

## **Intervention In Sticky Situations**

### **1 Samuel 25:14-23**

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 12-18-2011

#### **Introduction**

When Dr. Krabbendam was here three weeks ago he was telling all kinds of fun stories. But there is one story that I don't think he told, but that I think is especially cool. On December 29 of the year 2000, Dr. Krabbendam took two of his friends on a missions trip to Uganda. They went from Charlotte, North Carolina to London, and from London caught a British Airways flight to Nairobi, Kenya, where they were going to catch another flight to Uganda. But anyway, when they left London on a British Airways 747, I think Dr. Krabbendam must have envied his two friends, because for some strange reason they got bumped from coach up into first class. So Dr. Krabbendam is on the lower level and those two were in the top level, just two seats from the cockpit. Little did anyone know the significance of this providence.

Clarke just thought it was blessing because he had tons of legroom. He was a huge guy – six foot seven, and all muscle. He was a basketball player from Clemson. Anyway, Clarke and Gifford committed the trip to prayer, and after eating, turned out the lights and went to sleep. Six hours into the trip everyone on the 747 was woken up with a jolt as the airplane zigzagged in a crazy and incredibly steep dive for 19,000 feet. The whole cabin was in chaos with people screaming, and it took a few seconds for Clarke and Gifford to gain their senses and notice what was happening up in the cockpit.

What had happened was that a suicidal 27 year-old Kenyan by the name of Paul Kefa Mukonyi had charged the cockpit, knocked the pilot Hagan out of his seat, biting him on the ear, and then on the finger as he wrestled with him. He managed to get into the pilot's seat, locked himself into, took the airplane off of autopilot, and pushed the plane into a steep dive. The two pilots and another officer were desperately trying to wrestle the controls out of the Kenyan's hands, but were not successful. The Kenyan must have been one strong guy because three men could not budge him. About that time, Krabbendam's huge missionary friend, Clarke Bynum, ran into the cockpit, grabbed the Kenyan from behind by the shoulders and yanked him over the top of the seat, with the Kenyan kicking and screaming.

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Gifford came up behind him and the two of them pulled Mukonyi out of the cockpit where several of them jumped on the guy, tied him up, put him in handcuffs and took him to the back of the plane. The pilot later said that they were five seconds from death. That's how close they got to crashing. But the wounded pilot managed to pull the plane out, and took the plane safely on to Kenya. It was an absolutely remarkable intervention. Clarke and Gifford were required to stay in Kenya for questions, but Dr. Krabbendam went on with his missions trip as if nothing had happened. That gives you a little bit of insight into Dr. K. So that is the story of Dr. Krabbendam's missions team and the British Airways flight 2069.

The newspapers said that if Clarke Bynum and Gifford Shaw had not instantly intervened as soon as they found out what was happening, the plane would have crashed. If they had taken the attitude that other people's conflicts were none of their business, the plane would have crashed. If they had waited for the professionals to fix the problem, the plane would have crashed. The professionals were not able to do it. If they had given in to fear of what Mukonyi (or even the professionals) would think of them intervening, the plane would have crashed.

Today's sermon is on intervention in sticky situations. There are a lot of Christians who refuse to engage in intervention. They are afraid to get involved, or it is inconvenient to get involved. Of course they have their good-sounding excuses. A wife will say that it is not her place to contradict her husband or go around her husband when he is being abusive, or when he is engaging in drunk driving, or when he is engaging in incest. And I say, "Nonsense." God has providentially put you in a position where you could save your husband, just like Abigail tried to save her husband. Now, Nabal didn't want to be saved, but Abigail saved him anyway. Too many wives in America have become enablers of sin and (believe it or not) they have become even enablers of crime.

And sometimes they are enablers because they have a mistaken idea about what submission means. They might think that submission means passivity. It's not that they like the crime. No. Some of them weep over the situation. But they think that they can't do anything about it. Perhaps they fear reprisals from their husband if they turn their husband in. Or they feel sorry for their husband. Rather than saving their husband's life and the lives of others who are endangered by the drunkenness, they turn a blind eye to it and become enablers. And after the husband has killed somebody, they think, "If only I had intervened." But it's too late.

