

# Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

## Lesson 69 – Pursue Peace

By Sharon K. Griffiee

---

***1 Peter 3:10-12 (NIV)*** – “Whoever would love life and see good days, must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech. They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

The Apostle Peter is giving us sound instruction in these verses of scripture. If we would love life (not dread it) and truly look forward to seeing good days ahead of us, as Christians we would be actively engaged in carrying out God’s work. That means we would start each new day with the passionate resolve to turn from evil to do good. As we seek peace and pursue it in this manner, Brothers and Sisters, we have God’s attention.

***1 Peter 3:12 (NIV)*** – “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer...”

God is not watching over His people just to see what they are up to, but for their good. God watches over His people with vigilant attention to their needs. He deeply desires to bless His people! Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount,

***Matthew 5:9 (KJV)*** – *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

In every situation in life, we can be a part of the problem or we can be a part of the solution. We can be a troublemaker or we can be a peacemaker. God can bless us or we can bring destruction upon ourselves.

In the Book of I Samuel 25:2-42 we find an excellent example of the stark contrast between good and evil in the story of Nabal and Abigail. God used Abigail as a peacemaker to save lives, while her husband Nabal stirred up trouble, only to bring destruction upon himself.

The story takes place at the time of David, before he became king of Israel, when he was taking

refuge from the jealous king Saul who was trying to kill him. Moving from place to place in hiding, David decided to return to the Desert of Maon, where some of the land was fit for grazing animals. It was near Carmel where there lived a wealthy farmer, named Nabal, who operated his sheep shearing business. The Bible reveals that Nabal was churlish (bad mannered) and evil in his doings. His wife, Abigail, was nothing like Nabal. She was beautiful, intelligent, and a woman of good understanding. (See: I Samuel 25:3)

David and his men hoped to sustain themselves by watching over and protecting Nabal’s sheep. So David, with his six hundred men, settled nearby acting as a sort of neighbor watch, keeping thieves and wild animals from coming near Nabal’s flocks. Because of their efforts, Nabal’s flocks prospered. At harvest time, during the sheep-shearing celebration, David fully expected to receive provisions for his men in return for their protection of Nabal’s flocks. Therefore, David sent ten young men to Carmel with this message for Nabal:

***1 Samuel 25:6-8 (NLT)*** – “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.”

Though David sent a peaceful greeting to Nabal, he did not see things the way David did. Being his boorish self, he was in no mood to offer any kind of gracious hospitality. Nabal’s tongue got in the way, as he answered David’s servants with deceptive speech by pretending he did not know David.

***1 Samuel 25:10-11 (NLT)*** – “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?"*

When David heard from his ten young men what Nabal had said, he responded with vengeance!

***I Samuel 25:13 (NLT)*** – “Get your swords!” was David’s reply as he strapped on his own. Then 400 men started off with David, and 200 remained behind to guard their equipment.

The situation was clearly escalating. The frightened farm workers, who had witnessed Nabal’s tirade against David, feared the worse consequences. One of Nabal’s servants went to Abigail, the wife of Nabal, telling her all that had happened. He wholeheartedly defended David, telling her how day and night David’s men had been like a wall of protection to them and the sheep. The farm workers had built up such a good relationship with Abigail, they fully trusted she would know what to do in this dire situation.

Wasting no time and without a word to her husband, Abigail quickly gathered the necessary provisions for David and his men. She loaded a caravan of donkeys with loaves of bread, wine, slaughtered sheep, roasted grain, clusters of raisins, and fig cakes. She told her servants to “go on ahead” and she would follow shortly.

As Abigail was riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, she saw David and his men coming toward her. He had just been murmuring about how badly Nabal had treated him. What had he got in return for protecting Nabal’s sheep? He had been repaid evil for good. That is what he got! When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed low before David, taking the blame for the whole thing. She asked David to listen to her.

***I Samuel 25:25, 28, 31 (NLT)*** – *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... 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... 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.*

Abigail’s well-chosen words were successful in turning David’s heart away from vengeance. David responded to Abigail,

***I Samuel 25:32-34 (NLT)*** – “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 thankfully accepted the provisions Abigail had brought to him and his men saying,

***I Samuel 25:35 (NLT)*** – “Return home in peace. I have heard what you said. We will not kill your husband.”

---

### Questions for Personal or Group Study

1. According to the Apostle Peter, are we fulfilling our entire Christian duty by simply turning away from evil every day? See: I Peter 3:11
2. The Apostle Peter warned about keeping our tongue from evil. Though David sent a peaceful greeting to Nabal, describe how Nabal’s fiery tongue got in the way, destroying peace. See: I Samuel 25:10-11
3. David was wrong to respond to Nabal’s tirade with Vengeance. How did God wisely use Abigail to show David of his wrong thinking? See: I Samuel 25:32-33.
4. How did the evil, that Nabal intended for David, come down on his own head in the end? See: I Samuel 25:36-38
5. Have you personally intervened in a dire situation, as Abigail did, to stop a violent act from occurring?