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# Seeking God's Will

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# Seeking God's Will

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- Godly people seek the Lord's will, no matter what
- 2 Samuel 2:1–11 and Psalm 25:4–15
- Now that he had mourned Saul, David had to decide what to do next.
- God had chosen him to be the king, and Samuel had anointed him many years earlier (at least 15).
- The text tells us David was 30 years old at this point (2 Samuel 5:4), and he had been 15 years old when he had been anointed king

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# Seeking God's Will

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- David could have easily assumed this was his moment and just stepped in and taken over the throne. But the text tells us he inquired of the Lord, asking if he should “go up into” any of the cities of Judah” (2:1).
- As a vassal of King Achish of Gath, he was living in Ziklag (1 Samuel 27:1–7).
- David wasn't just asking to go to one of the cities of Judah to visit; he was asking if he should go live there.
- Based on the way this is written, it's implied that David used the ephod of the high priest to inquire of the Lord, as the king of Israel typically did.

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# Seeking God's Will

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- David asked about going to a city of Judah because that was his family's tribe. Going back to his own tribe seemed like a good first step.
- David went up to Hebron, which was not his hometown, but was the most distinguished of Judah's cities.
- It was a city set aside both for the priests / Levites and as a "city of refuge" by the Mosaic Law, a safe place set apart for those who had been falsely accused of murder, which some would have done to David (Numbers 35:6; Joshua 21:13).

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# Seeking God's Will

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- David inquired of the Lord while Abner tried to maintain power for himself by declaring Saul's son the next king. We will find out later that Abner knew God had promised the kingship to David (3:9), yet he still worked against it because it benefitted him. Abner not only didn't inquire of the Lord, but he also intentionally went against what he already knew was God's will.
- But David, even though he knew God's will was for him to become king, still asked God if it were the right time before he made a move. He had already been waiting 10 to 15 years for things God had promised him, but he was willing to wait even longer if it wasn't in God's timing.

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# Seeking God's Will

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- How often do we do what we think is best for ourselves without seeking God's will for our lives – or even intentionally go against what we know is God's will because we want something different?
- God calls us to seek His will, trusting that His plans will always work out for our good, even if they aren't what we think would be best for us.
- This kind of attitude takes great humility, not only submitting to God's will above your own, but also putting others' needs ahead of your own.

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# Seeking God's Will

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- Abner sought what was best for himself, not what would have been best for the whole nation of Israel.
- God's plan requires us to let go of what we think is best for ourselves (more power, wealth, status or influence) and do what He is calling us to do.
- We must learn to trust that His will always turns out best for us in the long run (Romans 8:28).

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- Godly people show love toward their enemies
- 2 Samuel 2:12–3:39
- Joab and Abner met at the pool of Gibeon, in the very south of Ish-bosheth's territory but close to Judah, so a sort of "meeting in the middle."
- In that challenge, 12 young soldiers from each army fought each other individually and each pair "fell down together" so that all 24 died (2:16).
- Because no one won, a very fierce battle broke out, with David's army winning (2:17).

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- After the battle, Joab and his two brothers pursued Abner.
- The fastest, Asahel, caught him, but Abner stabbed him with the butt of his spear, not the blade.
- This sounds crazy, but it was an old soldier's trick when someone was being chased.
- While running, Abner stopped short and thrust his spear backward, which would have caught Asahel by surprise, and Asahel's own momentum from running so fast would have impaled him.



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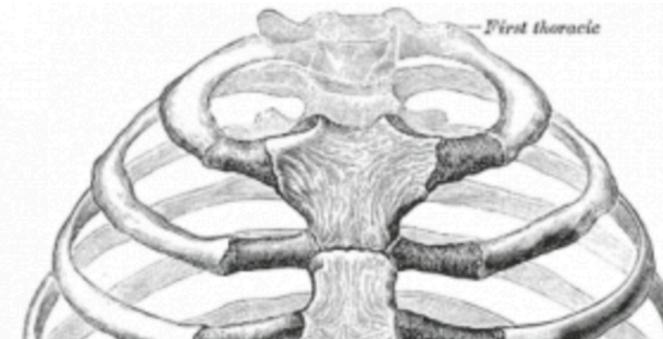
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## Not for the squeamish: How to kill people 2 Samuel style

Mark Woods | 06 August 2015 | 4:32 PM



The Bible is not for the squeamish, and particularly some of the more eventful books of the Old Testament. One of these is 2 Samuel, which tells the story of the beginning of King David's reign and in which large numbers of people came to a sticky end.



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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- Joab and his other brother continued to pursue Abner until he got to the rest of the tribe of Benjamin.
- Abner asked Joab for a truce, calling them all “brothers.”
- So, Joab commanded his army to stop pursuing them.
- David’s army only lost 20 men, but Abner lost 360.
- This was a war between “the house of Saul” and “the house of David.”