Of course, this is not a sermon about meddling. There is a big difference between constant meddling in other people's lives on issues that are really not of great consequence and intervention on issues that are either life-threatening or are destroying people's lives in other ways. That's why I started with the story of Bynum's intervention. I think you can relate to that. It used to be that passengers would just sit in their seats hoping that someone else would deal with the hijacker. I tell you, since 9-11, there aren't too many flights where there won't be at least someone who will do something. And people will say, "Yes, I understand that kind of intervention." But I would say that letting a husband get into a car when he is drunker than a skunk is a similar life-threatening situation. And if he repeatedly does this, it is time for you to intervene and to ask some other relatives or church officers to confront him. Thankfully I don't know of any drunks in this congregation, but it could happen. So let's dive into the text.

## I. The Need for Intervention

### *A. Intervention is not gossip; it is offering a solution to the problem (v. 14a)*

Verse 14: "**Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying...**" He told on Nabal. He's a snitch! Right? In fact, some people might have accused this young man of being a gossip. But he was not. He was seeking to find a solution to an immediate crisis, and the person he shared the information with was central to the solution. Rather than fleeing, which would have been the easier thing to do, and rather than confronting Nabal, which would have been fruitless (based on his earlier experience), he asked Abigail to intervene somehow.

And this is the first difficult hurdle that people have to overcome if they are to be effective in saving a person from himself when he is blind to how serious his condition is. Nobody wants to needlessly be a whistleblower. Nobody wants to needlessly be a snitch. But there are situations where you have no choice. It's OK to call for help when you've got a suicidal guy on the roof. Nobody's going to say, "Don't be a snitch," right? It's OK to call for help when you are being physically abused. None of us want to gossip, since gossip is a sin. But we automatically feel bad when we are talking about somebody behind their back even if it is a crisis situation. And in a sense we should feel bad because ordinarily talking about someone behind their back is a sin. What makes this different? Why is this not gossip? Let me give you three reasons:

First, people had already tried to reason with Nabal in the past, and they knew it was not going to work here. It's not like this is the first time that servants had tried to talk with him. Take a look at the last phrase of verse 17. **"For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him."** There has obviously been a history here. If there had been no history the servants could have easily talked to Nabal and warned him that they are all about to die if he doesn't change his mind. You wouldn't need to talk behind his back. But when you've got a long history of a person being in denial and lashing out at you every time he is confronted over his drunkenness or some other serious sin, you have no choice *but* to ask for intervention. In fact, I think that this is an integral aspect to Matthew 18. If they won't listen, you bring one or two more.

The second thing that keeps this from being gossip is that the danger was imminent. In fact, if Abigail had not been so speedy, they could have all died. It was an imminent danger. She had to make a snap decision. There is no time to argue once again with her husband because shortly they will all be dead if she doesn't do something.

The third thing that keeps this from being gossip is that the person that the servant went to was Abigail, the only person who could truly help. Here's a great definition of gossip: "Gossip is the sharing of information with someone who is neither part of the problem nor part of the solution." Let me repeat that: "Gossip is the sharing of information with someone who is neither part of the problem nor part of the solution." If this servant was just grumbling with the other servants, that would be a different matter. *But he was part of the solution and Abigail was part of the solution. In fact, both of them were part of the problem too, because they were about to die.*

Now I will grant you that too many times so-called Christian "concerns" about other people *is indeed gossip* because *we* are not willing to go on the ropes and we are not talking with *people* who are willing to go on the ropes. To avoid gossip, our speech about that other person must only go so far as the true solution to the problem exists. But that's the whole point about intervention. It is providing a solution. So it is utterly different from gossip.

***B. Intervention is not lack of submission; sometimes failure to intervene makes you an enabler (v. 14a)***

The second huge hurdle that people have to overcome before they are willing to intervene is submission. And it *is* a good hurdle. When we are an employee like this servant, or when we are a wife like Abigail, we should

not relish intervention. Our instinct should be submission. But when submission turns into enabling, we have crossed over the line and we have become guilty of the sin ourselves.

