

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Note: We will NOT be providing Discovery Questions for the week after Easter (the weekend of 4/15-16). We will resume again the weekend of 4/22-23. If you plan to meet next week, consider celebrating Jesus' resurrection with a meal or dessert and/or a time of prayer!

David and Mephibosheth "Pressure Points" Series April 8/9, 2017

Main Idea

Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" (2 Samuel 9:8)

Discovery Questions

1. Describe a time when you performed a "random act of kindness" for someone—when you did something for someone that was unexpected, but helped them in some way. How did that experience make you feel?

This is our last message in our Pressure Point about David for a few weeks. Following Easter, we'll begin a brief three-week series entitled "Trending," where we'll look at some of the major topics of our day and how we Christians should be thinking about them. After that, we'll have a special Mother's Day message. We will resume our series on David's life the weekend after Mother's Day.

The passage we're studying today represents sort of the pinnacle of David's reign. As popular and as successful as he was throughout his entire reign, David decides to use his popularity and success to show "kindness" to an unexpected recipient. From this story, we learn something about our responsibility to show kindness to those around us, and the kindness that God Himself shows to us.

2.
 - a. Read 2 Samuel 9. What examples do you see of the kindness that David shows to Mephibosheth in this passage?
 - b. What parallels do you see between David's kindness to Mephibosheth and God's kindness to us? (Read the Leader's Notes for some background on the Hebrew word translated "kindness" in this passage.)
3.
 - a. We are living in a world where "kindness" seems to be in short supply. What sorts of things get in the way of people showing kindness to others? In other words, what are the reasons people give for their lack of kindness to each another?
 - b. What examples of "random acts of kindness" have you seen recently that you can share with your group? What effect did these acts have on you?
4.
 - a. Is there a time in your life when, like Mephibosheth, you felt as though you were experiencing an act of God's kindness (2 Samuel 9:3), given through another person? What were the circumstances surrounding that? How did it make you feel?
 - b. As you look to your own life, what might get in the way of you doing a tangible act of kindness for another person in need? Think of loved ones, coworkers, friends, and even people you encounter on the street.

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- c. Who in your life right now could benefit from a tangible act of kindness? Considering the story of David and Mephibosheth, think out of the box—possibly people you might have a strained relationship with. What could you do for this person? What would get in the way of you doing that for this person?
5. The greatest act of kindness we can do for another is to care about their soul enough to give them an opportunity to respond to God's offer of salvation. With Easter next weekend, this week is a perfect opportunity to invite someone to one of our Easter services. Think of at least one person you can invite to Easter this weekend.
- What might get in the way of you asking them to Easter this weekend? How can you get overcome those obstacles and "just do it"?
 - Close your time by praying for that person and for your boldness to invite them to our Easter services.

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DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Leader Guide

1. 1. Describe a time when you performed a “random act of kindness” for someone—when you did something for someone that was unexpected, but helped them in some way. How did that experience make you feel?

This is a “lighter” question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.

This is our last message in our series in David for a few weeks. Following Easter weekend, we will begin a brief three-week series entitled “Trending,” where we will look at some of the major topics of our day and how we Christians should be thinking about them. After that three-week series, we will have a special Mother’s Day message. We will resume our series on David’s life the weekend after Mother’s Day.

The passage we are looking at today represents sort of the pinnacle of David’s reign. As popular and as successful as he is in his entire reign, David decides to use his popularity and success to show “kindness” to an unexpected recipient. From this story, we learn something about our responsibility to show kindness to those around us, and the kindness that God Himself shows to us.

- 2. a. Read 2 Samuel 9. What examples do you see of the kindness that David shows to Mephibosheth in this passage?**
- b. What parallels do you see between David’s kindness to Mephibosheth and God’s kindness to us? (Read the Leader’s Notes for some background on the Hebrew word translated “kindness” in this passage.)**

As we get to 2 Samuel 9, we find that David is at the height of his popularity in the nation of Israel. Rather than use this as an opportunity to just sit back and relax, David asks a very interesting question (v. 1): he wants to know if there is anyone left from Saul’s family to whom he can show kindness. He wants to do this, he says, “for Jonathan’s sake.” This phrase takes us back to 1 Samuel 20. Jonathan was David’s best friend—almost like a brother—and also Saul’s son. In 1 Samuel 20, Jonathan vows to protect David from Saul’s attempts to kill him. In exchange, David promises to show “kindness” to members of Jonathan’s family. 2 Samuel 9 occurs 15-20 years after that promise, and 10-15 years after Jonathan was killed in the same battle that took Saul’s life (1 Samuel 31). It’s then that David remembers his vow to Jonathan, and decides to honor it.

The request for a living member of Saul’s family leads to a man by the name of Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth is first introduced in 2 Samuel in 2 Samuel 4:4. We learn there that he was a son of Jonathan who had something tragic happen to him at age 5 – an accident that caused him to be disabled, “lame in both feet.” This disability, we learn, lasts into his adult age (see 2 Samuel 9:3).

David calls Mephibosheth into his presence, and shows him the “kindness” that he promised Jonathan. David does a few things for Mephibosheth:

- *He restores all of the land that once belonged to King Saul, Mephibosheth’s grandfather.*
- *He orders the former servants of Saul to farm the land, providing a source of income for Mephibosheth (see 2 Samuel 9:10).*

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- He gives Mephibosheth a permanent spot at the King's table, making Mephibosheth like one of his own sons (see 2 Samuel 9:11b).

Though Kings usually would kill the family members of former kings (as any remaining family member of a former king would be a potential threat to the throne), David decides to show Mephibosheth kindness.

For part "b" of this question, note that the Hebrew word translated as "kindness" in this passage and in 2 Samuel 9:1, 3 and 7 is the Hebrew word hesed. This is a word that's used 246 times in the Old Testament. What's interesting about it is that for every one time it's used to describe the "kindness" between two human beings (as we see in this passage), it's used three times to describe the kindness that God has for us. Indeed, hesed is the Old Testament equivalent of New Testament words like grace, love, and mercy. It is one of the primary words used to describe the way God has decided to treat us human beings.

Thus this story becomes a picture of what God does for us (see 2 Samuel 9:3, and David talking to Ziba about showing "God's kindness" to a member of Saul's family). Like Mephibosheth, we are not deserving of God's kindness; we are of the wrong family, enemies of God by our very nature. We are also "crippled" by our sin. But God, for no other reason than just because He has decided to, decides to save us, give us riches in heaven, and gives an invitation to sit at His table at the end of time, making us like one of His sons. This story is an incredible picture of God's grace towards us sinners!

Spend 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.

- 3. a. We are living in a world where "kindness" seems to be in short supply. What sorts of things get in the way of people showing kindness to others? In other words, what are the reasons people give for their lack of kindness to each another?**
b. What examples of "random acts of kindness" have you seen recently that you can share with your group? What effect did these acts have on you?

For part "a," we can imagine a variety of different reasons. Sometimes, it's just selfishness that causes people not to show kindness to others. Other times, it's things that get in the way—I'm too busy; I don't have enough money; I have my own family, friends, etc., to care about. Sometimes people don't like to show kindness to others because they're afraid of being taken advantage of—or they've been taken advantage of in the past by a particular person, and they don't want it to happen again. Others struggle to show kindness to people that believe or think differently than them, thinking that they don't "deserve" such kindness.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.

- 4. a. Is there a time in your life when, like Mephibosheth, you felt as though you were experiencing an act of God's kindness (2 Samuel 9:3), given through another person? What were the circumstances surrounding that? How did it make you feel?**

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- b. As you look to your own life, what might get in the way of you doing a tangible act of kindness for another person in need? Think of loved ones, coworkers, friends, and even people you encounter on the street.
- c. Who in your life right now could benefit from a tangible act of kindness? Considering the story of David and Mephibosheth, think out of the box—possibly people you might have a strained relationship with. What could you do for this person? What would get in the way of you doing that for this person?

Spend about 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.

5. The greatest act of kindness we can do for another is to care about their soul enough to give them an opportunity to respond to God's offer of salvation. With Easter next weekend, this week is a perfect opportunity to invite someone to one of our Easter services. Think of at least one person you can invite to Easter this weekend.

- a. **What might get in the way of you asking them to Easter this weekend? How can you get overcome those obstacles and "just do it"?**
- b. **Close your time by praying for that person and for your boldness to invite them to our Easter services.**

Note that across all of our campuses, we have seven services. There are four in Yorba Linda (Saturday at 5; Sunday at 8:30, 9:30 and 11:30), two in Orange (Sunday at 9 and 11) and one at our Amigos campus (Sunday at 10:30). All of our Yorba Linda services will also be live streamed. Be sure to go to friends.church, and download an Easter "social media pack" that includes graphics you can share on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.