**Is It God’s Call Or Not?**

***2 Samuel 2:1-11***

**Topic:** Discerning God’s call

**Subject:** How you can discern God’s call

**Complement:** Seek direction from God and others, then stand strong against opposition.

**Purpose:** The listeners will know how to discern God’s call.

**Introduction**

1. Arouse Interest: Have you ever thought that any open door of opportunity that comes your way is always God’s way of saying, “Do not hesitate and just grab it and go through it”? You may be approaching your graduation and walked past the SBC bulletin board. You saw the post on a vacancy for a church position and thought to yourself, it is certainly God’s calling me to apply for that church position. [get attention, arouse curiosity].

2. Background: David had just returned from his victory over the Amalekites, and was at Ziklag for three days (2 Samuel 1:1) when on the third day, he heard from an Amalekite about the deaths of King Saul and his Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:2-10). There were great sorrow and mourning by David and those with him for the two deaths (2 Samuel 1:11, 17-27), as well as the killing of the Amalekite messenger for helping King Saul commit suicide before he would be captured by the Philistines (2 Samuel 2:12-16). There was now this political vacuum in the kingdom of Israel after the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan. David, as previously anointed by the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 16, can move to immediately occupy the empty throne

3. Raise Need: How do *you* know for certain whether that or when you find yourself in similar situations, whether it is God’s call for you or not?

4. Subject: So, today I'll share *how you can discern God’s call.* You’ll see from our text three ways you can discern God’s call from 2 Samuel 2:1-11. Will you please turn to 2 Samuel 2:1-11?

5. Verses: Let us read from 2 Samuel 2:1-11 together.

(The first way to discern God’s call is to…)

**I. Stop to seek God for his direction (2:1-3).**

 [We need to resist the urge to respond impulsively.]

1. (1-3) You would naturally see such open doors as God calling out to you. ILL. In my case, I had entered my pre-university class classmate, and there was this girl in this same class. Also, we liked one another. I could have taken it to be a God-given relationship. But, I am now married to a different girl, my present wife. So, it turned out not to be God’s call for me.
2. King Saul and Jonathan had just died on the battlefield in 1 Samuel 31. David could have seen their deaths as God’s call for him to ascend the empty throne, especially when he had been anointed by the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 16. Instead, from verses 1 to 3, he asked God who directed him to go up to Hebron.
3. Thus, you need to stop to seek God for his direction. ILL. Matt. 6:33tells you to seek God’s best and he will give you what you need. When you focus on God and his kingdom priorities for you, you would surely be led into his call, and not be led astray by your human desires.

(After stopping to seek God for his direction, the second way to discern God’s call is to…)

**II. Seek other people’s confirmation and support (2:4-7).**

 **[**We need affirmation from other people.]

1. (4-7) If you make decisions only on your viewpoints and emotions, you could make biased decisions. ILL. I believe that before you made your decision to apply and come to Singapore Bible College, you did not make such a decision only on your impressions and desires. Instead, you would have sought out the advice and opinion of others before you decided to come to SBC.
2. David was accepted and anointed by the people of Judah who came down to Hebron (4a). David also heard how the people of Jabesh Gilead had risked their lives to take the bodies of Saul and Jonathan down from the walls of Beth-shan, and take them back to Jabesh (1 Samuel 31:11-13). After hearing, David intentionally went to seek the support of the people of Jabesh-Gilead (4b-7).
3. Thus, you are not to rely only on yourself, but also to seek the views and support of other people. ILL. Proverbs 11:14 alerts you to the important wisdom that you would have safety from the views and opinions of others. You have either have confirmation of God’s call, or you may receive from others a different view and opinion that would guide you in a different direction or decision.