There was a pastor who was out on his morning walk, and he saw a lady struggling to push a baby carriage up a hill, so he offered to help her. The wheels were rusty, so even he found it hard work to get it to the top of the hill, but when he got to the top, he asked her if he could take a look at the baby. The lady laughed and said, “Pastor this isn’t a baby that we have been struggling with, it’s my husband’s weekly beer supply.” And the pastor was thinking, “Arghh! I’ve helped a person with his problem of drunkenness and this lady is sweetly helping her husband with his problem of drunkenness.” He’s constantly so blasted that he needs someone else to get the beer. It’s easy to become an enabler when the issue has been gradually coming on.

Many people wonder how those morbidly obese men and women who are 500-800 pounds could ever get that way. Some of them can’t even move. So where do they get all the food? Almost always it has been a mom or sister who has been an enabler. In the case of Donna Simpson, it was her *husband* who was the enabler. Donna had a goal of reaching 1000 pounds, and her husband, Phillippe Gouamba said, “Gaining weight makes Donna happy and seeing her happy makes me happy.” He was an enabler. Last Christmas she ate a 30,000 calorie meal with two 25 lb turkeys, two maple-glazed hams, 10 lbs of baked potatoes, 5 lbs of mashed potatoes. Are you sick yet? I would think she would be sick, but she was used to this and just getting started. In the same meal she also ate five loaves of bread, 5 lbs of herb stuffing,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a gallon of gravy,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a gallon of cranbury sauce, 20 lbs of vegetables, and a gooey desert of marshmallow, cream cheese, whipped cream, and cookies. It took her two hours to eat all that. Who brought it to her when she couldn’t move? Her husband. He had become an enabler, and finally other family members intervened and talked sense into her. As of this year she has realized that this is wrong, and she is trying to lose weight. But when enablers feed that kind of compulsion, they are guilty of the sin.

Now let me clarify. I am not saying to get on everyone’s case who is overweight. That would be meddling. You are not guilty of another person’s sins simply because you overlook his sins. That’s not the issue. 1 Peter 4:8 says that “**love will cover a multitude of sins.**” We overlook each other’s sins in this congregation all the time, don’t we? I overlook a lot of your sins because I know you are growing and God is not finished with you yet. But when things start heading toward a divorce or when things start heading into serious physical abuse, or drug addiction, we elders have to intervene, and

your change is not optional. But you need to distinguish that from constant meddling. We don't feel like we have to intervene on every single sin that another person does. But when a person is endangering his own life (like Nabal was clearly doing here), is endangering the lives of others, is permanently destroying a relationship, is ruining the testimony of the church, or is so addicted to a substance that he can't help himself, then intervention is needed. And eventually even church discipline could result. However, even after church discipline, we can't share all the gory details. That would be gossip. But the intervention itself is not. We also need to intervene when an elderly relative is so unsafe in their driving that he is probably going to kill somebody one of these days if he doesn't quit driving. It's really hard to do, but it is sometimes necessary.

Virtually every commentary agrees that what Abigail did was proper. So why was that not contrary to God's call for submission? Well, we know from the book of Acts, from 1 Peter and from other passages that submission is not absolute. That is servility, not submission. Submission is always in the Lord. So here are some general rules of thumb on when intervention does not violate the call to submission:

First, would submission make *you* sin? If so, you may not do it. With Peter you must say, "**We ought to obey God rather than man**" (Acts 5:29). And most people find those situations fairly clear if they are not involved in the situation. But when you are intimately involved, it is sometimes hard to see straight. And so sometimes you will find a believer submitting to a tyrannical government and sinning against their brothers and sisters by turning them in. The church in China has learned from a long history of tyranny that you cannot excuse your sin with the excuse that you are submitting to the civil government.

Second, would submission ignore a *Biblical* crime that your family member is currently engaged in? And I say "Biblical" because not everything that the state says is a crime is truly a crime. And I say "is currently involved in" because for the Christian, repentance can clean the slate. But it is the Bible alone that can define this. And I think that should be obvious because in some countries it is a crime to worship God, right? You wouldn't turn *that* person in.

