

JUNE 2026



Bible Study | Faith in Action

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Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?

—2 Samuel 9:1

Have you ever received something you didn't earn? An unexpected gift, a drive-through meal that someone paid forward, a monetary gift, a friendship in a time of need, an encouraging text message, a sweet treat, or a neighbor cutting your grass for you? How did it make you feel?

By God's grace, the greatest gift I have ever personally received is the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, my Lord. My prayer of gratitude is the words of 2 Corinthians 9:15: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

Let's look at 2 Samuel 9:1–13. If you are familiar with the life of David, you will remember that although David is recorded as a man after God's own heart, he made many mistakes, sinned against the Lord, and did nothing to earn the title of king. He was also the recipient of the grace and forgiveness of God on many occasions (see Psalms 32 and 51; 2 Samuel) and was appointed king by God to lead His treasured people, the nation of Israel.

David's Grace Toward Jonathan and the House of Saul (2 Sam. 9:1–4)

Can you imagine having to help or serve the heir of the man who sought to take your life? What was it about the grace David received from God in his time of need that made him seek to extend grace to the house of Saul? David was under no obligation to do so. Or was he? First Samuel 20:12–42 gives us context into a covenant made between two friends and sheds light on why David chose to spare Saul's descendants (1 Sam. 24:21).

In 2 Samuel 9:1, King David made a search to inquire: "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" After Ziba, a servant and manager of King Saul's household, was called to the king, David asked for a second time, "Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" (v. 3). Ziba affirmed that yes, there was an heir, a son of Jonathan. What a joy it was to David's heart to learn of this!

David's Grace Toward Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9:5–8)

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who was David's best friend, had been through a lot! He lost his father and grandfather around the age of five in a battle at Mount Gilboa. He was left disabled when he fell while his nurse was attempting to carry him to safety (2 Sam. 4:4). And now, he was living in exile far away from his family's estate. Then to intensify matters, the king summoned Mephibosheth to appear before him. With what must have surely been fear and trepidation, Mephibosheth arrived and fell on his face to pay homage to the king. Perhaps sensing his fear, David responded, "Don't be afraid . . . for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table" (2 Sam. 9:7).

Consider what Mephibosheth must have felt in that moment. What would you have felt? In verse 8, he responded, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?” Mephibosheth used a term that reflected his view of himself in that season of his life: “a dead dog like me.” Mephibosheth had low self-esteem, no self-worth, no dignity, and no regard for himself as an image bearer. In verse 9, we see that instead of responding to Mephibosheth’s question, David served him with an enormous dose of grace.

David’s Grace in Providing for Mephibosheth’s Household (2 Sam. 9:9–13)

The grace and kindness David showed Mephibosheth didn’t stop there. David summoned Ziba and told him everything that had belonged to the house of Saul now belonged to Mephibosheth. Now here comes the clincher. This edict included the command for Ziba, his sons, and his servants to serve and provide for Mephibosheth, as well as a reminder that he would always eat at the king’s table. Still unable to walk, Mephibosheth, along with his son, moved to Jerusalem, and he ate at the king’s table always. Amazing grace!

What does serving someone with grace look like? These verses show us David expressed something deeper than kindness. God used him to extend His grace and mercy to the household of Saul. True joy comes when we serve others. Through David’s selfless act of grace, he served this household with love. Aren’t you grateful God doesn’t treat us as our sins deserve (Psalm 103:10) but freely lavishes His grace upon us because of His great love (Eph. 1:6–8)?

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever received something you didn’t earn—an unexpected gift, a drive-through meal that someone paid forward, a friendship, an encouraging text message? How did it make you feel?
2. In what ways have you experienced God’s unmerited kindness, or grace?
3. How do you or can you serve others with grace?

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When I was young, my family of four relocated from Mississippi to Arkansas due to an employment opportunity. I thought Arkansas was a million miles away and that I would be surrounded by snow-covered mountains nine months of the year. I also thought I would never see my relatives again. Of course, none of these thoughts turned out to be true.

Years later, when I became married to a real estate broker, moving to a different location was always a possibility. But none of these moves were made under duress. Unpacking boxes, deciding on bedrooms, and eating too much fast food for a few days were our main aggravations. The plight of refugees is an entirely different story. News reports depict devastating events that have forced many to flee their homes and home countries.

How can your myMISSION group support refugees? You can start with prayer. Ask God to help you see those in need around you and enable you to help them. Consider the following ideas to connect personally with refugees who may be right around you.

- Connect with refugees by contacting a local resettlement center, a refugee ministry center, an associational office, your state convention, or the North American Mission Board. Resettlement centers seek to partner with local churches and groups to fill the gaps of services.
- Collaborate with other churches and missions groups to strengthen and expand services.
- Provide practical item care kits, including paper products, laundry detergent, and food staples, for newly arriving refugees.

- Begin English as a second language classes at your church one evening a week.
- Invite sojourners into your home, myMISSION group, and church for a cultural exchange of regional foods or desserts. Listen to their stories, grieve with them, and pray for them.
- Plan a friendship tea and host in a group member's home.
- Start a sewing group for refugee women.
- Assist refugee families with learning to shop in local grocery and clothing stores. Take them to the farmers' market or teach them to plant a garden.
- Offer assistance and transportation to local sports, entertainment, and cultural events.
- Raise awareness by studying a refugee-based Bible study together. You can find *Refugees: Forced to Flee Bible Study* and the *Refugees: Forced to Flee Bible Study and Teaching Guide* at wmu.com.
- Check out Send Relief's Care for Refugees web page for practical steps to begin a ministry to refugees as the hands and feet of Jesus: sendrelief.org/focus-areas/care-for-refugees.

Participate in Prayer

No matter how you decide to implement your ideas, praying takes precedence. Depending on their situation, displaced individuals have varying needs. Get to know the person or people you are helping and pray specifically for and with them. Ask God to give you wisdom to help in a way that has a long-lasting, positive impact.

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