

Rise & Fall (Anger Provokes a Response)

Andy Deane · 7/9/2023 · 1 Samuel 25

Today's Scripture reminds us that responding to anger in a godly way is hard to do, but also how even after a failure to respond well, it is still possible to salvage most situations.

1 Samuel 25:1-3, 1...Now Samuel died, and all Israel...mourned... 2 A certain man...was very wealthy...3 His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean...

Life provides plenty of reasons for us to be angry:

1. Grief (v.1)
2. Unfairness (v.2)
3. Jerks (v.3)

When you're angry, it can be helpful to ask these questions:

- Why are you angry? Is your anger justified or not?
- Do your circumstances have to dictate your mood?

1 Samuel 25:4-10, 4 ...David...5 sent...men and said ..., "Go up to Nabal...and...6 Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household!...7 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 ...Therefore be favorable...Please give your servants ...whatever you can find for them.'...10 Nabal answered..., "Who is this David?...Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.

While it's true that life is hard and people can be mean, we can still be kind:

- David is trying to be nice, but Nabal responds with unprovoked unkindness.
- What's your button that triggers anger? How do you react when it's pushed?

1 Samuel 25:12-13, 12 David's men...reported every word. 13 David said..."Each of you strap on your sword!"...and...about 400 men went with David...

Anger pushes us to respond to make the situation better or worse:

- It's a God-given emotion we feel when we perceive something is wrong, that should motivate us toward constructive action (seeking clarity, confrontation, forgiveness).
- Physical violence, tantrums, bitterness, silent treatment, and raising voices are sinful responses.
- When we act like this we've lost control of the only person we can control: *ourselves*.
- David's response is a sinful overreaction. He treats Nabal like he is Goliath, but it's not the same situation.

1 Samuel 25:14-19, 23-31, 14 One of the servants told Abigail... 17 Now think it over and see what you can do... 18 Abigail acted quickly. She...loaded [food & wine] on donkeys... 21 David...said, "It's been useless—all my watching over this fellow's property...23 When Abigail saw David, she... 24 said: "Pardon your servant...25 pay no attention...to that wicked man...26 the Lord has kept you from avenging yourself...28 "Please forgive your servant's presumption...The Lord...will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight the Lord's battles... 29 Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my lord will be bound securely..., but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling. 30 When the Lord has fulfilled... every...thing...31 my lord will not have on his conscience the...burden of needless bloodshed..

There's a healthier way to process anger:

Abigail models this for David, and for us:

1. Value peace more than punishment.
 - Romans 12:18, *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

- “Angry people need someone who cares enough to listen long enough to understand the pain. They need someone who listens carefully enough to identify with the person’s anger, wisely enough to express understanding, and courageously enough to respond with a gentle, truthful answer that seeks resolution of the issue.” — Dr. Gary Chapman

2. Determine the best time to reengage.

- If you are apologizing, move fast: *Abigail acted quickly* (18)
- Ephesians 4:26b, ...*Do not let the sun go down on your anger...*
- If you are responding, move slow:
- James 1:19-20, ...*let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

3. Only take actions that move toward a resolution.

- Proverbs 19:11b, ...*it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense.*
- How is it possible to forgive when you are really offended? Only by communing with Jesus daily:
 - Jesus inspires us: Ephesians 4:32, ...*forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*
 - Jesus challenges us: Matthew 6:14-15, *14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

4. Remember what’s at stake.

- Your spiritual growth (v.28)
- Your team (v.28)
 - Ephesians 6:12, ...*your struggle is not against flesh and blood...*
 - James 3:6, *The tongue...is set on fire by hell...*
- Your reputation (v.29)
- Your conscience (v.31)

1 Samuel 25:32-39, *32 David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the Lord...who...sent you... 33 May you be blessed for...keeping me from bloodshed...35 Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought ...and said, “Go home in peace...” 37 in the morning ... [Nabal’s] wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him... 38 ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died. 39 When David heard...he said, “Praise...the Lord, who has upheld my cause... He ...kept his servant from doing wrong and...brought Nabal’s wrongdoing down on his own head.”... David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.*

If we let Him, God will give us the peace that we desire:

- Peace comes from the forgiveness we extend or experience, and also by trusting that God will one day judge all.
- Romans 12:19, *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.*
- Remembering we were once enemies allows us be merciful towards others.

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