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- Even though Saul was dead, and his son was king, the text is still contrasting Saul and David.
- David was growing stronger (3:1).
- Abner was also growing more powerful in Saul's house, and Ish-bosheth accused him of sleeping with Saul's concubine.
- This wasn't just a personal or moral issue; in their culture, it was an implicit way to lay claim to the throne.

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- Abner was infuriated to be accused of treason.
- He said he had done nothing but show “steadfast love” for Saul’s house, the same phrase used in the Old Testament to talk about God’s faithful love for Israel.
- Abner committed to help David gain the throne, which he admitted was “what the Lord has sworn to David” (3:9).
- Abner knew that God meant for David to be king yet had actively worked against it.

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- So, Abner sent messengers to David to make a covenant with him.
- David agreed only if Abner gave him back his original wife, Saul's daughter, Michal.
- The text includes the scene of Paltiel walking with her, weeping after her all the way.
- Abner sent him away before she got to David.

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- Meanwhile, David's general, Joab, believed Abner was making this covenant only to trick David (3:25).
- He went behind David's back to see Abner.
- Abner thought he was coming in peace, but Joab struck him in the stomach to avenge his brother (3:27).
- David claimed innocence before the Lord of the blood of Abner, but he cursed Joab and his house for it (3:29).

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- Then David buried and mourned Abner, saying he died “as a fool dies” when, as a “prince and great man,” he deserved a more noble death.
- David fasted and spoke words of honor about Abner, even though Abner had been his enemy. He also publicly stated that he had been “gentle” toward Abner. As anointed king, he could have been severe with Abner, but he left vengeance in the Lord’s hands as he had with Saul (3:39).
- The people were pleased with the way David mourned Abner, and no one blamed him for Abner’s death (3:36), which helped him gain support for becoming king of all Israel.

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- David showed love and honor to his enemy, both in his willingness to make a covenant with Abner and in honoring him after his death.
- He treated Abner as he had treated Saul, leaving vengeance and judgment to the Lord and speaking only good things about him even though he had not been a faithful follower of God.

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- Godly people leave vengeance and judgment to the Lord
- 2 Samuel 4
- When Ish-bosheth heard that Abner had died, “his courage failed” (4:1). He was afraid, just as his father had been throughout his reign.
- Two of his own captains came to his house, stabbed him in the stomach, and beheaded him, carrying his head to David at Hebron.
- They believed God was using them to avenge David for the way Saul had treated him (4:8).

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

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- When Saul died and an Amalekite, hoping for a reward, claimed to have been responsible, David had the man executed for laying a hand against the Lord's anointed one (1:15).
- Surely these men knew that story, yet they thought David would want to them to kill Ish-bosheth now?
- David had never laid a finger on Saul or any of his sons, and he didn't want to start now, even if their armies had been fighting each other for years.

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# Love Toward Their Enemies

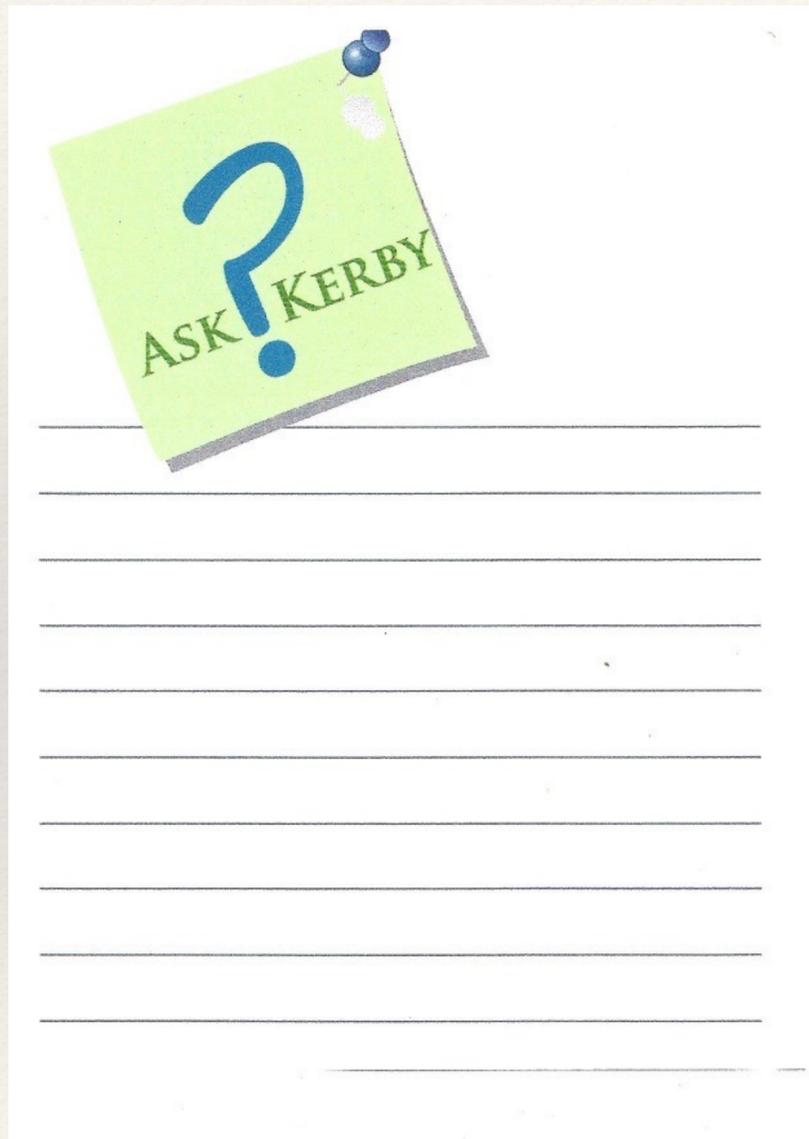
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- When these men brought the news to David, he reminded them how he had executed that Amalekite.
- “How much more,” David said, would he not do the same to them, who had killed “a righteous man” in his own house. Especially while he was taking a nap in his own bed, a cowardly way to attack him.
- David was faced with people who had taken things into their own hands. These captains thought they were doing the Lord’s will, but they didn’t inquire of the Lord. They just did what they thought was God’s will. But David sought the will of the Lord and waited for His timing.

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# Ask Kerby

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Can you review the principles for knowing God's will?

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# 1. The Bible

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- Before considering any other way to discern God's will, one should ask whether the Bible has already provided guidance in this area.
- The Bible is full of God's specific commands and principles.
  - A teenager doesn't have to ask if he should get drunk. The Bible has already addressed that issue: Ephesians 5:18.
  - An unmarried couple doesn't need to ask if they should live together before they marry. The Bible has addressed it: 1 Corinthians 6:18.

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## 2. Prayer

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- We discern God's will through prayer.
- We are commanded to bring our requests before God.
- Philippians 4:6 says:
- "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

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# 3. Holy Spirit

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- God lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit.
- He is our counselor, convictor, comforter, converter, and encourager. He will guide you and intercede for you.
- Romans 8:27 says: “The Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.”

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# 4. Conscience

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- We discern God's will through conscience. If our conscience is troubling us about a particular action or behavior, then we should refrain.
- Each person "must be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5) and "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).
- The opposite is not necessarily true. Conscience is a good stop sign but not a green light. A troubled conscience is sufficient justification to refrain.
- The Bible teaches that, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

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# 5. Circumstances

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- Some of us are born short, some tall. Some are born in America, some in Korea.
- God often reveals His will to us in the circumstances in which we live.
- Acts 17:26 says: “He determines the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.” If a student wants to be a missionary doctor and has trouble graduating from high school, probably has an answer.
- If you want to purchase a house with a \$400,000 mortgage and you only qualify for a \$200,000, circumstances have already given you God’s will.

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# 6. Counsel

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- Proverbs 15:22 teaches that “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”
- Wisdom comes from many counselors.
- Share your decision with other godly men and women.
- Their collective response will often provide God’s direction in a matter.

# Moral Gray Areas

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# Moral Neutrality

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- What about times when the Bible does not clearly seem to speak to a particular action?
- These areas of moral neutrality are still governed by biblical principles that guide our Christian liberty.
- Even though a particular action may not be prohibited in Scripture, it still may be offensive to others because of their social or religious background.
- Another person's family background or spiritual maturity is also a consideration Christians must make.

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# Christian Liberty

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- Paul articulates the principles guiding our liberty in Romans 14-15.
- The context there was the issue of meat sacrificed to idols.
- Not of relevance today.
- It does provide key biblical principles which we can apply in determining our response to issues not specifically addressed in the Bible.

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# First Principle

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- Christians are not to have a judgmental attitude toward one another in regard to issues that are morally neutral.
- Paul says in Romans 14:3 that the “one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat” nor should the “one who does not eat . . . judge the one who eats.”

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# Second Principle

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- Each Christian must decide what is right or wrong for him or her.
- Paul teaches that if you believe a particular action to be wrong for you, then it is wrong.
- “To him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean” (Romans 14:4).

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# Third Principle

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- Each person “must be fully convinced in his own mind” (Romans 14:5).
- If there is doubt, then it is better to refrain from participating rather than engaging in what has become a sinful action for the person.

# Questions to Ask

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# 1. Is It Constructive?

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- 1 Corinthians 6:12a - “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful.”
- You should be a person of excellence.
- Some things are not wrong.
- They are just a waste of time.

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## 2. Is It Controlling?

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- 1 Corinthians 6:12b - “All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.”
- Paul is saying, “I will not be enslaved by anything.”
- Is something controlling you?
- Are you addicted to something in your life that is controlling your behavior?

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# 3. Is It Compassionate?

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- 1 Corinthians 8:10ff - “For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? . . . Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”
- You should make choices that consider the impact on others:
  - alcohol
  - dress
  - entertainment

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## 3. Is It Consistent?

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- 1 Corinthians 10:32-33 - “Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.”
- You should try to be a good witness.
- Live a life of integrity before the watching world.