(Besides stopping to seek God for his direction and seeking other people’s confirmation and support, the third way to discern God’s call is to…)

**III. Stand strong against opposition (2:8-11).**

 **[**We need to remain strong when difficulties come.]

1. (8-11)Do not expect God’s will to always be smooth with no difficulties. ILL. You have come to study in Singapore Bible College, knowing that it is God’s call for you to come here. But, even when it is God’s call for you to come to Singapore Bible College, it does not mean that it would be smooth. You may experience academic and financial struggles during your time here.
2. David had to live with the two-year concurrent rival reign of Ish-Bosheth, who was helped by Abner. Even though it was God’s call for him to be king of Israel, he had to live with this rival reign and claim to the throne.
3. You are to expect difficulties and remain strong in the midst of them. ILL. You are to press on even amid your academic and financial struggles right here in Singapore Bible College. When it is God’s call, he will provide his grace and strength for you to go through it and standing strong.

(So how should you discern God’s call?)

**Conclusion**

1. Seek direction from God and others, then stand strong against opposition (Main Idea).

2. In what area of your life do you need to seek God’s will?

1. How can you seek God’s direction? A retreat? Journal? Prayer day?
2. Whose counsel do you need? How will you get it?
3. What opposition are you experiencing? Will you commit to trust God in future opposition so you can stand strong?

**Preliminary Questions on 2 Samuel 2:1-11**

**Verses Questions**

Context What did the author record just prior to this passage?

 David had returned from his victory over the Amalekites, and was at Ziklag for three days (2 Samuel 1:1) when on the third day, he heard from an Amalekite about the deaths of King Saul and his Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:2-10). There was great sorrow and mourning by David and those with him for the two deaths (2 Samuel 1:11, 17-27), as well as the killing of the Amalekite messenger for helping King Saul commit suicide before he would be captured by the Philistines (2 Samuel 2:12-16).

Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible?

 It is to teach us to seek God for his timing and direction especially when it comes to open doors.

Background What historical context helps us understand this passage?

 This passage happens in the context of a political vacuum in the kingdom of Israel after the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan.

1 Why did David not just go and claim the throne of Israel as he had been anointed by the prophet Samuel, and still had to ask God? David had to ask God of the right timing and manner of which he was to go about ascending the throne. In addition, he may not have the full support of the whole people of Israel, as some may still have loyalty towards Saul and his dynasty.

1 Why was there a course of time after Saul’s death before David asked God what to do next? It was because David was mourning for the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.

2-4 Why did God instruct David to go to Hebron? Was Hebron have any significance to the people of Israel? It may be that God had a sense of safety for David as many associated with Saul would have though that David had a part to play in an alliance with the Philistines to kill Saul and usurp the throne.[[1]](#footnote-1) Hebron was set apart as a city of refuge (Joshua 21:13). Second, David had connections with Hebron due to one of his wives (1 Samuel 25:3) and the the Aaronic priest Abiathar with him (Joshua 21:13). But, at the same time, it is also that Hebron was considered to be a historically significant and recognizable for not only Judah (the southern region of Israel) but the whole nation of Israel.[[2]](#footnote-2) This is very evident in here in verse 4 that the men of Judah anointed David as their king, as well as in 2 Samuel 5:1-5 when he was anointed and recognised as king over the whole nation of Israel at Hebron.

5-7 Why did David want to acknowledge the actions of the people of Jabesh Gilead in giving Saul a proper burial? It was to recognize their respect and kindness toward Saul, as well as to show clearly that David had no feelings of animosity toward Saul and those who still supported him. Instead, David;s goal is toward sustaining and strengthening the unity of the whole nation of Israel.

8-9 Why did Abner make Ish-Bosheth son of Saul king over Israel? It was because Abner who was commander of Saul’s army still had his loyalty toward Saul and not David, and wanted to ensure that Saul’s dynasty would carry on and remain strong.

9 What did “all Israel” in verse 9 mean? How does this phrase “all Israel” correlate to David’s rule over Judah? The phrase “all Israel” does not refer to the whole nation of Israel, but refers to the northern regions which included Gilead, Jezreel, Ephraim and Benjamin whereas David ruled over the southern regions of Judah. This means that the nation of Israel was divided over two kings and two loyalties.

10-11 Were the reigns of David and Ish-Bosheth concurrent or for different periods of time? There would have been two over-lapping years that they would have reigned from two different cities, Mahanaim (verse 9) and Hebron (verse 11) and over the northern and southern regions of the whole nation of Israel respectively.

 **Exegetical Outline**

**2 Samuel 2:1-11**

**Exegetical Outline 1**

Prologue: The time at which this passage occurred is after the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan on the battlefield by the Philistines. As a result, due to the political vacuum, the whole nation was thrown into a state of potential confusion and chaos, especially over who would be the next king.

EI: The manner by which David became and acted as king of Judah was by doing it through God-honouring ways and timing rather than his own ways and timetable.

I. (1-4a) The manner by which David became king of Judah was by asking God and His people for their direction.

1. (1) David asked God when and where he should go to become king
2. God answered that David should go now (1a)
3. God answered that David should go to Hebron (1b)
4. (2-4a) David went to Hebron, and was approved of and anointed as king by the people of Judah.

II. (4b-7) The way by which David acted as king of Judah was by seeking the support of the people of Jabesh Gilead.

1. (4b-6) David commended the people of Jabesh Gilead for giving Saul a proper burial.
2. (7) David sought the support of the people of Jabesh Gilead.

III. (8-11) The way by which David acted as king of Judah was by not getting rid of his rivals, Abner and Ish-Bosheth.

1. (8-9) The rise of Abner and Ish-Bosheth as rivals to David.
2. (10-11) David allowed and did not deal with this two-years concurrent rival reign of Ish-Bosheth.[[3]](#footnote-3)

**Open Doors: To Go Through or Not?**

**2 Samuel 2:1-11**

**Exegetical Outline 2**

Prologue: The time at which this passage occurred is after the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan on the battlefield by the Philistines. As a result, due to the political vacuum, the whole nation was thrown into a state of potential confusion and chaos, especially over who would be the next king.

EI: The manner by which God enabled David to become king of Judah was according to God’s own timetable.

I. (1-4a) The manner by which David became king of Judah was by asking God and His people for their direction.

1. (1) David asked God when and where he should go to become king
2. God answered that David should go now (1a)
3. God answered that David should go to Hebron (1b)
4. (2-4a) David went to Hebron, and was approved of and anointed as king by the people of Judah.

II. (4b-7) The way by which David acted as king of Judah was by seeking the support of the people of Jabesh Gilead.

1. (4b-6) David commended the people of Jabesh Gilead for giving Saul a proper burial.
2. (7) David sought the support of the people of Jabesh Gilead.

III. (8-11) The way by which David acted as king of Judah was by not getting rid of his rivals, Abner and Ish-Bosheth.

1. (8-9) Abner and Ish-Bosheth arose as rivals to David.
2. (10-11) David allowed and did not deal with this two-years concurrent rival reign of Ish-Bosheth.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Assignment #5 Homiletical Outline 1 (Incomplete)**

**2 Samuel 2:1-11**

**Homiletical Exposition** **1** (cyclical inductive form)

Subject: How should you respond to open doors of opportunity? (Three guidelines)

I. Do not immediately go through them, but stop to seek God and his people for their direction.

II. Seek the support of other people.

III. Exepct to meet with opposition and deal with it.

Main Idea: How should you respond to open doors of opportunity? Seek God and his people for their direction, seek the support of people close to you, and expect to meet with opposition and deal with it.

**Tentative Subject/Complement Statements**

The ways to respond to open doors of opportunity are to seek God and his people for their direction, seek the support of people close to you, and expect to meet with opposition and deal with it.

The means by which you are to respond to open doors of opportunity are to seek God and his people for their direction, seek the support of people close to you, and expect to meet with opposition and deal with it.

**Possible Illustrations**

Used in the Sermon

**Assignment #5 Homiletical Outline (Complete)**

**OPEN DOORS: TO GO THROUGH OR NOT**

**2 Samuel 2:1-11 (Cyclical Inductive Form)**

*Purpose: The listeners will respond to open doors of opportunity by seeking God and his people for their direction, seeking the support of people close to you, and expecting to meet with opposition and dealing with it.*

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**Introduction**

1. Have you ever thought that any open door of opportunity that comes your way is always God’s way of saying, “Do not hesitate and just grab it and go through it!” (ILL. The post on vacancy for a church position on the SBC bulleting board) [get attention, arouse curiosity].

2. How do *you* know for certain what is God’s direction for you besides relying only on open doors [raise need]?

4. Today I'll share *three ways how you can respond to open doors of opportunity properly* [subject].

5. In 2 Samuel 2 I’ll focus my attention on verses 1 to 11 but let’s first see the context [repeat text].

6. To reach our goal in 2 Samuel 2 verses 1 to 11, the previous chapter of 2 Samuel 1 tells us that King Saul and his Jonathan had just been killed in battle. David, as previously anointed by the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 16, can move to immediately occupy the empty throne [context].

(The first way to respond to open doors of opportunity is from verses 1-4a where it says we are to…)

**I. Stop to seek God and his people for their direction (v. 1-4a).**

 **[We need to resist the urge to respond impulsively.]**

A. We would naturally see open doors as God-given opportunities (ILL. Seeing my pre-university classmate to be a God-given relationship).

B. David could have interpreted King Saul’s and Jonathan’s deaths as God’s signal to ascend the throne.

 1. Instead, he asked God who directed him to go up to Hebron (verses 1-3)

 2. The people of Judah also accepted and anointed David as their king (verse 4a)

C. We need to stop to seek God and his people for their direction (ILL. Matt. 6:33 – Seeking for God’s best and he will give us what we need).

(Not only are we to stop to seek God and his people for their direction, but we are to also…)

**II. Seek the support of other people (v. 4b-7).**

 **[We need to have the affirmation from other people.]**

1. If we make decisions only on our own viewpoints and emotions, we could make biased decisions (ILL. Seeking the advice and opinion of others before you decided to come to SBC).
2. David intentionally went to seek the support of the people of Jabesh-Gilead.
3. Thus, we are not to rely only on ourselves, but also to seek the views and support of other people (ILL. Proverbs 11:14 – we would have safety from the views and opinions of others).

(Besides seeking God and his people for direction and seeking the support of others, we need to also…)

**III. Expect to meet with opposition and deal with it (v. 8-11)**

 **[We need to remain strong when difficulties come]**

1. Do not expect God’s will to always be smooth with no difficulties (ILL. Our studies in SBC involve our academic and financial struggles).
2. David had to live with the two-year concurrent rival reign of Ish-Bosheth, who was helped by Abner.
3. We are to expect difficulties and remain strong in the midst of them (ILL. We are to press on even in the midst of our academic and financial struggles).

**Conclusion**

1. So how can you know what is God’s direction for you besides relying only on open doors? You are to seek God and his people for their direction, seek the support of people close to you, and expect to meet with opposition and dealing with it. [MI]!
2. The appropriate ways to respond to open doors are to seek God and his people for their direction, seek the support of people close to you, and expect to meet with opposition and dealing with it. [MI restated].

3. How would you, from this time, respond to open doors of opportunity that seem so inviting [application]?

4. How would you be advising people who excitedly come to you to share of their open doors of opportunity in their lives [broadens application to include more listeners]?

**Assignment #5 Homiletical Outline 2 (Incomplete)**

**2 Samuel 2:1-11**

**Homiletical Exposition** **2** (cyclical inductive form)

Subject: How would you discern God’s calling in your life? (Three guidelines)

I. Stop to seek God for his direction.

II. Seek other people’s confirmation and support.

III. Be prepared to stand strong agaisnt opposition.

Main Idea: How would you discern God;s calling in your life? Stop to seek God for his direction, seek other people’s confirmation and support, and to stand strong against opposition.

**Tentative Subject/Complement Statements**

The ways to discern God’s calling in your life are to stop to seek God for his direction, seek other people’s confirmation and support, and to stand strong against opposition.

The means by which you are to discern God’s calling for your life are to stop to seek God for their direction, seek other people’s confirmation and support, and to stand strong against opposition.

**Possible Illustrations**

Used in the Sermon

The post on vacancy for a church position on the SBC bulleting board.

Seeing my pre-university classmate to be a God-given relationship.

Seeking the advice and opinion of others before you decided to come to SBC.

Our studies in SBC involve our academic and financial struggles

We are to press on even in the midst of our academic and financial struggles.

**Assignment #5 Homiletical Outline 2 (Complete)**

**Is It God’s Call Or Not?**

**2 Samuel 2:1-11 (Cyclical Inductive Form)**

*Purpose: The listeners will discern God’s call by stopping to seek God for his direction, seeking other people’s confirmation and support, and exepcting opposition and to stand strong against opposition.*

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**Introduction**

1. Have you ever thought that any open door of opportunity that comes your way is always God’s calling out to you, “Do not hesitate and just grab it and go through it!” (ILL. The post on a vacancy for a church position on the SBC bulletin board) [get attention, arouse curiosity].

2. How do *you* know for certain whether that is God’s call for you or not [raise need]?

4. Today I'll share *three ways how you can properly discern God’s call* [subject].

5. In 2 Samuel 2, I’ll focus my attention on verses 1 to 11 but let’s first see the context [repeat text].

6. To reach your goal in 2 Samuel 2 verses 1 to 11, the previous chapter of 2 Samuel 1 tells you that King Saul and his Jonathan had just been killed in battle. David, as previously anointed by the prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 16, can move to immediately occupy the empty throne [context].

(The first way to discern God’s call is from verses 1-4a where it says you are to…)

**I. Stop to seek God for his direction (v. 1-3).**

 **[You need to resist the urge to respond impulsively.]**

A. You would naturally see open doors as God calling out to you (ILL. Seeing my pre-university classmate to be a God-given relationship).

B. King Saul’s and Jonathan’s deaths on the battlefield (1 Samuel 31).

 1. David could have seen their deaths as God’s signal to ascend the empty throne.

2. Instead, he asked God who directed him to go up to Hebron (verses 1-3).

C. You need to stop to seek God for his direction (ILL. Matt. 6:33 – Seeking for God’s best and he will give you what you need).

(Not only are you to stop to seek God for his direction, but you are to also…)

**II. Seek other people’s confirmation and support (v. 4-7).**

 **[We need to have affirmation from other people.]**

1. If you make decisions only on your viewpoints and emotions, you could make biased decisions (ILL. Seeking the advice and opinion of others before you decided to come to SBC).
2. The people of Judah accepted and anointed David as their king (verse 4a).
3. David intentionally went to seek the support of the people of Jabesh-Gilead (4b-7).
4. Thus, you are not to rely only on yourself, but also to seek the views and support of other people (ILL. Proverbs 11:14 – you would have safety from the views and opinions of others).

(Besides seeking God for his direction and seeking other people’s confirmation and support, you need to also…)

**III. Stand strong against opposition (v. 8-11)**

 **[We need to remain strong when difficulties come]**

1. Do not expect God’s will to always be smooth with no difficulties (ILL. Your studies in SBC involve your academic and financial struggles).
2. David had to live with the two-year concurrent rival reign of Ish-Bosheth, who was helped by Abner.
3. You are to expect difficulties and remain strong in the midst of them (ILL. You are to press on even amid your academic and financial struggles).

**Conclusion**

1. So how can you discern what is God’s call for you? You are to stop to seek God’s direction, seek God’s people’s confirmation and support, and to stand strong against opposition. [MI]!
2. The appropriate ways to discern God’s call are to stop to seek God and his people for their direction, seek God’s people’s confirmation and support, and stand strong against opposition. [MI restated].

3. How would you, from this time, be able to discern what is God’s call or not in your life [application]?

4. How would you advise people of God’s call in their lives especially when they come to you for advice [broadens application to include more listeners]?

1. Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary 7 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 305. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Joyce G. Baldwin, *1 and 2 Samuel: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 8, ed. Donald J. Wiseman (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 1988; repr., Nottingham, ENG: Inter-Varsity, 2008),120. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary 7, 305. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, The New American Commentary 7, 305. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)