

Friends: Captivating our Children's Heart

A friend (Pr 17:17) loves at all times. The word that most accurately describes what a friend is, is *encourager*. To encourage is to inspire with courage and hope; to stimulate, give insight, influence, motivate. An encourager gives guidance, direction, shepherding. Our encounters with people should leave a striking impression. *Striking*: wonderful, marvellous, amazing, incredible... *Effective*: influencing every aspect of their life.

Our Master notices people. We must never pass by someone without noticing them, making them feel of great importance, wanted. To be friendless: lonely, lonesome, alone, no one to turn to, single, isolated, alienated, separate, apart, cut off, without ties, unattached, rejected, unwanted. This is what our children are faced with when they're not encouraged daily. Our children need friends (encouragers). When we notice them, they feel important. When one feels important, then he will be able to easily receive even the sternest reproof. Are we afraid of our children?

A friend (encourager) always thinks the best. He is one who gives help, aid, security, relief, protection, refreshment, comfort. He stands as a support, an advocate. He shows approval, gives blessing, and promotes advancement (increase). Jn 15:13-15 — A friend lays down his life (15:13), is commandable (15:14), and continuously makes known our Father's purpose (15:15).

Who are our children's friends? It has been said, "A nation is judged by its heroes." Who are our children's heroes? They are the ones who take notice of them, who probe them, challenge them, communicate with them, explaining "why," breaking things down, giving reasons. They are the ones who are consistent in their promises, their word. Who should their heroes be?