So we need to think clearly on what truly is a crime. Deuteronomy 13:6 says that if anyone in your family or if any friend tells you about a serious crime that he is about to commit, you have an obligation before God to intervene, and if that is not successful, to ask the state to intervene, since

the state has jurisdiction over such capital crimes. But let me read the text: it says that intervention is necessary **“If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul”** implicates you in the capital crime. It’s so obvious that it shouldn’t have to be said, but for some people it does. They allow their husband to engage in incest for years, with the sick thought that they are being submissive. That is not submission; that is servility. There are a lot of loony ideas out there about submission. Well, Deuteronomy 13:6 says that you are guilty of the crime in God’s eyes if you are an enabler of that Biblical crime. But I added the phrase “is involved in,” because 1 Corinthians 6 mentions a list of crimes that no Christian should engage in, and yet it goes on to say, **“such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”** So you don’t necessarily turn people in for crimes that they committed umpteen years ago and repented of umpteen years ago – especially if it is past the statute of limitations. That can be a sticky situation, but it is certainly something you need to think about. There is a balance there.

Now, because there are so many misunderstandings about submission out there, I want you to turn with me to 1 Peter 3, and I will give you a quick summary of what submission is not. And the reason this is necessary is that I have run across people who have said that everything Abigail is doing here is sinful. Believe it or not, there was a tape where Elizabeth Elliott was being interviewed where she said that even if your husband asked you to sin, you need to submit. And I say, “No. No. No. There are limits to submission.” Well, let’s take a look at 1 Peter 3. This is a beautiful passage on what submission is, but I’m not going to deal with that today. I want to simply look at what it is *not*.

It starts out by saying that everyone is called to submission. This is *not* something unique to wives. It says, **“Wives, likewise, be submissive.”** The word “likewise” means in the same way. He is continuing the discussion of submission in the previous chapter that says that citizens must submit to government, employees must submit to employers, and Christ submitted to the Father. Then chapter 3 says that wives need to submit just like these others all submitted. All of us must be in submission. So the moment you make a wife’s submission more radical than the other submissions, or less radical, you have misinterpreted her submission. Now I am not saying that husbands submit to wives. That’s another error that turns everything upside down. But husbands do submit to somebody.

Second, it says, “**Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands.**” It doesn’t call for submission to other men. It’s submission to their *own* husbands.

Third, submission does not mean giving up independent thought. Verse 1 is addressed directly to the wives, and it is addressed to wives who have rejected their husbands’ pagan religion and have become Christians. There had to be at least some independent thinking for her to be able to do that. So submission does not mean that you blindly believe everything your husband believes, or these women would never have become Christians. You are accountable to God.

Fourth, submission does not mean that a wife should give up efforts to influence her husband in a godly direction. Verse 1 says,

**1Peter 3:1** *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,*

Those wives are obviously seeking to win their husbands to Christianity. They are to do it without nagging, but it doesn’t mean that they can’t seek in other ways to influence their husbands towards good. By the way, when he says, “**without a word,**” he is calling them not to nag. That’s the worst thing that a wife can do. But at the same time, he is not saying that wives cannot present truth to their husbands if the husband is willing to listen. It is obvious that Peter meant this because he says “**even if some do not obey the word.**” That implies that the wives have brought the Word of God to their husbands. But if he rejects it, they shouldn’t nag. They just need to drop it. But again, that reinforces that they sought to influence.

Fifth, submission does not mean that a wife has to give in to every demand of the husband. Verse 2 says,

**1Peter 3:2** *when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.*

There were many pagans in that part of the world who wanted their wives to be engaged in orgies, wife-swapping, and other perversions. But Peter commands her to maintain chaste conduct. So that too implies limits to submission, similar to what we have talked about.

Sixth, submission is not based on lesser intelligence. This whole passage indicates the woman’s competence not only to make a decision of faith, but to be able to apply Peter’s words. 1 Samuel 25 makes it very clear that Abigail was far more intelligent than her husband. But he goes on in the next verses to describe the kind of beauty involved in true submission:

**1Peter 3:3** *Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—*

**1Peter 3:4** rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

**1Peter 3:5** For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

**1Peter 3:6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Of course, that last verse indicates another thing that submission is not. It is not timidity. Reverence for your husband is the opposite of being afraid or having terror. Some of the enablers of morbid obesity, or drunk driving, or other issues we have discussed are enablers because they are timid or afraid; they are easily intimidated. It is clear later on in 1 Samuel 25 that even though Abigail tried to rescue her husband, she was not an enabler of him, and she was not afraid of him. Nor was she timid to tell him what she had done once he woke up from his drunken stupor. She was wise enough to wait till he got sober, but she was not timid.

