#### Lesson 7:

#### David is Kind to Mephibosheth

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

2 Samuel 4:4; 9:1-13

MEMORY WORK:

Psalm 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

I must learn to look for ways to be kind to everyone: not just those I know and love, but also to those who may be “different.”

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| **LESSON STARTS HERE** |

INTRODUCTION:

Review last week’s lesson.

David’s best friend was Jonathan, one of Saul’s sons. David made a promise to Jonathan to take care of his children. One of Jonathan’s son was crippled/disabled. What does that mean? Do you know anyone who is crippled/disabled? (Discuss the handicaps of people they may know.) How are we supposed to treat people who walk, talk, or look differently than we do? Let’s see what we can learn from David.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. During an intense battle with the Philistines, three of Saul’s sons were killed. When Saul heard that Jonathan, Malchishua, and Abinadab were dead, he decided that he would rather die than be killed by the Philistines. He killed himself by falling on his own sword (1 Samuel 31). One of Saul’s sons named Ishbosheth was not part of the battle and survived.

**NOTE**: According to 2 Samuel 21:8, Saul had at least two more sons by his concubine Rizpah and five grandsons by his oldest daughter Merab from her marriage to Adriel, which Michal (Saul’s younger daughter and wife of David) apparently raised.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the articles “[**King Saul—Killed**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&amp;article=142)[**by a Philistine and an Amalekite?**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=6&amp;article=142)” and “[**Did All of Saul’s House Die Together?**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=6&amp;article=5082)” on the Apologetics Press Web site for a study of alleged Bible discrepancies regarding the death of Saul and his sons.

1. When news of the deaths of Saul and his sons reached the palace, the rest of the family became afraid that they would be killed, too. Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth who was only five years old at the time and was being taken care of by a “nurse” (comparable to a nanny). His nurse hurried to get the little boy to safety, but as she hurried, she dropped him. He was badly hurt and was never again able to walk normally (he became “lame”). She took the little boy to a place where she thought he would be safe (Lo Debar, east of the Jordan, to the house of Machir).
2. Meanwhile, Ishbosheth, the last surviving son of Saul, became king of Israel in his father’s place, instead of David, as God had decided. The country became divided between those that wanted David to be king and those that believed Ishbosheth should be king, because he was Saul’s son. Ishbosheth served as king for only two years, before he was murdered (2 Samuel 4).
3. The country that had been divided came together to ask David to be their king in Saul’s place. David had been acting as king over part of the country for 7 ½ years, with his headquarters in Hebron (2 Samuel 2:1,4,11). When he finally became king of all of Israel, he led his country to victory in many more battles against its enemies. He also gathered great wealth to be used in the building of a beautiful Temple to God. After several years of working to be a good leader for his people, he remembered his promise to his good friend Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:14-17)
4. He asked his servants to find out if any of Saul’s family (grandchildren or other descendants) were still living so that he could show them “the kindness of God.” One of David’s servants told David that a son of Jonathan was still alive. So David sent for Mephibosheth in Lo Debar. By this time, Mephibosheth was old enough to be married and had a son of his own. When he was asked to come to the king’s palace in Jerusalem, he was probably afraid. When he came to David, he bowed low to the king, with his face on the floor, as a sign of respect (and acknowledgement that the king had the power to do whatever he wished with Mephibosheth). But David assured him that he meant no harm, telling Mephibosheth that he only wanted to keep the promise he made to Jonathan—that he only wanted to show him kindness. David promised to give to him all that was rightfully his as a descendant of King Saul.
5. Not only did David give back to Mephibosheth the land that had been King Saul’s, but David also invited him to eat at his table regularly. It was a great honor to eat with the king even once; to be invited to eat at the king’s table regularly meant that he was being accepted as one of the king’s family and was under the king’s protection.
6. King David was generous and kind to this young man. In Bible times, handicapped people were often doomed to become beggars, dependent on handouts from strangers. It does not appear that Mephibosheth had to beg for food or live in poverty like others who were crippled or disabled; he had lived in safety in the house of Machir, in Lo Debar. But to be accepted once again in his homeland and promised a lifetime of honor by the king was a great blessing.
7. Mephibosheth was “different” because he could not walk. Some people are “different” today because they cannot see or hear or speak. Some people are “different” because they look different or speak a different language. But just as David was kind to Mephibosheth, we can and must be kind to others—no matter who they are, where they’re from, how they talk, or how they look. Kindness means doing nice things for others. It also means being polite (having good manners) and being compassionate. Jesus never laughed at anyone who was “different.” He always treated others with respect and kindness, looking for ways to help them. If we want to be like Him, we must do the same. Read what God said to Samuel before he annointed David to be king (1 Samuel 16:7).

**HISTORICAL NOTE:** Mephibosheth is called “Meribbaal” in 1 Chronicles 8:34 and 9:40. Some scholars believe that Merib-baal was the actual name of this grandson of Saul (son of Jonathan) but that many years later scribes substituted “bosheth” (Hebrew for “shame”). The word “baal” was a title frequently given to various idols and is used in the Old Testament many times to refer to pagan gods in Canaan and other parts of the Middle East.

Others think that Merib-baal was Jonathan’s son’s original name, at a time when “baal” was not completely associated with idol worship; the name then may have meant “the Lord’s man.” Perhaps scribes changed his name or perhaps his name was changed because he was not considered a “whole” man and therefore not suitable to follow in his father’s footsteps.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

##### Betty Lukens’ felt pieces

* ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;)
* Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file. File will be labeled “07” in the Visuals Folder

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

Any songs about love or kindness would be appropriate.

### SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Mephibosheth Picture – In the lesson file is a simple coloring picture of Mephibosheth. Add craft sticks for crutches and a bandage to his leg. Then add brown construction paper to make a the king’s table. Use food pictures from magazines or newspaper ads to add food to the table. To save time, precut the strips for the table pieces and food pictures. Save any leftovers in a small ziplock bag and leave in the lesson file for next year.

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. briefly (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Borrow crutches, a wheelchair, or blindfold children and let the children experience what

it feels like to need help. Make sure to emphasize that we do not make fun of others because they are different.

* Role Play the story – Be sure to have a kings crown, crutches or something similar, cups, plates, napkins, pretend food, or a light snack.
* Kings of Israel Review Game – Play using all the Saul and David cards

Review Questions

1. What happened to King Saul and Jonathan?
   1. They died in a battle with the Philistines.
2. How did Saul die?
   1. He killed himself by falling on his sword.
3. Who of Saul’s sons survived the battle?
   1. Ishbosheth
4. Who was Jonathan’s son?
   1. Mephibosheth
5. When the country divided, who were the kings over each side?
   1. People loyal to Saul had Ishbosheth as their king; everyone else had David.
6. What happened to Ishbosheth?
   1. He died after ruling for only two years.
7. What did David remember after ruling for a few years?
   1. His promise to Jonathan to show kindness to his family.
8. Did David find any family?
   1. Yes. Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth, was found.
9. What was wrong with Mephibosheth?
   1. He could not walk.
10. What did David do for Mephibosheth?
    1. Gave him Saul’s land and let him eat at the King’s table regularly

Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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