

1. Friend or Parent

Principle –Parents are to be parents first – to their children, and friends second.

Key Scripture:

Deuteronomy 11:18-19 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **Teach them to your children**, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Psalms 13:24 He who spares the rod hates his **son**, but he who loves him is careful to **discipline** him.

Colossians 3:20-21 Children, **obey your parents** in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Hebrews 5:8 Although he (Jesus) was a son, he learned **obedience** from what **he suffered**....

Comment

We are to continually train our (dependent) children in the things of the Kingdom. If we love our children we will also discipline them because this leads to obedience (and longer life). Even Christ had to learn obedience. When fathers discipline they are to do so in a way that is not discouraging to their children. The Scripture teaches that we are to be parents first, and “friends” second – even Christ had a Father-Son relationship with his heavenly Father despite their intrinsic unity.

Application in daily life??

- ♦ We have a unique role to play in our children’s lives – they need their parents to be “parents”. This can be a tough, and sometimes lonely job, but it is part of God’s perfect plan. We let our children down if we try to be their friend at the expense of being parents.
- ♦ This truth is particularly hard for single parents to practice because of the lack of close adult companionship for the sole parent. The temptation is to try to always be a friend-first to your child(ren) rather than risk the temporary emotional distance that sometimes comes with good parenting.
- ♦ When our children become adults our relationship changes. In a mature adult context, the friendship aspect of the relationship largely dominates – but the obligation that our adult children have to honour their parents means that we have that “status” for life.

Our example?? Do we accept the unique role God has ordained for parents and trust that God will provide our children (or our parents) with the friendship that we cannot?