And the last thing in this 1 Peter passage is that verse 7 shows that submission is not inconsistent with equality in Christ. It says

**1Peter 3:7** Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

They are joint heirs with their husbands. Now, this is a fantastic passage to teach radical submission. There are a whole bunch of points on what submission means. I'm not going to deal with that. I just wanted to point out that even the most famous passage on submission shows that there are limits to it. And Elizabeth Elliott is flat out wrong in saying that a wife could never be part of an intervention. And if you keep reading through verses 8-12 you will see that this is the only way that both husband and wife can love life, see good days, and find the blessing of the Lord upon them.

Well, let's go back to 1 Samuel 25. Commentaries point out that Abigail was seeking to protect her husband even though he didn't deserve it. She knew that David's men wouldn't kill her. She could have gotten rid of her scoundrel husband. But she didn't. She sought to the best of her ability to do what was in his best interests. This is the opposite of trying to get rid of a husband or trying to get a divorce. And so her motives on this intervention were pure. They were pure on behalf of Nabal and they were pure on behalf of David.

### ***C. Intervention is necessary when time is short (v. 14b)***

So we have seen so far that the intervention of Abigail did indeed avoid gossip, it avoided rebellion and was consistent with submission, and it avoided enabling. Let's move on. Point C says that intervention is necessary

when time is short. Verse 14 says, “**Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master.**” The wilderness was not very far away, and from the body language of those soldiers, this servant could tell that they were in trouble if something was not done right away.

But this is yet another hurdle to doing intervention properly. Because of the discomfort, people will sometimes procrastinate until it is too late to do anything. On the other hand, some people will go to the police when a much less serious intervention could work. 1 Corinthians 6 warns against doing that with believers. Going to the civil magistrate should be a last resort. But sometimes there is not a lot of time to think. Mr. Schlitzer tells of how he saved the life of a fellow electrician by the name of Hildebrand. Mr. Hildebrand was walking straight towards the broken end of a high voltage wire. Schlitzer yelled at him, but couldn't be heard because of all the noise. So he quickly picked up a stone, threw it and hit Mr. Hildebrand square in the chest. You know something like that is going to make a man angry, but it made him look up just in time to see the live wire, and with tears in his eyes, thanked Schlitzer for saving his life. There was the use of something painful, unwanted, and something that initially made the person mad, actually ending up being a welcomed intervention. And when interventions are done right (as Abigail did it) they are welcomed by the perp more frequently than not. They are maybe not thankful right away, but often down the road they do thank the people who intervened for having the courage to do so.

***D. Intervention is needed when gross injustice has happened (vv. 14b-16)***

Point D says that intervention is sometimes needed when gross injustice has happened. We saw last week that this was not anything that was contractually enforceable. But when you see a relationship permanently ruptured, you might need to approach the parties and try to be a peacemaker. And Lord willing, when we get to the speech of Abigail, we will see some marvelous features of good peacemaking. I haven't figured out yet how I'm going to preach on it, but oh, it is rich.

Anyway, this servant sees how fundamentally unfair this was, and how hurt David's men must have felt. Beginning with the last four words of verse 14: “**...and he reviled them. But the men were very good to us, and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. They were a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep.**” Though

nothing like this could have been enforced in a civil court, it still was an injustice. But more importantly, it created a needless break in relations.

***E. Intervention is needed when the danger of permanent disaster is near (v. 17).***

The fifth thing we see here is that intervention was needed because of the danger of permanent disaster. This was not a case of petty meddling. Verse 17 says,

**1Samuel 25:17** Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his household.

When we are trying to intervene in people's lives, we need to make sure that it is serious. Disaster was hanging over everyone's heads, and in this case it took more than one head to figure things out.

