



# Kingdom Storytellers

Towards a justice-driven and enabling Community of God

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## Practicing self-worth, identity and dignity

### 2 Samuel 9

**8 Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?”...**

**11b So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table like one of the king’s sons.**



Noting Mephibosheth's comment about himself you might be forgiven into assuming that he was feeling sorry for himself and his disabling circumstances. I certainly wanted to shake him and say, “Wake up man! You are in the presence of the King, show a bit more self-respect!” However, its worth considering that while someone with a disability may resent its imposition of disability as the defining characteristic of them they also recognize that it is an intrinsic component of their self-identity from which they cannot escape.

One of the reasons I changed my name [I wont tell you my given name, you’ll have to read my book to find that out 😊] was because I wanted a name that people would remember when referring to me as opposed to the obvious descriptive metaphor of ‘that girl or woman in the wheelchair’. I don’t think it worked. But it did enable me to draw a line under what had been a turbulent childhood where who I was would not dictate who I would become. Yes, I was enormously grateful for the medical intervention and care I received as a child that enabled me to live an independent life, but I didn’t want to be defined by my biology. Or as an object. This object wanted to relate to others, and in turn wanted others to relate to her. When someone who met me many years after our first meeting exclaimed, “Jazz Shaban is a name you don’t forget easily”, I knew I made the right choice.

Some have supposed that David’s championing towards Mephibosheth was because he identified with the low self-esteem that comes from being disregarded by his own father and siblings when the Prophet Samuel was looking for a potential new king for Israel. Gods guidance to Samuel being: ‘The Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart’ (Samuel 16.7). Whatever was behind Mephibosheth’s seemingly negative description of himself, his encounter with the King was transformative and life-changing. What he did with that new life has been the subject of some speculation by Bible scholars, but I’m certain it had nothing to do with his disability.



### REFLECT...

On where your own perceptions of disability came from. Often being rooted in the stories we were told as children. *And they lived... Ever After* reworks European classic fairytales by disabled women.



### PRAY...

Thank God that perceptions of disability are changing. Ask God for healing and forgiveness where negative attitudes have caused people pain and isolation.



### & STEP OUT!

Discuss some of the initiatives in your community which enable marginalized people to be ‘restored’ from situation in which they have felt second-best or overlooked.