

2 Samuel 3 - Guard Your Heart

David - future king OVER Israel - is engaged in a civil war AGAINST Israel

- It began with **Abner** rejecting David and making **Ish-Bosheth king of Israel**
- It was probably **motivated by pride**, Ish-Bosheth is a pawn - Abner is calling the shots
- Abner had been captain of Saul's army - maybe he wanted to retain power
- So bitter feelings developed which eventually led to war between Israel and Judah

This is a story of two men (Joab and David) & how each reacted to Abner's rejection of David -

Pro 4:23 NIV Above all else, guard your heart, **for everything you do flows from it.**

What happened in Joab's heart?

Joab was willing to fight (vs 14)

- 2 Samuel 2:12-32 ***Abner son of Ner, together with the men of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon.*** 13 **Joab son of Zeruiah and David's men went out and met them** at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side. 14 **Then Abner said to Joab**, "Let's have some of the young men get up and fight hand to hand in front of us." **"All right, let them do it," Joab said.** 15 So they stood up and were counted off—twelve men for Benjamin and Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, and twelve for David. 16 Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his dagger into his opponent's side, and they fell down together. So that place in Gibeon was called Helkath Hazzurim.

He engaged in a fierce battle - 360 Benjamites were killed that day (vs 31)

- 17 ***The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's men.***

Joab's vengeful heart likely rubbed off on his brothers - they may have even thought it was a noble cause - these were David's nephews

- 18 The three sons of Zeruiah [*Chronicles 2:13-16 - she was David's sister*] were there: ***Joab, Abishai and Asahel.*** Now **Asahel** was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle. 19 He chased **Abner**, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him. 20 Abner looked behind him and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?" "It is," he answered. 21 Then Abner said to him, "Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons." But Asahel would not stop chasing him. 22 Again Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? ***How could I look your brother Joab in the face?***"

Joab's brother was killed by Abner - there are always consequences - sometimes a price larger than we want to pay

- 23 But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so **Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot.** And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.

The counsel of an enemy is sometimes right

- 24 But **Joab and Abishai pursued Abner**, and as the sun was setting, they came to the hill of

Ammah, near Giah on the way to the wasteland of Gibeon. 25 Then the men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner. They formed themselves into a group and took their stand on top of a hill. **26 *Abner called out to Joab, “Must the sword devour forever? Don’t you realize that this will end in bitterness? How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their brothers?”*** **27 Joab answered, “As surely as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would have continued the pursuit of their brothers until morning.”** 28 So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the men came to a halt; they no longer pursued Israel, nor did they fight anymore. 29 All that night Abner and his men marched through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, continued through the whole Bithron and came to Mahanaim. 30 Then Joab returned from pursuing Abner and assembled all his men. Besides Asahel, **nineteen of David’s men were found missing.** **31 But David’s men had killed three hundred and sixty Benjamites who were with Abner.** 32 They took Asahel and buried him in his father’s tomb at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak.

The destructive nature of unresolved conflict

- Must the sword **devour** forever
- Don’t you realize this will end in **bitterness**
- Stop **pursuing** your brothers

Conflict does not die easily

- 2 Samuel 3:1 **The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time.** David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. 2 Sons were born to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel; 3 his second, Kileab the son of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; the third, Absalom the son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; 4 the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5 and the sixth, Ithream the son of David’s wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

What happened in David’s heart?

God was working out his purpose (to make David king of Israel), even when David could not see it

- 2 Samuel 3:6 During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, **Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul.** 7 Now Saul had had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. And Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, “Why did you sleep with my father’s concubine?” 8 Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said and he answered, “Am I a dog’s head—on Judah’s side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends. I haven’t handed you over to David. Yet now you accuse me of an offense involving this woman! 9 ***May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the LORD promised him on oath 10 and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David’s throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba.***” 11 Ish-Bosheth did not dare to say another word to Abner, because he was afraid of him.

David was willing to make an agreement with Joab - and send him away in peace

- 2 Samuel 3:12 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, “Whose land is it? **Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you.**” **13 “Good,” said David. “I will make an agreement with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do not come**

into my presence unless you bring Michal daughter of Saul when you come to see me.” 14 Then David sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, demanding, “Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins.” 15 So Ish-Bosheth gave orders and had her taken away from her husband Paltiel son of Laish. 16 Her husband, however, went with her, weeping behind her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, “Go back home!” So he went back.

Abner convinced Israel to submit to David as king

- **17 Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, “For some time you have wanted to make David your king. 18 Now do it! For the LORD promised David, ‘By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.’”** 19 Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole house of Benjamin wanted to do.

David fed his enemy and sent him away in PEACE

- **20 When Abner, who had twenty men with him, came to David at Hebron, David prepared a feast for him and his men.** 21 Then Abner said to David, “Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a compact with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires.” **So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.**

Joab held on to revenge - which ultimately led to another murder

- 2 Samuel 3:22 Just then David’s men and Joab returned from a raid and brought with them a great deal of plunder. But Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, because David had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. 23 When Joab and all the soldiers with him arrived, he was told that Abner son of Ner had come to the king and that the king had sent him away and that he had gone in peace. 24 **So Joab went to the king and said, “What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why did you let him go? Now he is gone!** 25 You know Abner son of Ner; he came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing.” 26 Joab then left David and sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know it. 27 Now when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into the gateway, as though to speak with him privately. **And there, to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died.** 28 Later, when David heard about this, he said, “I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. 29 May his blood fall upon the head of Joab and upon all his father’s house! May Joab’s house never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food.” 30 **(Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)**

David kept his heart pure in the matter

He mourned the death of Abner

- 2 Samuel 3:31 Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, “Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner.” King David himself walked behind the bier. 32 They buried Abner in Hebron, and **the king wept aloud at Abner’s tomb.** All the people wept also.

He sang a lament for Abner

- 33 **The king sang this lament for Abner:** “Should Abner have died as the lawless die? 34 Your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered. You fell as one falls before wicked men.” And all the people wept over him again.

David fasted at the loss of Abner

- 35 Then they all came and urged David to eat something while it was still day; but David took an oath, saying, “May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun sets!” 36 All the people took note and were pleased; indeed, everything the king did pleased them. 37 So on that day all the people and **all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner son of Ner.**

David honored Abner in the presence of his men

- 38 Then the king said to his men, “Do you not realize that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel this day?”

He held his nephews accountable for their murder

- 39 And today, **though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruah are too strong for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!”**

Guard your heart...Everything you do flows from it...and it is a critical element in our relationship to the LORD

- Psa 24:3-4 NIV Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?
(4) The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god.