

DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

DISCIPLINE OF FRIENDSHIP

A GREAT FRIENDSHIP

Friendship's Commitment

Jonathan's astonishing mutuality of soul and the immediacy of his love was followed by profound commitment — **“And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt” (1 Samuel 18:3-4).**

What sublime spiritual theatre — symbolism of a noble soul! Jonathan, the king's son, stands humbly in his undergarment, while the shepherd boy dons the prince's robe and armament. Jonathan's act was one of *honor, equality, and vulnerability*. To wear the robe of a king was an immense honor, as testified by Haman's fateful request to wear the Persian king's robe and parade through the streets (cf. [Esther 6:6-9](#)). Jonathan's symbolic divestiture formally abolished David's status as a shepherd and placed him side by side as an equal. His disrobing was a conscious display of vulnerability and real risk. The Shakespearean gesture meant, “My life for your life” — and he meant every bit of it.

We may wonder, is such friendship really possible outside the sacred pages of Scripture? After all, these men were spiritual giants. But consider what happened when a twenty-year-old Anne Sullivan arrived in Tuscumbia, Alabama, to tutor the blind and deaf seven-year-old Helen Keller, who could only utter animal-like sounds and often fell into destructive rages. For weeks Anne Sullivan tried to break through to the girl's consciousness, until the famous fifth of April 1887 — a day Helen Keller described sixty years later — when the girl was holding a mug under the spout while Anne pumped water into it, using her other hand to repeatedly spell w-a-t-e-r — and Helen suddenly understood! She later said, “Spark after spark of meaning flew from hand to hand and miraculously, affection was born.”

Anne Sullivan gave almost her entire life to Helen Keller. By ten, Helen was writing to famous persons in Europe — in French. She mastered five languages and displayed far greater gifts than her teacher. Still, Anne Sullivan was devoted to Helen, sitting beside her famous pupil at Radcliffe, spelling the lecture into her hand. Anne Sullivan's devotion never changed. She was satisfied to be Helen's friend and encourager — to make her a queen.

Bible Study: Discipline for Godliness

Discipleship Series:

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

The deepest of friendships have in common this desire to make the other person royalty. They work for and rejoice in the other's elevation and achievements. There are no hooks in such friendships, no desire to manipulate or control, no jealousy or exclusiveness — simply a desire for the best for the other. **Dostoyevski** had the idea when he wrote: "To love a person means to see him as God intended him to be."

Do you have the great fortune to have such a deep friend? Men, are we kingmakers?