

CANONICAL MONDAYS: A MAN SHOULD LISTEN TO THE WISDOM OF HIS WIFE

[Last week](#) on #CanonicalMondays we asked whether it was inherently wrong for a husband to listen to the voice of his wife, based on the grave and consequential narrative event of Adam listening to Eve, which led to the Fall.

We saw that Abram, like Adam, listened to the voice of his wife Sarai in a story that was meant to mirror the Fall in Genesis 3 (you can read more about that [here](#) and [here](#)). And without diving deeper, this could clinch the assumption that a man should not listen to his wife, for when he does, it leads to sin.[\[1\]](#)

But we *did* go deeper and we dismantled that assumption. In Genesis 21, we read a later narrative where Sarah has changed her tune. In fact, when she tells her husband what he should do, she echoes what God Himself had told Abraham to do back in Genesis 17. And, God Himself tells Abraham to **listen to the voice** of his wife and to **do what she says** (Gen. 21:12).

Observing the details of these narratives—and comparing and contrasting them—leads the reader to understand that a man should *not* listen to his wife when she is in opposition to the Word of God, but that a man *should* listen to his wife when she tells him that which agrees with the Word of God[\[2\]](#).

Let's look at the story of Abigail and David from 1 Samuel 25 and see if this new understanding holds true (listen to a woman who speaks the wisdom of the Word).

As we read, we'll note the Garden themes that are at play, and how this man (David) responds to the voice of this woman (Abigail).

I'll suggest that you read the passage (on the left) through one time, and then go back and read it with the notes on the right-hand side:

18 Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs [A] , and laid them on donkeys. ...20 And as she rode on the	[A] Look at all this food! An abundance of food, which is thematically on point with the Garden in Genesis 1-2.
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donkey and came down under cover of the **mountain**[B], behold, David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. 21 Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. 22 God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him."

23 When Abigail **saw** David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. **Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant.** 25 Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and **folly**[3] is with him. But I your servant **did not see**[4] the young men of my lord, whom you sent. 26 Now then, my lord, as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, because *the Lord has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand*[5], now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. 27 And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be **given** [6] to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the LORD will certainly make[7] my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the LORD, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. 29 If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling. 30 And when the Lord has done to my lord according to all the good that he

[B] This meeting between a man and a woman, where the woman gives the man food, occurs on a mountain, just as the first story does in Genesis 2-3.

[3] In Hebrew, this is a play on words. The name 'Nabal' spelled with the consonants NVL, which are same consonants that spell the word meaning "folly." Again, we think of Proverbs which contrasts life-giving wisdom and death-giving folly.

[4] NVL failed to see **and** do what was right. Just like Eve, she saw, but did not do what was right. Here, Abigail is contrasted with both Nabal and Eve.

[5] She's essentially talking David into doing what's right here. David was on his way down to destroy Nabal and all his men (cf vs 22), but Abigail throws herself before him and is basically asserting that she is the means by which the LORD is preventing David from slaying these men. We'll see that David himself says this outright a few verses down.

[6] A woman giving food to a man and his male servants. Cf Gen 3 and the results of a woman giving a man some food.

[7] Prophetic speech from this woman!

has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, 31 my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord working salvation himself. And when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.”

32 And David said to Abigail,^[8] **“Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! 33 Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! 34** For as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, *who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me,*^[9] truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male.”

35 Then David received from her hand what she had brought him.^[10] And he said to her, “Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition.”

^[8] These clauses are parallel in the Hebrew text: David blesses the LORD for what He has done, and in the same syntax and nearly all the same vocabulary frame, blesses Abigail for what she has done. In so doing, the author parallels what Abigail does here as what God has done. I think that this is a crucial observation. Eve was framed in the text of Gen. 3 as attempting to copy the actions of God in Gen. 1-2. Sarai, also, in Gen. 16 is described as attempting to do what God had done in Gen. 1-2. Here in 1 Sam. 25 we have an example of a woman’s actions being described the same way as God’s actions—to the benefit of a human and with salvatory function.

The text in Hebrew for those who would like to see it:

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְאַבְיָגַיִל בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחךָ הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְקִרְאָתִי:

וּבְרוּךְ טַעֲמַךָ וּבְרוּכָה אַתְּ אֲשֶׁר כָּלַתְנִי הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִבּוֹא בְדָמַיִם וְהִשַּׁע יָדֵי לִי:

^[9] And here we see David’s explicit connection between the LORD’s purpose and Abigail’s actions, which was mentioned earlier: the LORD has sent Abigail to rescue David from the bloodguilt of slaughtering all those men in vengeance.

^[10] Here is the resolution, which is incredibly significant in in it’s explicit

	<p>connection (by Hebrew words) to Genesis 3 (and Gen. 16): David took something from Abigail (food) that she had given him. And he says – explicitly – I have obeyed your voice. For the benefit of <u>every single man involved</u> in this story. For Nabal and his men, who were about to be murdered, and for David and his men, who would have sinfully engaged in the bloodshed of revenge.</p>
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Abigail is a Better Eve.

What she brings to the man and what she says to the man is truly wisdom — it aligns with the words and the plans of God. By her gift of food and her admonition to David, she saved all of Nabal’s house from death, and David (and his men) from bloodguilt. I’ll say it again: every single man in this story is saved because of this woman.

Abigail is more proof that listening to a woman — full of the wisdom and Word of God — not only can be listened to, but must be listened to. For God Himself brings women just like Abigail into men’s lives in order to further His plans and teach His ways^[11].

NOTES:

^[1] Which, shockingly, is a part of the assumption about women and their place in the family and in churches throughout Church history. Only relatively recently has the tide begun to change and woman’s inherent equality with men has gained agreement in the dominant Church denominations. See William Witt’s detail of historical church views of women in his work *Icons of Christ*, published in 2020.

^[2] Proverbs deals with this concept of one who speaks or listens to wisdom vs. foolishness. Wisdom comes from the Word of God, and foolishness is *opposed* to it. Cf Prov. 1 and 2, just in example. Especially Prov. 1:20-31, and the contrast between 2:6-12a vs 12b-15.

^[11] The woman in Genesis 2 was given to the man to be a corresponding “helper.” This is the same term (‘ezer) which is used of God in Exod 18:4 and Deut 33:7, Israel’s

helper. God who rises up and rescues Israel from defeat and death. Abigail is a prime example of what a woman was created to be, an 'ezer. How important then is it for a man to listen to his 'ezer, if it leads to his rescue?

I also think of the Proverbs 31 woman, the woman that a man wants to find and marry: vs 26 says that "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue."