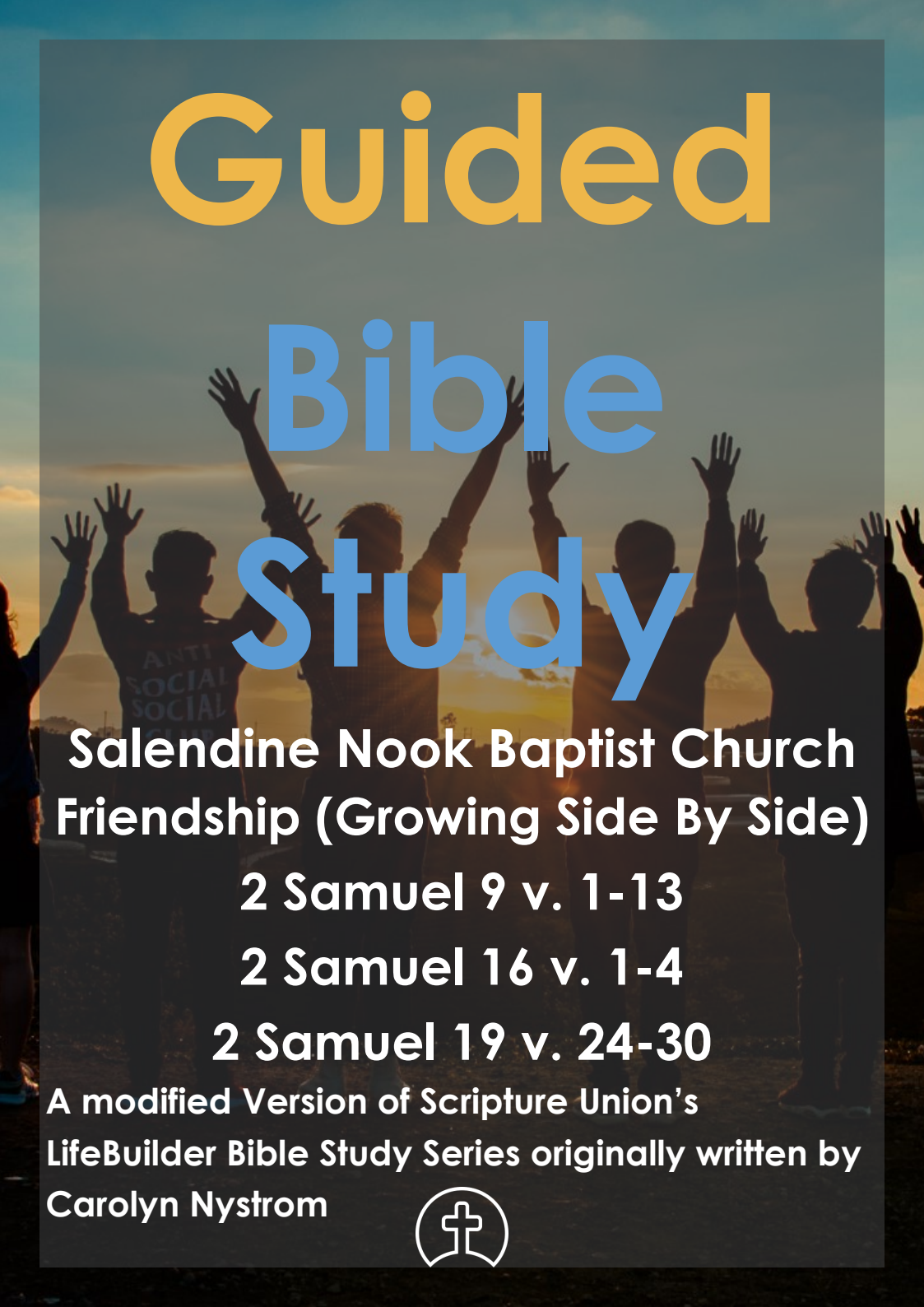


Guided Bible Study



**Salendine Nook Baptist Church
Friendship (Growing Side By Side)**

2 Samuel 9 v. 1-13

2 Samuel 16 v. 1-4

2 Samuel 19 v. 24-30

**A modified Version of Scripture Union's
LifeBuilder Bible Study Series originally written by
Carolyn Nystrom**



About These Bible Studies

*For the purposes of our Bible Studies we will be using Scripture Union's LifeBuilder Bible Study Series. Our Theme for these studies is: **Friendship (Growing Side by Side)**. The studies were originally written by Carolyn Nystrom, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for home study as church transitions between the church building and home during the ongoing Pandemic.*

These studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us – much like we would do in our normal Wednesday Morning Bible Study. To give a sense of group study, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

Hope that you enjoy it!

Pastor Ian

Context

God created us to thrive in one another's presence. Friends help us to mature emotionally and spiritually. Friends love us no matter what. Friends teach us about forgiveness. As we look at these studies together, they introduce us to powerful stories about friendship in the Bible, and how we can apply the principles contained within these stories into our own lives. They also help us to discover the riches of godly friendship – the greatest friendship of them all.

Study 2 -

David &

Mephibosheth

We all *need* friends, but some friends come with their own set of needs – some of those needs with risks attached. King David lived in an era when kings killed their competitors. He'd spent a decade or more on the receiving end of that threat. Saul, the first king of Israel, wanted David dead. David had dodged spears, hidden in caves, even endured Saul's efforts to recruit his wife as a spy. But friendship softened (and complicated!) this battle between king and future king. David had sworn eternal friendship to Saul's son Jonathan. Yet Jonathan's children would be Saul's grandchildren as well – potential heirs to the throne. Political savvy said: 'Forget the friendship; wipe them out!'

PERSONAL REFLECTION. *If you were experiencing a time of physical or emotional need, what kind of help would you want from a friend? What would you not want?*

For a moment reflect on one of your long – term friendships. When have you had an opportunity to serve your friend in a time of need? How did those times of need impact the future shape of your friendship?

The kingdom of Israel had moved into a new era. Saul was dead and so was Jonathan. David reigned as king. How was David to keep his vow of friendship to Jonathan?. **Read 2 Samuel 9 v. 1 – 13.**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

- In what practical ways did David show kindness to Mephibosheth?
- Mephibosheth referred to himself in **2 Samuel 9 v. 8** as a ‘**dead dog**’. What can you imagine would be difficult about his situation in that era?
- What did David do that allowed Mephibosheth to maintain a sense of dignity in spite of his needs?
- If you were not able to walk, what kind of help would you want and not want?
- What did David risk by taking Mephibosheth and Ziba into his household?
- Later David’s kingdom suffered an internal rebellion – led by his own son Absalom. King David had to run from Jerusalem to keep from being killed. Just as he left, he met Ziba. **Read 2 Samuel 16 v. 1 – 4.** How did Ziba return David’s favours?
- How did Ziba explain his presence and Mephibosheth’s absence?
- The rebellion ended. Absalom died. David returned, still in power, to the capital city. **Read 2 Samuel 19 v. 24 – 30.** How did Mephibosheth’s story differ from what Ziba had said?
- Which story do you think David believed?
- Being a friend to a person in need always involves inconvenience and sometimes real risk. What is it that David might have lost because of his friendship with Mephibosheth?
- What inconveniences or risks would come with being a friend to some of the needy people that you might know?
- Despite these obstacles, what sort of commitment do you think God might be asking of you at this present moment in your life?

Now or Later

Make a quick list of some of the needy people that you know. These might be people with physical, emotional or financial needs, or even people who have special needs because of their life stages – a young mother, an aging relative, a person who has recently experienced grief or divorce. One by one, name these people before God in prayer.

Select one person from the list of needy people who you prayed for above, a person you are willing to offer your friendship. As you consider what this could cost you (time, money, personal risk), what one or two steps can you take to be a friend to this person? If you need help, why not ask two or three friends to join you in the project. Pray regularly together for the person you are serving. Keep journal notes of the events as they unfold. Look for ways that God is at work. Note any changes that you see in yourself.

To help you in your study

The purpose of the study is: To realistically assess the risk of becoming a friend to a needy person and then taking that risk.

No one lives a trouble – free life. In long – term friendships, one or both members will have experienced need. This study transfers the subject of need in the previous study (our own *need* for friends) to a more outward focus: the *needs* that friends bring with them and how good friends deal with those needs and the accompanying risks.

To know how Mephibosheth became crippled, read **2 Samuel 4 v. 1 – 4**. David provided a means for Mephibosheth to maintain independence, economic security and dignity. By seating him at the king's table, David gave Mephibosheth respect, not to mention an adequate diet. Dependence and independence are in constant tension for people unable to walk. So is dignity.

David had some of the same reasons to fear helping Mephibosheth that we fear in our own contacts with people who are needy. Notice the last sentence of **2 Samuel 9 v. 10**. Ziba's household was no small force of able – bodied men. David must have wondered if he could count on their loyalty – and what might happen to him if they turned against him.

You might think that Mephibosheth should have lost his share of the inheritance. You might think that Ziba was lying and should have been banished. You might agree with David. He couldn't know who was telling the truth, so he was right to divide the property between them.

David did give up property and food. He may have lost respect among strong loyalists who viewed his kindness to Saul's son as an

unnecessary risk. He might have harboured a traitor and a spy at his own table. He could have lost his kingdom and his life. Even without that, he probably lost his ability to trust either Mephibosheth or Ziba. Still he kept them on as friends and tenants.

Many of us often avoid real contact with needy people because we don't want to take the risks their needs create. So we house ourselves within barriers by where we choose to work, live, even where we go to church, so that we do not have to see people with serious needs. These barriers protect us not only from inconvenience but also from recognising our own selfishness. Weighing the cost of being a friend to someone in need will help us make realistic decisions about what we are willing to offer.

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