



Connection Group Questions
October 11, 2020
"The Hesed of God"

***"The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in (HESED) and faithfulness, maintaining (HESED) to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin."
~ Exodus 34: 6-7***

Open

Assuming that you have engaged in our "30 Days of Kindness," what have you tried? Any stories to share? In the message from October 4 we explored some of the science behind kindness and the link between acts of kindness and better emotional, physical and relational health. Have you experience more happiness by engaging in acts of kindness?

Discuss

HESED is used nearly 250 times in the First Testament, primarily in reference to God. In English Bibles hesed is translated with a variety of words, depending on the context, including "love," "steadfast love," "loyalty," "favor," "devotion," "mercy" and of course "kindness."

We are introduced to hesed in Exodus 34 and from there we find it reoccurring as a primary descriptor of who God is and how God acts toward people. Once we look for hesed we'll see it throughout scripture: the story of Ruth, Pslam 23, Micah 6:8. Your group can explore these and other occupancies of hesed throughout the Bible.

Read Psalm 136 and take note of all the acts of hesed for which David gives thanks to God.

Michael Card writes,

"In the Hebrew mind hesed is always something you do. It is a verb. It is loading wounded people on donkeys, running to greet runaway children, forgiving enormous debts, paying someone who worked an hour as much as the ones who worked all day, giving a party to those who can't pay you back. It is a resonant response to the overwhelming kindness of the God of Exodus 34, who is full of hesed." ~ "Inexpressible: Hesed and the Mystery of God's Lovingkindness."

In it he writes this definition for Hesed:

"When the person from whom I have a right to expect nothing gives me everything."

How has God given we, who deserve nothing, everything in Jesus Christ?

Read 2 Samuel 9:1-8

David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?" 2 Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "At your service," he replied. 3 The king asked, "Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?"

Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet."

4 "Where is he?" the king asked. Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar." 5 So King David had him brought from Lo Debar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel. 6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "At your service," he replied. 7 "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "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. 8 Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?"

How was David's life touched by hesed? God used Jonathan in a powerful way in David's life. Has your life been touched by someone like Jonathan showing you the hesed of God?

Have you ever felt like Mephibosheth, literally or figuratively- orphaned, estranged, crippled, living in Lo Debar, a "dead dog?"

Apply

First, write your own Psalm 136. Aim for at least 26 verses. Get specific. How has your life been touched by the hesed of God?

Second, name your "Mephibosheth." If you already have someone in mind, great! If not, start praying. Be open to where and to whom God may lead you. Imagine the difference it could make in someone's life to reach out and live out hesed, God's kindness.