

Get Rid of Demoniac 'Wisdom' With This James 3:17 Truth

How many times have you heard the saying "opposites attract"? Do you believe that or do you think it's just a catchphrase? I'm sure there is some truth to it because several of my friends are married to men whose personalities are the opposite of theirs. They say their husbands' differences actually complement the marriage and don't hurt it, and if they had to do it all over again, they would gladly marry the same man.

However, I have prayed with enough hurting couples to know that being married to someone who is very different can be challenging. Dr. Neil Warren, a clinical psychologist and founder of the popular online dating website eHarmony, encourages dating couples to proceed with caution if they have opposite characteristics. "I don't discount how hard it is to find someone who is a lot like you," he says. "It has always been difficult, and it's become even more so, as diversity increases. But when two people come from similar backgrounds, they operate from a position of strength. Their relationship is made significantly easier by all the customs and practices they have in common."

What to look for in a husband isn't the main focus of this, but it is the perfect segue to this next unthinkable character. Her name is Abigail. She was a beautiful woman whose wisdom saved her fool of a husband, Nabal, from certain death after he insulted David, who was later crowned king of Israel.

Yes, I called Nabal a fool but you don't have to take my word for it. He and Abigail are introduced to us in 1 Samuel 25:1-3, where we learn a lot about them in just a few sentences.

From the moment we meet Nabal we know he's trouble. He was wicked, foulmouthed, and mean-spirited. In fact, his name literally means "foolish" and "stupid." Then out of nowhere Caleb is mentioned. When I first read "a descendant of Caleb," it seemed out of place to me. But after rereading about this great man of faith, I realized the text fit perfectly.

Nabal was able to build a lucrative sheep shearing business because he owned prime property that had been passed down to him from his famous ancestor, Caleb, who had been among those who wandered in the wilderness after the great exodus from Egypt. When God told Moses to handpick 12 men to scout out the land of Canaan, Caleb was one of the spies. When he returned to Moses with a good report based on his faith in God and not fear, God rewarded him with the very land Nabal now possessed.

Nabal was the beneficiary of someone else's blessings, but his life is proof that godly character cannot be inherited. Abigail, however, is described as a sensible, beautiful woman with great understanding and a joyful spirit. Her name even means "cause of joy." In this story it is clear that sometimes opposites don't attract; they distract.

I don't know how Abigail became the wife of a fool. Perhaps her father agreed to give his beautiful daughter to Nabal in exchange for a handsome bride price. Whatever the case, I know that when she was confronted with a life-or-death situation, Abigail responded with a rare weapon: wisdom. Her wisdom saved their lives.

First, when she heard that David was going to kill Nabal for being condescending and disrespectful to him, she didn't go yelling and screaming at her husband. Had that been many women today, they would have told Nabal, "Because of your big mouth, every man in this family is going to die, including you!"

But Abigail must have known that it doesn't pay to argue with a fool, because she did the opposite. She didn't even tell

Nabal that she knew about all the ugly words he had spoken to David's messengers. Sometimes wisdom requires that we measure our words carefully and use them to calm a situation and not make matters worse.

I don't know Abigail prayed or if she prayed at all, but when she got the news about David, she prepared a peace offering. She gathered hundreds of pounds of food and gave the man of God what he requested, despite Nabal's selfishness.

The Bible says there are two types of wisdom, earthly and godly. Earthly wisdom is this: "But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom" (James 3:14-15).

The text goes on to say that where there is jealousy and selfish ambition, every evil imaginable is also there.

Now, juxtapose the definition of earthly wisdom with godly wisdom in James 3:17: "But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds."

Do you know anyone who fits this description? I wish I could say that I have perfected all six of these qualities, but I am a work in progress, as we all are. To have wisdom, though, we must first ask for it, and God will "generously" give it to us according to James 1:5. This brings me to my next point: I believe it is impossible to live a lifestyle of godly wisdom without help from the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will tell us when and how to respond in every area of our lives. He is the Paraclete, the One who gives us counsel, and He is our helper. The Holy Spirit will prompt you if a response is needed, and He will let you know if nothing at all needs to be said or done.

Abigail had godly wisdom, was humble and was prepared for the

challenge she faced. You can do the same.

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Prayer Power for the Week of July 1, 2018

This week, ask God for godly wisdom every day and thank Him when He provides it. Pray that the Lord will give our president and all those in leadership the wisdom they need to make decisions affecting our nation and the world. Pray concerning the selection of our next Supreme Court judge and ask the Lord for His choice to fill the position. (James 1:5; 1 Samuel 25:32-34; James 3:17)