

Teaching Plan  
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: July 1, 2018  
Lesson Title: "Valued"  
Lesson Passage: 2 Samuel 9:1-13

ABOUT THIS LESSON

The Bible passage chronicles David's kindness to Mephibosheth, the lame son of David's beloved friend Jonathan. Mephibosheth is brought to David, who lavishes kindness upon the lad, making him a permanent guest at the king's table like a member of family. He also provides a house for Mephibosheth, gives him all of his grandfather Saul's land holdings and provides the human resources needed to maintain the extensive operation.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Explain the meaning of *hesedh*, the kindness David showed Mephibosheth. (2) Explain the significance of the invitation to be a permanent guest at the king's table.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

*As background for the episode described in this lesson, review the account of David's and Jonathan's farewell meeting in 1 Sam. 20:35-42: After King Saul had, in blind fury, vowed to kill David, Jonathan went out into the fields to urge his dear friend to flee his father's wrath. Before they parted, they embraced and reaffirmed a vow they had made previously, "The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants, for ever."*

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *Summarize the prelude to David's meeting with Jonathan's son, as described in 2 Sam. 9:1-5: David did not wait for an opportunity to fulfill his pledge to care for Jonathan's descendants; he initiated an opportunity by seeking out a surviving member of Jonathan's family. This quest led him to Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan who was quite young, possibly still in his teens. Having located Mephibosheth, David had the lad brought to him immediately (2 Sam. 9:5).*

2. *Comment on the account of David's meeting with Mephibosheth in 2 Sam. 9:6-8: (1) When Mephibosheth came into the presence of David, he prostrated himself ("fell on his face and did obeisance") before the king (v. 6). NOTE: This does not necessarily mean that the lad was unusually terrified. Such humble behavior, and Mephibosheth's self-deprecating remark in v. 8, were customary when one was in the presence of royalty. (2) However, David's words, "Do not fear" (v. 7), were appropriately reassuring, for a grandson of the former king would usually have reason to be afraid, since it was customary in the ancient East for a new dynasty to wipe out all possible claimants to the throne. (3) But David assures him, "I will show you kindness" (v. 7). NOTE: "Kindness" translates the Hebrew word *hesedh*, which denotes love based on a covenant relationship, often attributed to God himself. (David's kindness*

toward Mephibosheth is based on his covenant with Jonathan, the lad's father.) (4) To exhibit his kindness, David makes two pledges: First, he will bestow upon Mephibosheth the property and income from his grandfather's considerable estate. EXPLANATION: The verb "restore" means "give back." But, of course, David was not giving back land that Mephibosheth had owned beforehand. The previous possessor was King Saul, his grandfather. Second, Mephibosheth would be given the privilege of being a permanent guest at the king's table (v. 7). This was a special privilege that meant more than being a guest at meals with the king, for anyone who ate with the king was also guaranteed protection and security. This arrangement was virtually tantamount to adoption into the royal family.

3. *Describe the additional arrangements that David made for the welfare of Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9:9-12):* (1) Though he was to eat at the king's table (an extraordinary honor), Mephibosheth would have a house of his own in the city of Jerusalem. (2) David's thorough-going arrangements for Mephibosheth's upkeep included his provision of the human resources needed to maintain his household and the lands he had inherited from his grandfather. For this purpose he called upon Ziba, who once had managed Saul's affairs. NOTE: Ziba is identified as Saul's former "servant" in 9:9. But "steward" would be a better translation than "servant" to characterize Ziba's very responsible position in Saul's court. As such, he had been in charge of the king's property, his servants, and his land holdings. Now he would have a similar function in the household of Mephibosheth. This would include supervision of all the farming operations--planting, tilling, harvesting and storing the produce, as indicated in v. 10a. NOTE: The wealthy landowners who lived in Jerusalem cultivated lands outside the walls of the city. (3) Ziba would not need to recruit the manpower needed for this extensive operation, because he already had 15 sons and 20 servants (v. 10) at his disposal. (The income from Saul's estates would be used for the upkeep of the property and the maintenance of the extensive household described in vv. 10-12.)

4. *Note the comment concerning Mephibosheth's lameness in 2 Sam. 9:13:* The lameness of Mephibosheth has been mentioned twice already (in 2 Sam. 4:4 and 9:3). But now the writer emphasizes the point that the lameness affected both of his feet.

#### CLOSING THE LESSON

*Conclude the lesson with this thought:* Mephibosheth's life was profoundly influenced by two radically contrasting experiences. He suffered the ravages of war when he was crippled for life (2 Sam. 4:4). On the other hand, the remarkable kindness of King David rescued him from a life of misery and, possibly, from an early death. Countless innocent children in today's world will either suffer from "man's inhumanity to man" or be blessed by the kindness of adults who are motivated by love.