

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Aug 7

MONDAY

Ziba consented to do as David commanded, and Ziba and his household became the servants of Mephibosheth and his young son Micha. And so it was that Mephibosheth, lame in both feet, lived in Jerusalem (the city of kings) and ate daily at the king's table.

READ: II Samuel 9:11-13

This whole story reminds us (and maybe this is what God wants us to be thinking about) that God, by grace, restores us to what was once ours! And what was it that was once ours? I'm writing about the relationship God enjoyed with mankind (that's the "ours" part of it) in the Garden of Eden. Because of sin, we lost that relationship, and because of the Cross, it is ours again! Hallelujah for the Cross! Praise God for His grace! Live this day thinking about that!

TUESDAY

Sometime later, the king of Ammon died, and his son, Hanun, became the new king. David decided to show kindness to the new king as his late father had done to David in years past. In order to do so, David sent servants to the kingdom of Ammon.

READ: II Samuel 10:1-2

When it comes to showing kindness, David is the aggressor. He doesn't sit tight until unavoidable "opportunities" to be kind are forced upon him. Instead, he seems to be looking for the chance. Don't think for a second that, despite his best efforts, he could not find any one to be kind to! Even if it meant that he'd have to look outside his own kingdom, he'd look for the chance and grab it. Outside his own kingdom. (maybe, for us, outside of our own usual circle of friends) Aggressive kindness. Try-to-stop-me kindness! Be-amazed kindness!

WEDNESDAY

Advisors of the new king, King Hanun, told him that David's so-called "gesture of kindness to honor his father" was nothing more than an act of war - the sending in of spies to survey the city and plan an invasion. Convinced that they spoke the truth, King Hanun mistreated and humiliated David's servants: he shaved off half the beard of each, and cut off some of their clothing, apparently everything below the waist.

READ: II Samuel 10:3-4

People think of others as they know themselves to be! In other words, others may misjudge the actions of believers who are living for the Lord and not for their own welfare. Because they are so far removed from that themselves, they cannot imagine any other way to live. Don't be surprised when you are judged falsely. It's our goal, day-by-day, to live our lives to please the Father, and to think the thoughts of the Savior! *May the mind of Christ our Savior, dwell in me from day to day!*

THURSDAY

When news of what King Hanun had done reached David, knowing that they would have been greatly ashamed and humiliated, he personally went to meet his servants outside the city. He told them to stay in Jericho until their beards grew in again.

READ: II Samuel 10:5

Are you not immediately struck by David's tender treatment of his servants! He allowed them to take a vacation in Jericho until their beards grew back. He could have said, "Be tough. It's no big deal. Show a little gumption!" But instead, he put himself in their place and demonstrated tender concern for their plight and feelings. There's an old California beach saying: don't criticize how a guy carries his surfboard until you've walked a mile in his flip-flops. (never heard of that saying? It's so good - somebody must have said it!) Anyway, Lord, let me walk in the shoes of others today. And then, let me be that tender source of comfort and encouragement which they might need.

FRIDAY

When the Ammonites saw David's response to the mistreatment of his servants, they readied for battle by hiring 33,000 mercenaries - that is, soldiers from other kingdoms. At the same time, David ordered General Joab to attack Ammon's capital city. Ammon's own forces defended the city's gates, and the hired soldiers were on their flanks.

READ: II Samuel 10:6-8

Why, I wonder, did Hanun, the king of Ammon, risk war by mistreating David's servants when he did not even have enough troops to fight? Because the human thought process is amazingly self-centered, prideful, and, foolish, that's why! And we are tempted to think this way ourselves: that the only way out of some difficulty is to lie about it; that somehow we can escape the consequences of a sin; or that we can make it through the day in a good way without yielding ourselves to the Lord. That's wrong. All wrong.

SATURDAY

When Joab realized that the enemy was divided into two forces, he divided his own forces. He led the elite troops himself, against the hired mercenaries. And the others he put under the command of his brother, Abishai, and to attack the Ammonites.

READ: II Samuel 10:9-10

Joab could have easily assigned his brother to face the more dangerous foe - the hired mercenaries, the professional soldiers - while he himself would lead the secondary forces against a lesser foe. But instead, Joab put himself into the place of greatest danger. His courage and conduct were about to be tried greatly, but he accepted the opportunity to be God's man for that hour. How can we apply being God's man (or God's woman) for this hour? Simple. Just look at the clock, see what time it is, and think to yourself, "I am God's man for this hour. I will face the world and stand true for the faith."

#42