

David Helps Mephibosheth

Scripture Reference: [2 Samuel 9](#)



Suggested Emphasis: Be kind.



Background Study



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Story Overview:

King David remembered his good friend Jonathan. He found out that before Jonathan died, he had had a son named Mephibosheth. David had Mephibosheth brought before him. He gave Mephibosheth all of the land that had belonged to Saul. He also gave him servants and told him that he would always take care of him. He treated him like a son. David did not wait until Mephibosheth asked for help. He gave kindness freely.

Background Study:

Israel was a United Kingdom under David's rule. After many years of being a nation divided into many parts, Israel now had a central government and a capital, Jerusalem. The tabernacle containing the Ark of the Covenant was now in Jerusalem. This city was now the centre of worship for the nation.

Several years had passed since David became the king. David still missed his good friend Jonathan. Jonathan had died in battle with his father, Saul. David had never forgotten his covenant with Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:15, 42). Though David had suffered greatly because of Saul's jealous wrath, David did not retaliate against Saul's family. He did not tolerate abusive treatment of any of the members of Saul's family. Still, he wished there were something more he could do.

It may seem odd to us that David would try to find out if there were any descendants of Jonathan still living. It was

a common practice in Bible-time cultures for a new king who was not descended from the previous king to wipe out all the relatives of the previous king. This was done to prevent any of them from trying to reclaim the throne. David had not wanted Saul's descendants killed, but he didn't know for sure what had happened to them. As the assassination of Saul's other son - Ish-Bosheth (I1 Samuel 4) - had shown, some military men may have taken it upon themselves to kill the members of Saul's family.

David was told that Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan, was alive and living near Jerusalem. David immediately ordered his servants to bring Mephibosheth to the palace. When Mephibosheth arrived, he was probably very nervous because he was uncertain of the king's intentions. The descendants of the deposed king would not want to be brought before the new king.

David, however, surprised Mephibosheth. David was overjoyed to be able to help the son of his friend Jonathan. David gave Mephibosheth all the lands that had belonged to Saul. This ensured that Mephibosheth and his descendants would always be provided for. In addition, David bestowed a tremendous honour on Mephibosheth - he was to take his meals at the king's table. David had already ensured that Mephibosheth and his family would not go hungry, so this gesture was not intended to keep Mephibosheth from starving. It symbolized to the nation that David had accepted the grandson of Saul as if Mephibosheth were a member of his own family!

David was far from a perfect person. But he was called a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). God is intimately concerned with the weak and disadvantaged in our world. David demonstrated that same concern in his treatment of Mephibosheth. God calls us to share this same spirit of concern for those who are in need.



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Way to Introduce the Story:

Write the word "KINDNESS" in bold letters on the middle of a piece of paper. (Or, if the children cannot read yet, copy a small picture depicting kindness onto the middle of a paper) Pass the paper around to each child and tell them to tear off a piece of the paper without tearing any of the letters. Keep passing it around until someone tears the word or until it becomes too difficult. This is just a fun way to begin talking about the word kindness. "What does kindness mean? Has anyone ever been kind to you?" Share your own stories. "In today's story we are going to learn about a time when King David was very kind to someone."

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The Story:

Many years had passed since David had become King over all of Israel. He tried to be a very good king. He tried to be kind to everyone. If someone needed help then David tried to be kind and help them. If someone was sad David was kind and tried to do things to make them happy.

Mephibosheth was the son of David's old friend, Jonathan. Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan, and Mephibosheth's grandfather, King Saul, were both dead. They had died when Mephibosheth was just a little boy. When Mephibosheth was a little boy he used to have a nurse to take care of him. On the terrible day when King Saul and

Jonathan died, something very bad happened to Mephibosheth. A messenger came and told everyone that Mephibosheth's father and grandfather were dead. The little boy's nurse picked him up started to carry him. Somehow the nurse dropped little Mephibosheth. When he fell, Mephibosheth's legs were badly hurt. They were so badly hurt that, for the rest of his life, he could never walk.

Many years had passed and Mephibosheth was a grown man with his own sons. David did not know about Mephibosheth. He thought all of Jonathan's sons were dead. Sometimes David remembered what it was like when he and his good friend, Jonathan, used to do fun things together. Jonathan had loved David and David had loved Jonathan.

David remembered the last time he had seen Jonathan. Jonathan had saved David's life. David remembered a promise he had made to Jonathan. If anything happened to Jonathan, David had promised that he would take care of Jonathan's family.

The more David thought about Jonathan, the more he wanted to keep his promise. David had an idea. He decided to ask Saul's old servant, Ziba, about Jonathan's family.

"Ziba, you were Saul's servant. You knew Jonathan and his family. Does Jonathan have any children that are still alive," he asked.

Ziba, Saul's servant, answered, "There is one son, King David. His name is Mephibosheth. Something very sad happened to Mephibosheth when he was little. He cannot walk."

"Ziba, I command you to find Mephibosheth and bring him to me."

Then Ziba went quickly and found Mephibosheth. At first Mephibosheth was afraid to come to meet David. He was worried that David might try to hurt him. Sometimes new kings did that to the children and grandchildren of the old king.

But that is not what David did. King David welcomed Mephibosheth. He told him about how Jonathan had been his good friend. The king probably told him about how Jonathan used to give him lots of gifts. King David also told Mephibosheth about the special promise that he had made to Jonathan. The king wanted to do something special for his friend's grandson.

Mephibosheth could hardly believe what he was hearing! "Oh no, King David, I am not worthy of this honour," exclaimed Mephibosheth.

"No, Mephibosheth, I promised your father that I would always take care of you. Other people have taken the land that belonged to Saul and Jonathan and your family. I will now give all of it back to you. Also, I would like to make a special place at my table for you. Anytime you want to come and eat with me or visit me at the palace you can come. You will never have to worry about anything because I will always take care of you," said David.

Mephibosheth went away happily to tell his family the good news. He told everyone about the kind king. David kept his promise to Mephibosheth and took care of him for the rest of his life.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the

illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. Who was Jonathan's son? Mephibosheth
2. Why was Mephibosheth unable to walk? His nurse had dropped him when he was little
3. Why did David take care of Mephibosheth? Because he had promised Jonathan
4. What did King David do for Mephibosheth? Gave him all of Saul's land, invited him to come to the palace and eat whenever he wanted, and said he would always take care of him.

Song Suggestions:

- [Happy all the Time \(Inright, outright\) Song](#)
- [I've Got Something in My Pocket Song](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)
- [Love is Something If You Give It Away Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Make a collage. Use old magazines to find pictures of people being kind. Cut the pictures out and glue them to a poster. Class members could make individual ones or the whole class could do one together.
- Encourage children to act out situations in which people are kind.
- Let volunteers try doing basic tasks (getting around the room, opening a door, carrying something, etc.) without using their legs. Discuss how life must have been like for Mephibosheth.
- Write all of the letters of Mephibosheth's name on separate cards and then mix them up. Make two sets of cards and let two teams see who can put them in order first.
- Before class, make arrangements with the teacher of the adult bible class. Ask if the children can come in and pass out papers and pencils to the adults. One child can ask them to write the name of Jonathon's lame son on the paper. Collect all of the papers and take them to class to tally how many knew his name. Kids think it's great to stump the adults!

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "David Helps Mephibosheth" printables to print on A4 size paper](#)
[Click here for "David Helps Mephibosheth" printables \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Craft: Kindness wreath from http://www.christianitycove.com](http://www.christianitycove.com)
- [Lesson plan at http://storage.cloversites.com](http://storage.cloversites.com)

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