

## Love Letters from Your Father

---

saved from being stoned for adultery in the Temple, and Mary, the wife of Cleopas and the mother of the apostle James the Younger.

The sole disciple-companion there to support Jesus was John, the beloved youngest apostle, who alone of the Twelve had the courage of his convictions. He fearlessly activated his oath of allegiance to the Master at the risk of his life. All the others had fled to the Upper Room in fright and were currently cringing behind the massive barred doors.

There are stages of loyalty among friends. Initially there are those in youth who assist in life's developing struggles, and who usually pass by the way as they make their individual road through life. Then there are those who remain close and loyal no matter what later happens. The latter are the few and true. Most so-called friends are the more numerous happy-day sunshine types who remain only

so until they have withstood the test of time and trial. These are a veritable treasure, a lifetime companion, a Jonathan, a Ruth! Most are attracted to friendly connection for their own self-interest.

This can be the largest group, even a swarm which only time and circumstances can properly categorize. The amount of either of self-interest or true devotion that influences this group is generally uncertain. The vast number of Jesus' disciples, followers, and hangers-on clearly belonged to this category and gave no support when really needed.

Most friends are the superficially fair-weather type, who willingly share the good times and can handle mutual agreement, but

little else. All is well when these are mutually agreeable and all projections and proposals are positive. This type rests on self-serving emotion, tokenism, and presence without commitment.

True friendship is relationship that perseveres without catastrophic deterioration. It shows itself when, after disagreement, one and

the other is yet accepted with mutual respect. Solidity of support in every circumstance can be relied upon and adversity and failure cannot affect its continuance. It perseveres beyond agreement, and

commitment to life-sacrifice is supreme. In fact, need is the

catalyst that authenticates and modifies true friendship. Until need occurs and acceptance beyond agreement conquers self-assertion, every