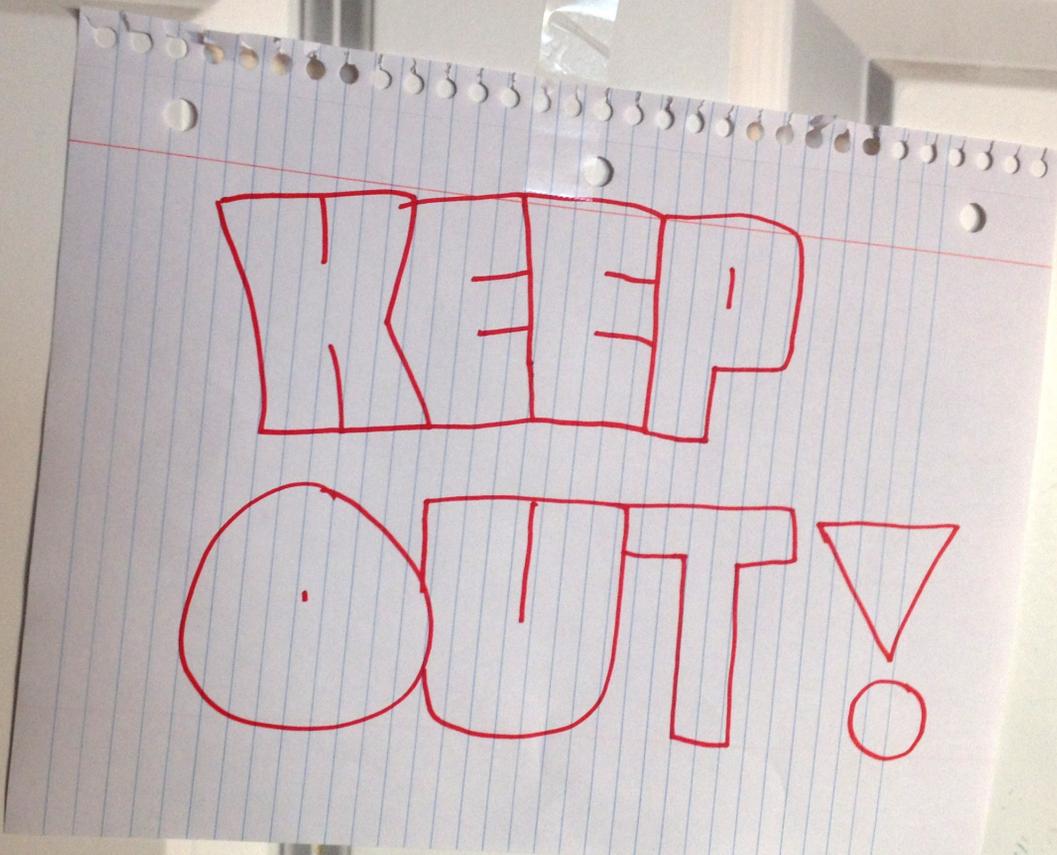


# SESSION 5

# STEP IN

A piece of lined paper with a red spiral binding on the left side. The words "KEEP OUT!" are written in large, bold, red capital letters. The paper is slightly wrinkled and has a small piece of clear tape on the top edge. The background shows a doorway and a hallway.

**KEEP  
OUT!**

***How do you respond when you hear  
"It's none of your business"?***

## THE POINT

*Step in to keep a bad situation from getting worse.*



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

I will never forget the time a young man in my church made some poor decisions. This boy grew up in the church. His parents were personal friends. He was active in everything the church had to offer. He made good grades, was popular, and had a bright future.

One day at church he showed up with a girl I knew had a bad reputation. His friends even commented that she was not his type. I knew this young man's character and the potential he had. For several months, I observed them together. It appeared the longer they were together, the less interest this young man had in things of God. He seemed to be losing his ability to discern right from wrong.

I knew the parents well enough to know they couldn't be approving of what I was observing, yet they never approached me. Should I get involved? Was this any of my business? Would I lose their respect if they felt I was interfering? What should a pastor or friend do?

The story of Abigail helps us consider how we can respond to the conflicts of others.

# WHAT DOES **THE BIBLE** SAY?

## **1 Samuel 25:14-17,23-28,32-35** (HCSB)

**14** One of Nabal's young men informed Abigail, Nabal's wife: "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he yelled at them. **15** The men treated us well. When we were in the field, we weren't harassed and nothing of ours was missing the whole time we were living among them. **16** They were a wall around us, both day and night, the entire time we were herding the sheep. **17** Now consider carefully what you must do, because there is certain to be trouble for our master and his entire family. He is such a worthless fool nobody can talk to him!"

