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How would you like to develop a mind-set that can help you overcome challenges that come your way? When challenges arise, we always have a choice to make: either we can allow circumstances to have control over us and defeat us, or we can overcome circumstances with God's Word. Being Word conditioned and not circumstance controlled helps us overcome challenges in life.

In I Samuel 25, the record of Abigail provides us with a vivid illustration of a woman who overcame challenges by letting the Word of God dominate her thinking and not allowing the circumstances to defeat her. Let's get a glimpse into Abigail's life and the adverse circumstances surrounding her.

I Samuel 25:3:

Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish [hard, harsh, cruel] and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

Her circumstances were not favorable—she was married to a worldly and cruel man. Yet Abigail did not allow this to keep her from focusing on God and His Word. She was a woman of “good understanding”—she chose to make God's Word preeminent in her mind.

We also find in this chapter another daunting challenge that Abigail faced—her household was being threatened by David and his band of about six hundred men!

David and his men were in exile and on the run from King Saul (I Samuel 23). While in the wilderness, they had kept watch and protected Nabal's sheep and servants. Therefore, David sent a request asking for provisions for his men from Nabal (I Samuel 25:5-8). Nabal rudely refused to provide help, so David determined to attack Nabal's household (I Samuel 25:10-13).

Abigail learned of this encounter and David's intentions to attack. Rather than shrink in fear and allow the circumstances to control her behavior, Abigail held fast to God's Word and took believing action. She quickly gathered together some food and wine and personally went to meet David and his men; she humbly offered an apology for her husband's foolish behavior. With her good understanding, she spoke winning words to David and deterred his vengeance against her husband (I Samuel 25:18-35).

Not long after this encounter, Nabal died. David then sent for Abigail and asked her to be his wife (I Samuel 25:38,39). Her good understanding of God's heart and her resilient mind-set brought God's deliverance to David and to her household. And God delivered her—she became the wife of David, a man after God's own heart.

We too can develop a resilient, Word-conditioned mind-set to help us overcome challenges that come our way. Romans 12 contains many practical keys to help us become Word conditioned and not circumstance controlled. The renewed mind is one such key.

Romans 12:2:

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

If we are going to be Word conditioned and not controlled by our circumstances, then it is imperative that we become transformed—changed in condition, nature, or character—by renewing our minds to God's Word.

Another key found in Romans 12 is to cleave to things that are morally good (Romans 12:9), which God's Word goes on to define. Romans 12:10 and 11 tell us that we are to treat each other affectionately in the household of God and put a wholehearted effort into living for God.

Also, we can pray.

Romans 12:12:

...patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.

We can patiently endure pressure, continuing in prayer. Prayer helps us keep our focus on God and off the circumstances.

Another key to being Word conditioned and not circumstance controlled is not allowing our emotions to control our behavior and cause us to react toward others

who may have wronged us. Instead, we can choose to bless one another with kindness (Romans 12:14,19,20). Choosing kindness over hostility can appease the anger and malice of others just as Abigail's blessing to David and his men prevented David from avenging himself.

Romans 12 ends with another tremendous key to help us confidently face challenges and obstacles:

Romans 12:21:

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

We always have a choice to make. Let's choose to stay Word conditioned and live above life's circumstances and challenges. Like our heroine, Abigail, we do not allow ourselves to be overcome of (or by) evil, but we choose to overcome evil with good. We can meet every challenge in life with renewed-mind vigor—even if our situation feels inescapable! We don't shrink in fear; instead, we keep our minds and hearts steadfast on the Word and live it as Romans 12 instructs us and as Abigail's life shows us. For as we are Word conditioned and not circumstance controlled, we can overcome any challenges in life.

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