

5 Lessons From the Stupidest Man in the Bible

If you want to be a good husband and father, avoid this guy's bad example.

Who is the most brainless man in the Bible? We could make a long list of losers: Adam, Cain, Esau, Pharaoh, Saul, Ahab, Judas or Simon the Sorcerer. I love the fact that people's mistakes aren't whitewashed in the Scriptures. Even the holiest guys blew it (Peter comes to mind) but fortunately many of them found forgiveness and a second chance. That gives me hope every time I make a dumb mistake.

But there's one guy who's stupidity puts him in a class by himself—partly because he never even realized how spiritually clueless he was. When I was speaking to a group of leaders last week in Puerto Rico, I used Nabal as an example of how men *shouldn't* act.

If we want to be good husbands and fathers, and if we want to disciple other men to do the same, we should take a cue from this Old Testament geezer whose name literally means “fool.” Here are five reasons I put Nabal in the “stupid” category:

Nabal didn't honor God. Nabal was an entrepreneur and he built a prosperous business in sheep and goats. But the Bible says he was “harsh and evil in his dealings” (1 Sam. 25:3). He was the kind of guy no one really wants to be around: pompous, corrupt and selfish. When David came seeking food for his warriors, Nabal refused to help. He didn't care about God's kingdom because he was focused totally on building his own.

Lesson #1: Smart guys yield the throne of their lives—as well as their money and careers—to Christ.

Nabal didn't listen to his wife. If you look up the word

“macho” in the dictionary, Nabal’s picture should be there. His wife Abigail is described as “intelligent” (see v. 3) and she is praised in verse 33 because of her discernment. But Nabal didn’t benefit from his wife’s wisdom because he ignored her. She was a deeply spiritual woman, and she stopped David from making the foolish mistake of attacking Nabal. David listened to Abigail, but Nabal arrogantly refused.

Lesson #2: Smart guys marry women who love God—and they learn to treasure their wives’ advice.

Nabal never broke free from his sinful nature. Abigail painted a pitiful picture of her husband when she begged David not to attack Nabal. She said: “Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him” (v. 25). Nabal never rose above the depravity of his past. He never grew spiritually. He refused to change.

Lesson #3: Smart guys may not come from the best backgrounds, but they trust Jesus to free them from every sinful tendency.

Nabal let his addictions control him. After Abigail successfully prevented David from slaughtering Nabal’s men, she went to tell her husband and found him so drunk that she had to wait until morning to talk to him. Alcohol was his drug of choice, and he became totally debilitated because he couldn’t kick his habit.

Lesson #4: Smart guys don’t allow any unhealthy behavior to control them. They seek help and confess their sins.

He had a hard heart. When Abigail finally told Nabal how she had successfully intervened in David’s life, and how David was destined for the throne of Israel, Nabal’s heart “died within him so that he became as a stone” (v. 37). His physical condition mirrored his spiritual deadness. His stubborn refusal to submit to God’s authority ended up taking him to an early grave.

Lesson #5: Smart guys maintain close, intimate fellowship with Jesus so their hearts stay moldable.

One of the tragedies of our generation is that so many Christian men are sitting in the back rows of churches, struggling to become true disciples. Some have been haunted by certain behavior patterns since they were young, yet they never found emotional healing or deliverance from the shame of their mistakes. Others are secretly addicted to alcohol, drugs, porn or gambling.

Many other men I have prayed for struggle in their marriages because they view their wives as inferior. Sometimes a seething macho attitude erupts in anger or even violence. As a result, many modern Abigails are suffering because of their husbands' stupidity. They are praying for a holy intervention.

What would happen in this country if huge numbers of men renounced their selfishness, repented of their foolishness and asked God to break their hard hearts? The gospel of Jesus has the power to make this happen. This Father's Day I'm praying that God will spark a national movement among men that will break addiction, stop domestic violence, reconcile broken families and turn stubborn Nabals into humble Davids.

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