.....

**23** When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off the donkey and fell with her face to the ground in front of David. **24** She fell at his feet and said, "The guilt is mine, my lord, but please let your servant speak to you directly. Listen to the words of your servant. **25** My lord should pay no attention to this worthless man Nabal, for he lives up to his name: His name is Nabal, and stupidity is all he knows. I, your servant, didn't see my lord's young men whom you sent. **26** Now my lord, as surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, it is the LORD who kept you from participating in bloodshed and avenging yourself by your own hand. May your enemies and those who want trouble for my lord be like Nabal. **27** Accept this gift your servant has brought to my lord, and let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. **28** Please forgive your servant's offense, for the LORD is certain to make a lasting dynasty for my lord because he fights the LORD's battles. Throughout your life, may evil not be found in you.

.....

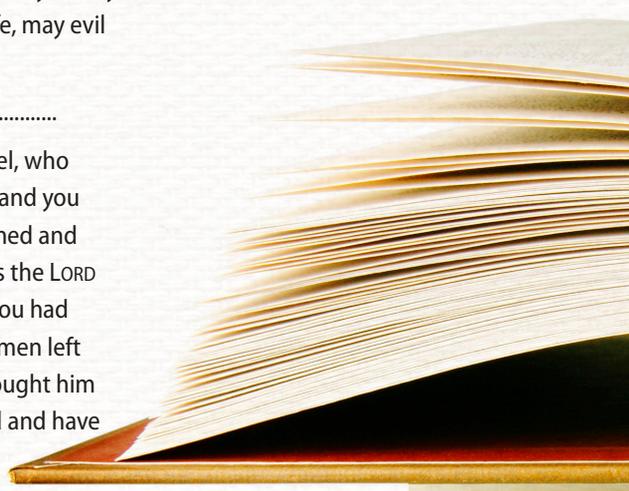
**32** Then David said to Abigail, "Praise to the LORD God of Israel, who sent you to meet me today! **33** Your discernment is blessed, and you are blessed. Today you kept me from participating in bloodshed and avenging myself by my own hand. **34** Otherwise, as surely as the LORD God of Israel lives, who prevented me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, Nabal wouldn't have had any men left by morning light." **35** Then David accepted what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. See, I have heard what you said and have granted your request."

## *Key Words*

**Nabal** (v. 14) – The Hebrew term means fool or foolish, from a word meaning to be senseless. This probably was not his given name but a distortion or nickname describing him.

## **The custom of hospitality**

In David's time, his request that Nabal supply food was not unreasonable nor considered extortion. Eastern hospitality, and Israelite law, included providing for needy people and outcasts. Sojourners (nomads) had a right to expect others' hospitality.



## 1 Samuel 25:14-17

“He is such a worthless fool nobody can talk to him” (v. 17). Wow! The word “Nabal” means “fool.” It appears Nabal lived up to his name. Have you ever met anyone like that? Can you imagine that being said about you?

David had provided protection for Nabal’s flocks in Carmel at no expense. He asked Nabal to return the favor by feeding his men. It was a feast day, so there would have been ample food. It was not an unreasonable request. It would be expected that Nabal would have happily rewarded David’s kindness. David’s request was legitimate and it would have been in keeping with the customs of the time.

But Nabal was a fool. His name, and the witness of others said so. Proverbs 10 speaks of men like Nabal, fools who die for lack of sense (v. 21) and who find pleasure in shameful conduct (v. 23). Nabal may have taken pleasure in his arrogance and meanness to David. Nabal was clueless to the danger in the conflict he had begun with David.

David was noticeably angry. He sent his men to do battle against Nabal. One of Nabal’s servants was evidently a brave young man. He recognized the problem, knew he had to do something about it, and he took action into his own hands. Abigail was informed of the conflict between Nabal and David.

It is highly unusual to see a wife treated so nobly in the Old Testament. Abigail was obviously an exceptional woman. No doubt, this servant felt comfortable going to Abigail with the news. He had certainly seen the ignorance of his master Nabal, but he must have also seen the wisdom of Abigail.