***F. Intervention is needed when you cannot reason with the abuser (v. 17b)***

The last reason that intervention was needed was because no one could reason with Nabal. Verse 17 goes on to say,

**For he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him."**

Obviously the ideal would have been to reason with Nabal, but if they had taken the time to do that, everyone would have been dead, including Nabal. Drunks usually reject any notion that they have a problem. Meth users often convince themselves that they are using the drug responsibly and that they are no danger to anyone. "Get off my back." In fact, every meth user that I have counseled has been a liar. Porn users deceive themselves and others into thinking that they don't have a problem. So, like a drunk who didn't want help, Nabal didn't want help. So those are six things that show the need for the intervention.

## **II. The Speed of Intervention**

***A. Quick thinking (v. 18a)***

***B. Quick action (v. 18b)***

Let's quickly take a look at the speed of the intervention. Verse 18 says:

**1Samuel 25:18** Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and loaded them on donkeys.

The interesting thing about this is that she was taking food that had already been prepared for the days of feasting. The grain had already been roasted, the loaves of bread baked, and the sheep already butchered. And later on in the chapter we see that everyone still had plenty to eat. So Nabal was a liar about not having enough food. Anyway, she found from the larder whatever she could find and quickly took it with her. This shows quick thinking and quick action, both of which are often needed in interventions. Some of the elders in our denomination have had to engage in a speedy intervention. It was inconvenient, but it had to be done.

But this passage also shows that she was giving David what Nabal had refused to. There is a sense in which this was undermining her husband. But it was undermining her husband in order to save his life. She was for her husband without being in denial about the seriousness of his sin. And we already saw from Deuteronomy 13 that there are limited circumstances where this is allowable. Wives should not undermine their husbands unless the situation absolutely demands it. And of course, this one did.

### **III. The Deed of Intervention**

#### ***A. Involved others (v. 19a)***

We are going to finish off today with the deed of intervention. Verse 19: **“And she said to her servants, ‘Go before me; see, I am coming after you.’”** This was either a case of bringing the gifts first to soften David, or it was a case of urgency, knowing that she could not keep up with them. But the only point I am applying here is that she involved others in her deed. She involved others in her intervention. Everyone but Nabal was in agreement that Nabal needed intervention and that David needed intervention. If you are the only relative who believes intervention is needed, you might want to reconsider. Maybe anger is clouding your mind. Or maybe you are too cautious about your parents’ driving. And so it is worthwhile finding out from the other brothers and sisters if they think the same way. Maybe there is something you are missing. But there is a reason why Matthew 18 recommends two or three be involved. Again, these are protections from abusing this concept of intervention. Are others willing to be involved? If so, that’s a good sign. If not, maybe you ought to rethink the intervention.

#### ***B. Involved personal presence (v. 19b)***

Secondly, it involved personal presence. She says, **“I am coming after you.”** She doesn’t make other people do her dirty work for her. It makes me very angry when State-interventions occur based on an

anonymous tip. That is wrong. How many households have been damaged because CPS has barged in based on an anonymous tip, and the tip has ended up being false. If you are not willing to get personally involved, forget it. Don't let somebody else do your dirty work for you. They can help, but that does not get you off the hook.

And when you get to her speech, you realize how imperative this personal presence was. She gives an amazing speech. In fact, it is so amazing, it may explain why the Jews thought of her as one of seven female prophets of the Old Testament and why the Roman Catholic Church believes she was a prophetess. I'm not sure about that fact, but it was her personal presence that made the difference. She is not an anonymous whistleblower. She was willing to face Nabal later in the chapter and say exactly what she did. And she was certainly willing to face David. Both David and Nabal needed intervention, and she had a personal presence with both of them.

### *C. Bypassed normal protocols (v. 19c)*

Third, it bypassed normal protocols. The last phrase of verse 19 says, "**But she did not tell her husband Nabal.**" If she had told him, Nabal and possibly the whole household would have died. So again it emphasizes that interventions are not standard procedures. They happen when nothing else will work. Can you see how I am trying to give a balance between the need for interventions and cautions concerning interventions?

### *D. Was dangerous (vv. 20-22)*

Fourth, it was dangerous for her to do this. Verses 20-22:

**1Samuel 25:20** So it was, as she rode on the donkey, that she went down under cover of the hill; and there were David and his men, coming down toward her, and she met them.

**1Samuel 25:21** Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this *fellow* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *belongs* to him. And he has repaid me evil for good.

