin of taking vengeance without God's consent or approval. He left any punishment in the hands of God, just as he did for Saul in the cave.

### Read 1 Samuel 25:36-42

**What happened to Nabal when he heard about Abigail's actions?**

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**When Nabal died, for what two things did David thank God?**

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Nabal suffered something like a stroke as providential punishment for his inhospitable treatment of David. After his death, David was thankful that Nabal received divine punishment and that God had kept David from sinning.

When we pray, I doubt that many of us take the time to thank God for restraining us from sin. I



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think that we often falsely believe that keeping ourselves from sin is something that we can do through our strength alone. While we must make the choice to do right, as Christians, we have the Holy Spirit through God’s Word helping us to understand what is right and what is wrong.

**Read 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; Psalm 19:12-14; Galatians 5:16-25**

**How can we be sure we are listening to the Spirit and not our evil nature?**

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Not only was David thankful to God for his provision, he was thankful for the woman who unknowingly served as God’s messenger in the matter. David saw the wisdom, humility, and beauty in Abigail and asked her to become his wife.

**What made Abigail a suitable wife for David?**

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**What made David a suitable husband for Abigail?**

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**Read 1 Samuel 25:43-44.**

**Read Deuteronomy 17:17. As the future king of Israel, what warning from God did David neglect?**

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This is a summary statement about David’s growing household. David had already taken

another wife, Ahinoam who gave him his first-born son, Amnon. Unfortunately, David was starting to collect wives, a decision that would bring his family great misery later in life. Michal, his first wife, was given to another man which, in the absence of consent from David, could have only happened at the command of Saul. Since Michal was given to another man, David was no longer the king’s son-in-law and as such, had no familial claim to the throne. Unfortunately for Michal, she became yet another pawn in her father’s strategy to destroy David’s future.

**Read 1 Samuel 26:1-5**

Saul was at it again. Although Saul had publicly admitted that David had not wronged him, his jealousy had not vanished. Hearing that David was on the hill of Hacilah, he attempted once more to capture David. David was not willing to run from the fight this time. He sought out Saul, hoping for another chance to prove his innocence.

**Read 1 Samuel 26:6-12**

**Why did David not harm Saul?**

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**What did David believe the Lord would do to Saul?**

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David had his chance again. He and his nephew, Abishai, infiltrated Saul’s camp and came within striking distance of Saul. Again, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to kill his enemy, but David’s experience with Nabal had strengthened his faith in God’s power to intervene on his behalf.



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Remembering that Nabal had died unexpectedly by God’s hand, David believed that God would be able to take Saul’s life through sickness or through battle. David left vengeance in the hands of his faithful God and abstained from killing Saul.

**Read 1 Samuel 26:13-25**

**Compare this incident to 1 Samuel 24:8-22**

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After mocking Abner for not doing his duty, David presented a case for his own innocence. Again, Saul recognized David’s blamelessness and blessed him.

1 Samuel 24-26 shows David’s gradual acceptance of a very important truth; vengeance belongs to the Lord. In the cave, David made the decision to restrain himself when confronted with what seemed like a providential opportunity to end his problems. With Nabal, God restrained David through the actions of Abigail when David could not control himself. Finally, in the wilderness of Hacilah, David sought out Saul with the express purpose of proving to Saul that he would not seek vengeance.

**Read Psalm 63**

**According to this Psalm, where did David find satisfaction (v. 5-8)?**

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**From where would justice come for David (v. 9-11)?**

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**Read Romans 12:14-21**

**How does God want us to treat those who hurt or wrong us?**

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**What does society say we should do to those who hurt or wrong us?**

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David is called the man after God’s own heart. When we hear this, it is easy to think that David “naturally” understood God’s ways and will. Instead, this passage reveals that David developed this heart over time by choosing repeatedly to do God’s will, even when easier options are presented to him. Paul explains how to achieve this same character in his letter to the Romans. It is not easy to live at peace with everyone, especially when it momentarily feels more satisfying to let anger control our actions. Sisters, that is not how we are called to live. Hold back your wrath, trusting that showing godly love will produce a better result for you and for the one who has wronged you.



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**Think of someone who has wronged you. What can you do today to live at peace with that person (Romans 12:18)? Take some time to pray about this situation and pray for that person.**

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**Character Study: What did you learn about David in this lesson? Identify his moments of strength or weakness in this passage. Also, record the information about his growing family.**

**Do you think Saul's words in 1 Samuel 24:16-21 and 1 Samuel 26:25 were truthful? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

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