

CROSSING FAMILY LINES



Introduction

It was the slap heard around the world. On March 27, 2022, Chris Rock made a joke about Jada Pinkett Smith's shaved head. Her husband, Will Smith, walked onstage and slapped Rock before returning to his seat. The event sparked numerous debates about what constitutes comedy, how far comedic boundaries go, what counts as violence, and to what extent celebrities should be held publicly accountable for their actions.

Rock never filed charges against Smith, but Smith voluntarily resigned from the Academy. The Academy banned Smith from attending any Academy event for the next 10 years but did not take away the Oscar he won moments after the slap occurred for his portrayal of Richard Williams in the film King Richard.

⊕ **What do you think is more challenging: confronting a work colleague who was wrong or sticking by a family member who was wrong?**

Session Context

Since our last session where we saw David ready to battle Goliath, here are some key events that happened:

- David defeated Goliath and became a national hero.
- David married Saul's daughter and became a successful military leader in Saul's army.
- David and Saul's oldest son, Jonathan, formed a deep, loyal friendship.
- Saul became jealous of David's popularity and repeatedly tried to kill David.
- David fled from Saul and 400 men followed him which later grew to 600.
- Saul ordered 85 priests at Nab to be killed because they helped David escape him.
- Saul pursued David and nearly killed him multiple times.
- David had an opportunity to kill Saul in a cave but didn't out of respect for God.

Scripture Exploration

1 Samuel 25:5-20

5 David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. 6 Tell him, 'Long life to you! Peace be to you! Peace be to your house! Peace be to all that you have! 7 Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds have now been with us, and we didn't harm them. Nothing was missing from them all the time they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let the young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a good day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.' "

9 When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal all those words in the name of David, and waited.

10 Nabal answered David's servants and said, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants who break away from their masters these days. 11 Shall I then take my bread, my water, and my meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give it to men who I don't know where they come from?"

12 So David's young men turned on their way and went back, and came and told him all these words.

13 David said to his men, "Every man put on his sword!"

Every man put on his sword. David also put on his sword. About four hundred men followed David, and two hundred stayed by the baggage.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master; and he insulted them. 15 But the men were very good to us, and we were not

harmed, and we didn't miss anything as long as we went with them, when we were in the fields. 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 and consider what you will do; for evil is determined against our master and against all his house, for he is such a worthless fellow that one can't speak to him."

18 Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves of bread, two containers of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five seahs of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. 19 She said to her young men, "Go on before me. Behold, I am coming after you." But she didn't tell her husband, Nabal. 20 As she rode on her donkey, and came down hidden by the mountain, behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them.

1 Samuel 25:35–40

35 So David received from her hand that which she had brought him. Then he said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. Behold, I have listened to your voice and have granted your request."

36 Abigail came to Nabal; and behold, he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king. Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk. Therefore she told him nothing until the morning light. 37 In the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal, his wife told him these things; and his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. 38 About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal, so that he died. 39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed is the LORD, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from evil. The LORD has returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head."

David sent and spoke concerning Abigail, to take her to himself as wife. 40 When David's servants had come to Abigail to Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you, to take you to him as wife."

VERSES 5-13

David was on the run from Saul and the prophet who anointed David king had recently died. While in the wilderness of Paran, David encountered the shepherds of a wealthy man named Nabal. David and his men could have used their strength to steal from Nabal but instead they protected Nabal's possessions. David sent 10 young men to Nabal in hopes Nabal would hear about David's goodness and return the favor, but Nabal responded disrespectfully and David told his men to prepare to fight Nabal.

VERSES 14-20

One of Nabal's servants told Nabal's smart and beautiful wife Abigail what happened with David's men, and she immediately acted to fix what Nabal had done. She prepared food and drink for David's men, had her male servants take it to them, and followed the servants to meet David. We do not read in Scripture where God directly told her what to do.

VERSES 35-40

After meeting with Abigail and hearing her wise counsel concerning Nabal, David released his anger and blessed her instead. Abigail returned to Nabal where she found him holding a kingly feast for himself. The next day she told Nabal what she did and his heart died within him. Ten days later he died. David heard about Nabal's death and sent his men to tell Abigail he planned to take her as his wife.

Life Application

+ **Leading a family well requires discernment.**

Saul was the legitimate king, but David was the rightful one. Backing the legitimate king likely seemed the practical choice to Nabal considering his wealth and responsibility as the family's leader, but it didn't make it the right one. David had protected Nabal's shepherds. Providing food and drink for David was a reasonable response given his actions toward Nabal, but Nabal disrespected and dismissed David's men.

Leading others well requires good discernment which comes from God as his spirit guides us into all truth (John 16:13). Spiritual discernment looks beyond practical choices and encourages us to respond in ways that reflect God's character: loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, gentle, faithful, and self-controlled.

+ **Don't let conflict cause you or others to sin.**

Nabal was not legally obligated to provide for David and his men, but David's kindness toward Nabal was worthy of kindness in return. So, when Nabal disrespectfully responded to David's request for assistance, David was angry enough to kill him. Abigail's quick and discerning response turned David's anger to favor. She did it quietly, without her husband's knowledge. David blessed Abigail for keeping him from sin.

Sin easily traps us when we take our eyes off God (Hebrews 12:1-3). Acting quickly to apologize on behalf of offensive family members can remove the cracks sin uses to enter. We may even have to do it without them initially knowing so they do not delay or discourage us.

+ **God corrects our family lines when we correctly follow him.**

Within days, Abigail went from being the wife of a foolish man to the wife of Israel's rightful king. If she had not practiced Godly discernment, David would have killed her along with all her husband's household. However, she acted quickly to intercede on Nabal's behalf and kept David from committing bloodshed, which also preserved her life. Shortly after, God struck her husband and David took Abigail as his wife after Nabal's death. As the wife of the future king, God opened the door to a life of honor, security, and privilege she may never have experienced with Nabal.

When we act honorably before God, God responds with blessings we may never have planned or imagined. He opens doors in ways we could not have foreseen except by his divine grace and mercy. To remain open to God's plans, we must be ready to act on his behalf. This requires us to stay spiritually connected to him and do what is right even when he doesn't explicitly tell us to do it.

Session Reflection

- When are you tempted to respond in anger to others who technically don't owe you anything?
- When is it appropriate to hide your actions from family members?
- Who in your family do you seek to keep you from sinning during times of stress or conflict?
- How can we be confident we're acting in God's will when we don't hear his voice telling us what to do?

