

# WISE COUNSEL FOR TROUBLED TIMES

## STUDY FIVE

### Demonstrating Wisdom

*1 Samuel 25:1–42*

*Rash reactions never lead to anything good. Nothing good happens to us because of them. Nothing good happens to others.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**V**IRTUOUS living exudes a kind of magnetic, glistening splendor. Like dewdrops lit by the rays of the sun, people of noble character sparkle and attract our notice as we pause to ponder the beauty of lives well lived.

God designed human beings to live virtuously—to express the goodness of His character, uphold the truth of His Word, and display the fullness of His image. In this series, we’ve been exploring certain virtuous traits highlighted through great lives from God’s Book. In this study, we shine the light on Abigail, whose life encourages us to exercise that classic virtue of wisdom in action—*prudence*.

According to *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, the meaning of the word *prudence* includes many facets:

1. The ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason
2. Sagacity or shrewdness in the management of affairs
3. Skill or good judgment in the use of resources
4. Caution or circumspection as to danger or risk<sup>1</sup>

This definition perfectly describes Abigail—the woman whose quick thinking and wise action spared the future king of Israel! Though Abigail appears only briefly in the grand narrative of Scripture, her example proves instructive for those wanting to follow in the same path of wisdom.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Demonstrating Wisdom

1 Samuel 25:1–42



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

What do you hope to learn from this study? Express to God your need for Christ to work in your heart during this study. Turn that reflection into a prayer below.



### YOUR TURN IN THE SCRIPTURES

Keep the following in mind as you navigate your way through 1 Samuel 25 using the *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study method.<sup>2</sup>

*Occasionally, as I see these single-chapter stories, I think of them as plays—three act plays that open with the introduction of the main characters in act one. Then you go to the plot which opens the curtain for act two. Then you come to a surprising conclusion, act three. First Samuel, chapter 25 is no exception. It's one of the great stories you'll ever read in the Bible. —Chuck Swindoll*



### Observation: Meeting the Characters

Begin observation with a careful read of *1 Samuel 25*.

Who are the three main characters in this chapter?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



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Who are minor characters in this chapter?

When and where did the events of this chapter occur?

What kindness did David show Nabal? How did Nabal belittle David's request?

How was Nabal's perspective skewed in his reply to David? How did David act rashly?



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Armed with sharp swords, David and his four hundred, flint-faced men walked with an indomitable gait to slay the arrogant Nabal. David took no time to reason. Anger steered him. A rampage of revenge awaited Nabal's camp.



### Interpretation: The Plot, The Surprise

Only one person in the Bible lived perfectly: Jesus. Nevertheless, many scenes thread Genesis through Revelation in which God's people wonderfully reflect God's character—like Abigail.

What actions did Abigail take that displayed her wisdom?

*Here is wisdom at work. I mean, you don't argue with a fool. How stupid it would have been for Abigail to walk in and demand of her husband, "What were you thinking, Nabal?" Abigail was not going to stop David's group from coming. They were on their way with blood in their eyes. She did not even talk to Nabal. You can't talk to a Nabal, not a fool like him. She learned that over the years of living with him. But without wasting any time, she put together the first catering service. —Chuck Swindoll*

How did Abigail display wisdom and humility in her conversation with David?



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How did Abigail's prudent use of her resources and wise management of her affairs benefit both Nabal and David?

What surprise did the author record to conclude this biblical three-act play?

Let's now examine the theology of 1 Samuel 25:23–35. Often, biblical authors use speech in narratives to insert theology and highlight God's hand in the matter. How did Abigail and David interpret God's involvement in Abigail's actions? In what way is their theology important for Christians to remember today?

God preserved David—and not merely for David's sake. God protected David from bloodshed because God had a kingdom for David to rule, divine truth for David to steward, and chosen people for David to bless through his God-centered governance.



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### Correlation: Biblical Wisdom

The biblical authors address the topic of wisdom from beginning to end. Review each of the passages below and record what they teach about the importance of wisdom.

