



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Proverbs 3:7–8 says,

Don't be impressed with your own wisdom.
Instead, fear the LORD and turn away from evil.
Then you will have healing for your body
and strength for your bones. (NLT)

Let's meet a woman named Abigail, who deftly and exquisitely applied godly wisdom to a tenuous situation and turned a future king from evil. Abigail stood in the breach between David's rash murderous intent and her husband's insulting indifference. Abigail's story is compact: it's all told in 1 Samuel 25. This narrative has it all: an unfair, self-serving boss; a careless husband; frustrated employees; a strained marriage; and a wife who saved her husband's neck. Abigail's example is relevant to us today, as we seek to apply godly wisdom to our everyday challenges.



DIGGING DEEPER

Chuck Swindoll says, "There are great stories in the Scriptures. Some of them run through several chapters. . . . Others are snapshots that are all covered in a single chapter. . . . I think of them as plays. Three-act plays that open the curtain at the introduction of the main characters. And then to the plot which opens the curtain for act two. And then you come to a surprising conclusion, act three."

Today, we will examine 1 Samuel 25 as one of those great three-act plays, paying special attention to its genre: narrative.



Getting into the Narrative

The Bible can be studied as literature. Its books contain law, history, poetry, letters, and prophecy. To correctly interpret the Bible, we need to discern the genre that we aim to study.

Quotable

Rash reactions

are never

the best

reactions.

— Charles R. Swindoll



1 Samuel is a historical book, but the genre of literature employed in 1 Samuel 25 is *narrative*.

For narratives, or stories, we want to focus on three items:

First, we ask questions about the *setting*, noting physical, temporal, and cultural components.

Let's apply this technique to 1 Samuel 25.

Read 1 Samuel 25 in its entirety and then answer the following questions to glean more out of the narrative.

How would you describe the *physical* setting of 1 Samuel 25?

What is the *emotional* setting for David, given the intro in 25:1?

How can observing the state of David's emotional and physical setting aid you in reading the passage?



Who are the major characters?

Who are the minor characters?

Which characters drive the action that takes place in the story?

Lastly, in studying narrative, we examine the *plot development*—the sequence of events that follow the model of the beginning, middle, and end. This is what Chuck refers to as a “three-act play.”

Plot development is the vehicle driving the narrative. Without a plot structure, there’s simply no story.

Let’s answer some *plot development* questions about 1 Samuel 25.

What type of conflict is in view—physical, character, spiritual, or a combination?

What makes the plot interesting or suspenseful—danger, tests, questions of destiny, or divine-human encounters?



What are the relationships between events—cause/effect, change/no-change?

What challenges must the main character master—resourcefulness, mental acuity, or physical strength?

What changes occur between the beginning and the end of the narrative—solutions to problems or character growth?

What do the details of the narrative tell us about the author’s purpose—perspective on reality or teaching of morality?



Questions Are Key

Chuck says “you’ve got to ask yourself questions when you’re reading stories” like the one found in 1 Samuel 25.

What are some questions you unearthed while reading 1 Samuel 25? In answering the questions you unearth, you may need tools like a concordance, Bible dictionary, commentary, or an online resource like lumina.bible.org.



Here are some sample questions to get you started:

- When Nabal asked, “Who is David?” (1 Samuel 25:10–12), do you think Nabal was being honest? Ignorant? Snobbish? How did Abigail know David, then (25:29)?
- What does “Abigail” mean?
- How did Abigail know that the Lord would reward David with a lasting dynasty (25:28)? What does this knowledge imply about her walk with God?

Write your own questions (and their answers) below.



Learning Where We Fit in the Story: Application

1 Samuel 25 offers a trove of wisdom from which we can learn today. Here are some applications from Chuck’s message, based on each character:

We learn from David that *rash reactions never lead to anything good.*

We learn from Nabal that *insensitive husbands always leave heartaches in their wake.*

We learn from Abigail that *wise wives seldom miss the best use of timing and tact.*

Although Chuck’s applications are tucked into the marriage rubric, one doesn’t have to be married in order to learn life lessons of wisdom to apply immediately to his or her life. Timing and tact are *always* worthwhile. Insensitivity or rashness are never traits that we want to purposely act on; they are counter to the fruit of the Spirit.



Write down your additional applications from 1 Samuel 25.



A FINAL PRAYER

Lord, keep us humble. Keep us self-aware, so that we don't run over people with our rash reactions or tactless words. May these words inhabit our responses:

*A gentle answer deflects anger,
but harsh words make tempers flare.
The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing,
but the mouth of a fool belches out foolishness. (Proverbs 15:1–2 NLT)*

In the name of Jesus, Amen.



WISE COUNSEL FOR TROUBLED TIMES

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1 Samuel 25:1–42

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

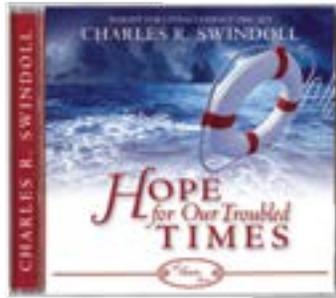
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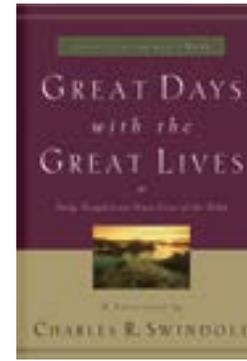
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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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