*What’s the difference between tattling and giving someone information to keep a bad situation from becoming worse?*

### QUESTION #1

## 1 Samuel 25:23-28

Abigail was an intelligent woman (v. 3). As much as her husband was foolish, Abigail was wise. In the culture of the day, it is possible that Abigail was married to Nabal because he was “very rich” (v. 2) and could afford her beauty and intelligence. Abigail realized the potential for devastating conflict.

Abigail responded with:

- ▶ **Humility**
- ▶ **Respect**
- ▶ **Diplomacy**

Some may be tempted to criticize Abigail for going against her husband. Abigail showed she was serving a higher authority. God used her to prevent bloodshed.

Abigail reasoned with David, appealing to his moral character and his wisdom. She helped him see the bigger picture of what God was doing. David’s future was promised. Abigail also wisely appeased David with food, his original request of Nabal. Finally, Abigail assumed blame for her husband and appealed for David to remain a man of integrity.

Abigail is a great example of a wise peacemaker. She was kind, humble, wise, and even prophetic. Her conciliatory actions protected her husband, her people, and herself. She also kept David from bringing about needless bloodshed.



*What prevents us from stopping a “train wreck” in someone’s life?*

**QUESTION #2**

## THE POINT

*Step in to keep a bad situation from getting worse.*

*What does Abigail's story teach us about how to step in?*

### QUESTION #3



## STEP IN ... OR STEP AWAY

	STEP IN	STEP AWAY	REASON
A co-worker is about to make a decision that will hurt his chance for a promotion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
A neighbor is painting his house an ugly color and the other neighbors hate it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....
Two church members disagree over a church budget issue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	..... .....

# 1 Samuel 25:32-35

I can't help but wonder if the death of God's prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 25:1) played a part in David's anger and his decision to pursue Nabal. The country was mourning and David was running from King Saul. Whatever the reason, David recognized Abigail was an agent of God's grace in his life.

David's anger was justified. Nabal was a fool. Even so, shedding innocent blood was not the answer. Abigail's humility and wisdom helped David see the error in his solution. He accepted Abigail's resolution to the conflict. As David had extended grace to Saul (1 Sam. 24), David now extended grace to someone who didn't deserve it: Nabal. David is the opposite picture of the stubbornness displayed in Nabal:

- ▶ He blessed Abigail for her wisdom and advice.
- ▶ He was open to rebuke.
- ▶ He was willing to accept wise counsel.
- ▶ He humbled himself to admit he was wrong and change his course of action.

David is a reminder of the tenderness of heart God seeks in all who serve Him. With her peaceable nature, Abigail was able to restore peace to David's angry heart. Abigail protected David from sinning. She prevented David from taking matters into his own hands. His anger would have caused him to behave more like his predecessor Saul, instead of a "man after God's own heart." Saul lost the kingdom because he sinned against God. David perhaps saw that he had just avoided doing the same and he humbly recanted of his actions against Nabal. Abigail brought peace to more than just her household. Her efforts kept David from fighting Nabal and ultimately protected his future reign as king.

"David accepted what she had brought him" (v. 35). In her effort to bring peace to a mounting conflict, Abigail had not come empty-handed. Forgiveness is based on extending undeserved grace, but sometimes to solve a conflict, justice must be served and wrongs must be made right.

***What does it take to step in and get involved?***

**QUESTION #4**

## LIVE IT OUT

You remember the young man on page 46? I felt led by God to say something to him. He politely listened to me, but he chose to continue seeing the girl. Later he realized she was not a good fit for the direction he wanted to take his life. He began to make better choices, and today he continues to live his life to honor Christ. Three actions to take when deciding whether or not to step in are:

- ▶ **Give permission.** Give someone permission to step in if you are about to make a bad decision.
- ▶ **Seek advice.** If you're not sure if you should step into someone else's problem, ask the advice of someone you trust.
- ▶ **Intervene diplomatically.** Say what needs to be said with humility and respect.



**Let God lead as you step in to keep a bad situation from getting worse.**

## Not So Fast



**Whenever Monty and Carla have a conflict, Carla bolts.**

**In their first session with Monty and Carla (married one year), Tim and Britney (married 14 years) jumped right in to explain how destructive avoiding conflict can be. "If you run from your problems, Carla, you'll never resolve them—you'll create loose ends that eat away at your marriage," Tim said. "You've got to discuss issues." With that, Carla broke into tears and walked away from the meeting.**



To continue reading "Not So Fast" from *HomeLife* magazine, visit [BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles](http://BibleStudiesforLife.com/articles).



# My group's prayer requests

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## My thoughts