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Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- As Pastor Doug frequently says, *"In every tense situation, remember—you have a bucket of water in one hand, and a bucket of gasoline in the other. Be careful **which one** you throw on the fire!"*
 - 1 Who would be willing to tell us about a time you threw **gas** on the fire? ...**water**? ...**nothing**?
How did that experience change your approach to future conflicts?
 - 2 Review the four observations Pastor Lanier made about peacemaking (see the **Sermon Summary**). Which of those traits have you experienced personally? Tell us about it.
 - 3 Are you more likely to be **active** or **passive** in conflict situations?
 - 4 In what ways was your engagement in the situation (or lack thereof) redemptive?
 - Review the biblical story of peacemaking Pastor Lanier mentioned (see 1 Samuel 25:2-42).
 - 5 Abigail's peacemaking action is evident, but note the young man's report found in v. 14-17. How is **this** also a peacemaking effort, and not mere gossip? Have you ever played that role?
 - 6 Make a list of **all** that Abigail did in v. 18-20 & 23-31. How did **each** action contribute to peacemaking?
 - 7 Which of those actions have typically been lacking in your peacemaking efforts in the past?
 - 8 Envision a tense situation you're likely to encounter. How could one or two of those missing elements be put to good use? Be specific.
 - 9 Notice Abigail's wisdom in informing Nabal about the previous day's events (v. 36-38). **How** was that also a godly, kind, courageous act?
 - 12

Need help learning to be a peacemaker?

Write to:

BiblicalHopeAndHelp@gmail.com

Application-Challenge

- 10 If there are tensions in your family, come up with a plan for how you can lovingly work to bring peace. Avoid taking sides or gossiping. Help both sides work towards forgiveness and restoration.
- 11 Read Isaiah 53 this week. Focus on the peacemaking efforts of Christ and the great cost at which peace with God was won on our behalf.

- 1 Read the first part of this question in order to get one or more stories out there for consideration. Then, after one or more stories have been shared, move to the question about how that experience helped shape their responses to future conflicts.
- 2 It probably would be helpful first to have four group members each read one of those observations. Then, ask for volunteers to share which of those traits they've experienced.
- 3 Items 3 and 4 of course go together, but ask and respond to 3 before moving onto 4.
- 4 This question will require greater processing of their experiences. If you "prime the pump" a bit with questions such as "What happened next?" or "How has your relationship developed since then?" it may help group members be able to discover redemptive elements, even if the *initial* response and outcome to the relationship was a bit rocky. Growth takes time.
- 5 It's easy to see Abigail in her starring role as peacemaker, but for this young man to have played a role anything like Abigail did would have been "above his pay-grade". But notice that he did what he could. He knew that Abigail could do something—if she were made aware of Nabal's actions. He was witness to Nabal's rudeness. He understood that a warrior-king such as David (remember, David killed Goliath when he was still just a youth!) could be dangerous if you dissed him! So in v. 14 he informed Abigail. In v. 15-16 he vouched for David's uprightness. In v. 17 he let's Abigail know that danger awaited, and that a direct appeal to Nabal was futile. Although Agigail was the start of this show, she could not have done what she did without his supporting role. In peacemaking, we each need to play our role.
- 6
 - David had asked for food for his hungry men (v. 5-6), and so she quickly fulfilled his request (v. 18).
 - She knew that it would take time to assemble and deliver the supplies, so she sent messengers on ahead to prevent David from violent action (v. 19).
 - She herself went with her gift. Not only was she the most senior after Nabal, but she wanted to make a personal appeal, to explain the consequences of violence, and to be persuasive (v. 20).
 - In v. 21-22 she had the opportunity to evaluate the situation, to know how dangerous it was.
 - She showed deep respect to David (v. 23)—the very thing Nabal had refused to do.
 - She became a mediator between her rude relative and the innocent but offended David (v. 24).
 - She acknowledged that David was justified in being offended by Nabal (v. 25).
 - She asked him to let God be his defender; let God do to Nabal what should be done (v. 26-29).
 - She reminded him that God had promised that he would someday be king, and that this act of revenge would be a black mark on is record (v. 30-31a).
 - She slipped in a personal request at the end! (v. 31b. Which David fulfilled—see v. 37-42!).
- 7 Obviously, you'll have to distill out the principles which lay behind the specific's of Abigail's actions. But this is how we use biblical narrative—we see what others did (commendable and otherwise), we distill out the principle lying behind the specific action, and we apply it to our lives.
- 8 Help your group be both specific and concrete in their proposed actions (rather than vague and non-specific), and yet limited and achievable in their objectives (making incremental progress; not having an "all or nothing" view of peacemaking.)
- 9 Abigail distinguished between the immediate danger (which needed to be quickly averted) and the underlying trait in Nabal which could not be addressed while he was drunk. She used wisdom to distinguish between an immediate crisis and an chronic character flaw—yet she wasn't satisfied simply to avert the immediate danger; she also took the harder step of advising a fool (see Proverbs 23:9).
- 10 Observations from 5 through 9 will provide ideas for creating your own plans. The group could either focus on helping the one individual with the most perilous set of relations come up with a plan, or you could pair up and let one individuals help each other, so that everyone gets a bit of advice.
- 11 The New Living Translation of Isaiah 53 is printed in *Talking Points*.
- 12 Please urge group members to take advantage of TCC's free biblical counseling. Biblical counseling is nothing more than "focused discipleship". The Bible presents counseling one another as part of the normal Christian life—not some indication of extraordinary problems. We need to normalize the getting of help and the giving of help. What is *not* normal is hiding our problems or suffering in silence.