**1Samuel 25:22** May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who *belong* to him by morning light."

Commentators say that these were the most venomous words to come out of David's mouth in the Old Testament. He was really angry. So she was walking into something pretty dangerous, and it was going to take tact, humility, graciousness, and wisdom to diffuse the situation. Not everyone does equally well with interventions. Some people make matters worse through their attitudes. That's why Galatians 6:1 says that with most interventions you need to be spiritually mature. But most interventions do have an element of danger to them. It may simply be the danger of making the rift in the relationship permanent. But it could be a worse danger. I've

been in interventions where my life was in danger. I really wondered if I was going to be killed, but I felt it was imperative that I get involved.

I find it interesting that David did not take an oath that pronounced judgment on *himself* if he didn't follow through. David says, "**May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I leave one male of all who belong to him by morning light.**" One commentator says, "David's oath form is admittedly irregular, but it reflects a degree of wisdom; it avoids the risk of taking the Lord's name in vain (cf. Exod 20:7), and it insulates David from disastrous consequences in the event the vow is not fulfilled. It essentially obligated God to kill any enemies that David himself might fail to kill." But the only little point I am going to bring out is that David is treating all of them as enemies.

And that highlights something that we should be very careful to distinguish when we engage in interventions. David was attempting an intervention on behalf of his 600 men who had been hurt. He no doubt thinks that he is doing a good thing. But *David's* attempt at intervention was ungodly, prideful, destructive, flowed from anger, did not flow from love, had as its goal the destruction of *people* rather than the solving of the *problem*, and would have created more problems than it solved. And part of the issue was that David went into the problem thinking of these people as his enemies. Your intervention will not be successful if you do that. Your bad attitudes will ooze out and destroy the effectiveness of your peacemaking

Abigail's intervention was the exact opposite. It was godly, humble, constructive, flowed from love, provided a solution, it gave honor to David, it did not treat either David or Nabal as her enemy, and was peacemaking par excellence. David later admits that he had been incredibly foolish. It was Abigail who had the sense to realize that her husband was not the enemy and David was not the enemy; it was Satan who was the enemy. She's got the right focus. And so rather than praying imprecations against either, she sought intervention to reconcile.

***E. Required tact, humility, wisdom, and diplomacy (vv. 23ff)***

Verse 23 says, "**Now when Abigail saw David, she dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground.**" She does not intervene with arrogance, harshness, or accusation. That would not have worked very well with David. Instead her attitude displayed in this verse and in her speech that followed showed the characteristics of a true peacemaker. Intervention is not about getting even.

Intervention is not about getting your way. It is not about giving someone else “what for.” It’s not about venting. It is not about putting them in their place. Such intervention rarely works. In fact it usually makes things worse. True intervention is about cutting through the blindness that people have about their own problems, and doing it with tact, humility, wisdom, and diplomacy. We may not be as good at it as Abigail was in this chapter, but it is certainly a goal that we can pursue when fellow believers are blinded by their sin.

### **Conclusion: Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24-26**

Now let me conclude with two Scriptures that will fill out the picture of what I have said. These concluding Scriptures give just a few more characteristics that should clothe us when we intervene.

First, Galatians 6:1 “**Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**” Paul says that it takes spiritual maturity to do this well. So if you are not spiritually mature and you need an intervention, you might want to think about bringing someone mature with you. Second, it takes gentleness and meekness to do it well. Those are characteristics that tend to smooth the waters. And third, Paul says it takes an attitude of humility or what one person said, “There but for the grace of God go I” to do this well. If you go into the situation knowing that you could be tempted in exactly the same way (and really believe that), you will have a humility that will take the edge off the confrontation. So Galatians 6:1 is an incredibly important passage to meditate upon before you go into an intervention.

One more passage: 2 Timothy 2:24-26. This passage says, “**And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel** [That doesn’t work too well in interventions...] **but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition** [I think you can see how each one of those characteristics will go a long way in intervention, so let me repeat them – he “must not quarrel, but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition”], **if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and *that* they may come to their senses** [you see, this is a blindness issue many times; they just don’t see it. They think you are a nut to say that they have a problem with alcohol, etc. So it says, “that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses”] **and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.**” Interventions are sometimes

needed because Satan has blinded the person and enslaved that person and apart from outside help they will not be able to get out of that slavery, whether it is slavery to porn, or slavery to something else. So that is 2 Timothy 2:24-26. If you add those two passages to everything we have looked at in 1 Samuel 25, I think you will be well prepared. And may God prosper you if you ever have to do this. Amen. Let's pray.