#### Proverbs 3:7–8

*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. (Proverbs 3:7–8)*

#### Proverbs 4:5–8

*Get wisdom; develop good judgment.  
Don't forget my words or turn away from them.  
Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you.  
Love her, and she will guard you.  
Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do!  
And whatever else you do, develop good judgment.  
If you prize wisdom, she will make you great.  
Embrace her, and she will honor you. (Proverbs 4:5–8)*



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Proverbs 24:3, 17

*A house is built by wisdom  
and becomes strong through good sense . . . .  
. . . wisdom is sweet to your soul.  
If you find it, you will have a bright future,  
and your hopes will not be cut short. (Proverbs 24:3, 14)*

Through her dependence upon wisdom, Abigail displayed virtuous living. Through her acts of humility, she protected many lives in the house of Nabal—not to mention her own—and won for herself a bright future and honor in the eyes of God’s chosen king.

### **Application: Lessons from the Characters**

Chuck ends his sermon with three application points tied to the three main characters.

#### David’s Rashness

*Rash reactions never lead to anything good. Some of you are given to anger. You have a temper. Often you do not realize how difficult you make it for those around you. I challenge you to be mindful of your anger and leave room for the Lord to intervene in your situation.*  
—Chuck Swindoll



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*1 Samuel 25:1–42*

If you sense a habit of rash reacting in your own day-to-day living, think over what might be causing it. Develop a plan to help you better trust in Christ's leading.

### Nabal's Folly

*We learned from Nabal that insensitive husbands always leave heartaches in their wake.*  
—Chuck Swindoll

If you're a man whom God has blessed with a wife, consider ways you might be acting like a Nabal. Note below what comes to mind, plan to apologize if necessary, and determine the way to move forward toward spiritual wholeness, joy, and encouragement in your marriage.

### Abigail's Wisdom

*From Abigail, we learn that wise wives seldom miss the best use of timing and tact.*  
—Chuck Swindoll



## Demonstrating Wisdom

*1 Samuel 25:1–42*

If you're a woman whom God has blessed with a husband, consider ways you can use better timing and tact to love your husband and foster a thriving marriage. Write those ways below.

Neglecting God's wisdom often makes life difficult, dwindles joy in life, and can even wreak havoc in the lives of others. But upholding and using God's wisdom nourishes us like a life-giving tree. As we see in prudent Abigail, wisdom proves to be a marvelous gift from above!



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for Your provision and faithfulness in my life, for giving me wisdom to know You, worship You, and follow Your good ways. I pray that I would not act rashly when tempted, but that You would increase my wisdom so I can live intentionally and be a blessing to others. In Jesus' sweet name I pray, amen.*

### ENDNOTES

1. Merriam-Webster, Inc., *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2003), see "prudence."
2. We recommend you purchase Chuck's *book Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* if you do not already have a copy. You can also read Chuck's *Searching the Scriptures* introductions on [sts.insight.org](http://sts.insight.org).



# WISE COUNSEL FOR TROUBLED TIMES

## STUDY FIVE

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

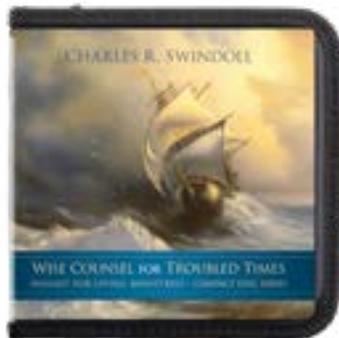
STUDY

## Demonstrating Wisdom

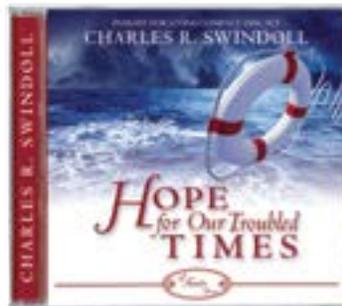
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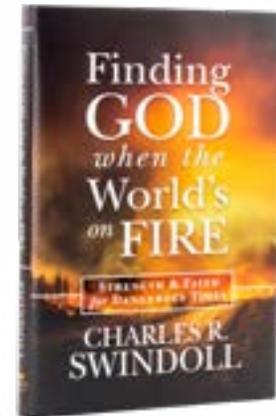
### Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2020 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Aaron Massey in collaboration with Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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