

**“After God’s Own Heart,” Lesson 8, Leader’s Guide**  
**Kindness, 2 Sam 9**

**Central theme: A man after God’s own heart is kind**

**For starters:**

Show the scene from “Forrest Gump,” in which Forrest is looking for a seat on the bus, and, since he’s crippled in his legs, none of the other students will let him sit with them, until he meets Jenny. (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqY4zc-7zP8>) Use it as a way to discuss how Jenny’s one act of kindness changed everything for Forrest.

Handout: Can you think of a time someone did something nice for you for no apparent reason? How did that make you feel?

Tonight, as we continue in our study of the life of David, we’re going to learn a little bit more about what it means to be a man after God’s own heart.

**Look at the Book: 2 Samuel 9**

Read **2 Samuel 9:1-5** together.

Handout: What was David’s intention in this passage? **(To show kindness to someone from the house of Saul)**

Briefly review the history of relations between Saul and David. **(Saul chased David, tried to kill him, pursued him with an army, etc.)**

Handout: In light of the way that Saul persecuted David, is David’s course of action surprising to you? Why or why not?

Explain to your group that David had a special friendship with Jonathan, Saul’s son. In fact, the two were like brothers. (See **1 Samuel 19-20**) Because of his friendship with Jonathan, David determined to do something kind for one of the members of Saul’s family. Even though Saul had caused David trouble, David was willing to be kind because of his deep love for Jonathan.

Think about the games we play, games like chess, Risk, Monopoly, Settlers of Catan, etc. If you were playing one of those games, would you be inclined to “go easy” on someone else? Not likely, because we’re playing to win the game. But, sometimes, when it’s clear that the game has been won, things change a little.

Think about major sports. When a football team has a huge lead in the fourth quarter, they typically stop passing the football. When a baseball team has a big lead late in a game, they won’t steal bases. When a basketball team has a huge lead late,

they'll stop firing three-pointers. Because, once the outcome is clear, it's not such a bad thing to go easy instead of go for the kill shot.

For David, the game with the house of Saul had been decided and David had won convincingly. So, he faced a choice: he could act like the game was still in question and continue to persecute the house of Saul, or he could pull back a little in recognition of the "score." He, obviously, chose the latter.

Read **2 Samuel 9:6-13** together.

Handout: What did David promise to do for Mephibosheth? **(Restore the land that belonged to Saul and allow him to always eat at his table)**

Explain to your group that David's promise to restore the land was most certainly a promise to restore the farmland, and, thereby, provide for Mephibosheth's needs. Further, since Mephibosheth is lame in both feet, David provides an adequate workforce for such a task by commanding Ziba and his family to work the land.

Even though David had experienced years of struggle with Saul and his family, he decides that he will treat Mephibosheth well instead of like an enemy. This wasn't typical for kings in his day, but David wasn't trying to be like the other kings of the other nations. He was trying to be a man after God's own heart.

**(Optional teaching direction: Talk with your group about how God has done the same thing for us that David did for Mephibosheth: showed kindness to his enemies. Read **Romans 5:6-11** to further the discussion.)**

Handout: A man after God's own heart is kind.

Since Jesus is the descendant of David, many times the characteristics we see in David are even clearer in Jesus.

Read: **Luke 13:10-17**

Handout: Why did the Pharisees object to Jesus' actions? **(He healed on the Sabbath)** What did Jesus' concern seem to be? **(That the opportunity to do good not pass by)**

Jesus wasn't concerned with the obstacles and "rules" of the Pharisees. Instead, he saw someone in need of kindness and he acted in kindness.

Handout: What are some of the obstacles that prevent us from showing kindness to people when the opportunity arises?

So, where did David even get this idea in the first place? **(Have them re-read 2 Sam 9:3 closely.)** David reveals the answer when he says that he wants to show, "God's

kindness.” Another translation of that might be, “kindness like that of God.” David sees this as an opportunity to respond to his enemies with kindness, the way God would. Just as David was concerned to be more like God than like the kings of the nations around him, so our example is Christ. We ought to be ready to show kindness to others, in spite of the obstacles.

You’ve heard of the “fruit of the Spirit,” right? Tonight, we’ve looked most closely at the fruit of kindness. We’ve seen this fruit demonstrated in the lives of both David and Jesus. This should prompt us to look for opportunities to be kind to others.

Handout: What’s one way you can show kindness this week?

Let’s spend some time in prayer, thanking God for his kindness to us, and asking for the fruit of kindness to be evident in our lives. Pray for the courage, the strength, and the character to act on the thing you wrote down for the last question.

**Optional activities:**

- Play: “Kindness” by Chris Tomlin. (You can watch a video with the lyrics here <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BqT16CU1Y8>, or download the song from iTunes.) Challenge your group to really consider the lyrics and think about the message. Have someone read **Romans 2:4**, and then talk about how we ought to respond to God’s kindness.
- In order to introduce the game/sports analogy in this lesson, set aside some time at the beginning of the night to play a few games. Watch closely how your group approaches the competition, so that you can draw upon their actual examples when you teach the lesson.
- Commit as a small group to practice “spontaneous acts of kindness” as opportunities present themselves throughout the week. You can share with and encourage each other via email as the week goes along.