

## **#407 8/13/07 Taking a risk for friend**

Last week I wrote about Jonathan going into the desert to encourage David as he was being pursued by a crazed King Saul: "And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.

" I Samuel 23:16. As we look at teaching our children about friendship, we can find another characteristic of a good friend in the visit Jonathan made to David.

Jonathan was a prince. He had grown up with a plush lifestyle in a royal household. However, his relationship with his father was getting shaky. King Saul found out that Jonathan had made a covenant with David. In fact, King Saul assassinated 85 priests because they had not told him about the covenant. (The Bible is filled with fascinating characters and intriguing plots.)

For Jonathan to go into the desert was a risk. He could further splinter the damaged relationship with his father. There were robbers hiding in the desert who would gladly kill a prince if they thought he carried valuables. There were wild animals and rough terrain. Also, he had to locate his friend who was constantly on the move. All in all, it was a dangerous journey that he undertook.

We can use the example of Jonathan to talk to our children about taking risks for our friends. It is not likely that they will have to go into the desert and risk their lives or damage their relationships with their parents. However, young people are daily called upon to do something for a friend that is uncomfortable or unpleasant.

Ask your teen how he would react if a group of popular kids were verbally abusing his friend about his dress, his alcoholic father or the fact that he had to walk to school. Or ask your teen daughter what she would do if her friends decided to ostracize a member of their group. Ask your 9-year-old how he would handle a group of kids who made fun of a teammate who missed a basket.

Then, remind your child that being a friend sometimes means doing something that is hard or embarrassing or uncomfortable. Also remind him that when we do what is right, we feel at peace about our actions.

Next week, are there ever times when it is not right to stand up for a friend?