Charge: Brothers and sisters, if God ever calls you to engage in intervention, I charge you to put on the courage of Abigail and do it; but do it with her humility, tact, graciousness. And may God use your work to help others to escape from the snare of the devil. Amen.

# Youth Notes

Draw a picture of the sermon

Word checklist: check words off as Pastor Kayser says them.

- providence
- suicidal
- professionals
- enablers
- meddling
- intervention
- drunks
- gossip
- danger
- submission
- love
- crime
- accountable
- nagging
- fear
- perp
- undermining
- presence
- anonymous
- Satan
- gentleness
- humility

Things I need to do:

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Try the following wordsearch puzzle. All answers are to the right.

H	C	S	I	E	J	H	A	T	M	F	K	Y	N	N	S	O	R	C	P	J	S	G	P	H
V	R	Y	V	N	H	H	N	A	A	T	B	F	T	J	C	B	D	M	L	Q	U	S	M	U
D	I	R	D	A	Q	K	O	C	M	E	D	D	L	I	N	G	P	Y	X	V	I	L	G	M
K	M	N	B	B	N	L	N	S	T	S	U	B	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	D	C	M	F	I
W	E	D	H	L	Y	O	Y	W	E	A	X	J	C	P	H	I	O	W	I	I	I	B	T	L
V	I	R	Y	E	X	V	M	B	W	Q	C	J	N	E	A	K	R	D	J	Y	D	U	L	I
S	D	J	K	R	U	E	O	I	D	Y	S	C	F	R	D	W	X	R	T	Z	A	R	L	T
C	A	X	T	S	E	G	U	T	L	U	A	E	O	P	X	L	O	R	L	A	L	M	V	Y
Q	N	R	K	S	G	U	S	Y	G	Y	R	C	L	U	N	D	E	R	M	I	N	I	N	G
Q	G	M	I	N	T	E	R	V	E	N	T	I	O	N	N	S	A	D	X	U	T	N	Y	P
G	E	N	T	L	E	N	E	S	S	K	P	H	J	B	U	T	Y	D	A	N	K	L	C	P
W	R	O	D	Q	V	C	R	S	M	G	O	S	S	I	P	N	A	G	G	I	N	G	O	N
X	X	J	A	H	K	A	Q	B	S	J	V	D	R	U	N	K	S	B	L	Q	B	U	W	Z
G	R	N	A	B	E	I	A	P	R	O	F	E	S	S	I	O	N	A	L	S	Q	L	U	X
F	Q	Y	Z	F	E	P	R	O	V	I	D	E	N	C	E	P	W	M	K	E	I	L	M	X
S	E	Z	Z	Y	N	O	V	V	P	M	P	R	E	S	E	N	C	E	M	T	Y	G	Y	Z
H	S	E	O	Y	H	G	V	N	C	H	H	N	P	Q	O	I	J	F	S	A	T	A	N	M

# Intervention In Sticky Situations

## 1 Samuel 25:14-23

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 12-18-2011

### Introduction

#### I. The Need for Intervention

A. Intervention is not gossip; it is offering a solution to the problem (v. 14a)

B. Intervention is not lack of submission; sometimes failure to intervene makes you an enabler (v. 14a)

C. Intervention is necessary when time is short (v. 14b)

D. Intervention is needed when gross injustice has happened (vv. 14b-16)

E. Intervention is needed when the danger of permanent disaster is near (v. 17).

F. Intervention is needed when you cannot reason with the abuser (v. 17b)

#### II. The Speed of Intervention

A. Quick thinking (v. 18a)

B. Quick action (v. 18b)

#### III. The Deed of Intervention

A. Involved others (v. 19a)

B. Involved personal presence (v. 19b)

C. Bypassed normal protocols (v. 19c)

D. Was dangerous (vv. 20-22)

E. Required tact, humility, wisdom, and diplomacy (vv. 23ff)

Conclusion - Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24-26

