

Traits of a GB Relationship: Introduction

After my initial series of posts on **Making the Case for God Buddies** that was followed by another series of **Examples of GBs in The Bible**, I want to now start describing some of the key traits and characteristics of a God Buddy relationship.

During this next series of posts, I will explain why some key building blocks that are critical to a deeper, covenant God Buddy relationship that will help you become a better friend and a more godly man.

But first, here are some basics about the difference between male and female friendships.

Male and Female Friendships Differ

It is no surprise that men's and women's friendships are different. Generally speaking, male-male friendships tend to be more "tactical" or "transactional" while female-female friendships are more nurturing and based on emotions.

In other words, friendships among men are usually side-by-side: working together on projects, playing cards, or attending sporting events. And most women do friendships face-to-face: talking over coffee or lunch, crying together, and sharing secrets.

On the whole, women invest more time in maintaining their friendships by calling friends regularly, meeting more frequently, thinking about others who are struggling.

On the other hand, men tend to move to the next task quickly, even in our friendships. We don't feel the need to stay in touch and are less intimate and supportive of our friends.

Yes, this is more than "Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus". We have other issues that impact our closeness with other men.

Masks Hurt our Relationships

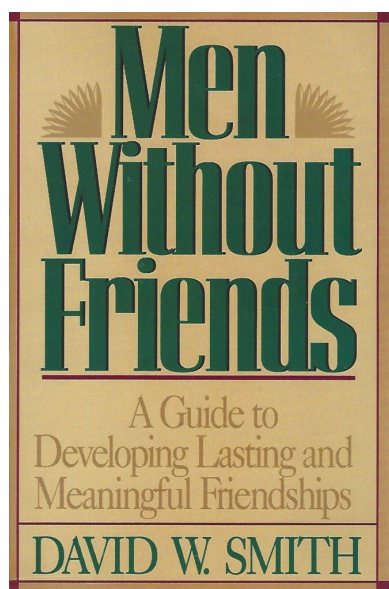


Geoffrey Greif, professor of sociology at University of Maryland and author of the book, *Buddy System: Understanding Male Friendships* says that the most common myth around men's friendships is that they are not as important as women's friendships are to women.

Greif says that a lot of men don't necessarily want friendships where they have to open up emotionally. I have found we tend to hide behind one of our many "masks" due to a deep-seated fear that no one will want to be our friend if we take off the mask to show our true selves.

Barriers to Friendships for Men

David Smith, author of the book *Men Without Friends* lists 6 characteristics that prove to be barriers to friendships for men:



1. Aversion to showing emotions,
2. Inherent inability to fellowship,
3. Inadequate role models,
4. Male competition,
5. Inability to ask for help, and
6. Incorrect priorities.

Therein lies the rub.

Men have many issues and barriers that keep us from developing real close friendships. We also don't know how to be good friends because we're not comfortable sharing our emotions, feelings, and fears. Now, this doesn't mean friendships are not incredibly important to us men. Close, intimate friendships don't come as easy to us as our female counterparts because we just don't know how to do it!

All this hinders our ability to become more godly men.

Characteristics of a GB Relationship

So over the next several posts, I will describe some of the main characteristics of a God Buddy relationship, including but not limited to:

"Perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in excellence; for these wish well alike to each other qua good, and they are good in themselves."

ARISTOTLE

Qua is Latin for "which way" or "as," and it is a derivative of the Latin qui, meaning "who."

- Trust and Confidentiality
- Authenticity and Vulnerability
- Acceptance, Good Listening, and Empathy
- Non-judgmental, Forgiving, and Unconditional Love

- Accountability and Encouragement
- Prayer and Support
- Loyalty and Consistency
- Desire to Study and Willingness to Improve

Those are some initial thoughts about the key traits needed for a deep and accountable friendship. Most seem very obvious and many are basic to most friendships.

However, I will attempt to describe the uniqueness of those traits and biblical references as they relate to your GB relationships. I may even change around or re-group these characteristics as I refine my thoughts some more.

Feel free to add any additional traits that you feel are important in the Comments below.