

Traits of a GB Relationship: Developing Trust

This current series of posts about the Traits of a God Buddy Relationship describes the unique characteristics that can help men make and keep better friendships while also overcoming the barriers that make it difficult to share our emotions, feelings, and fears.

The first post was about Finding Commonality. This next trait is about Developing Trust.

Let's start first with a definition of Trust.

Trust [truhst]

Noun:

Reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, surety, etc., of a person or thing; confidence. Confident expectation of something; hope.

Verb (used without object): To rely upon or place confidence in someone or something. To trust in another's honesty; trusting to luck.

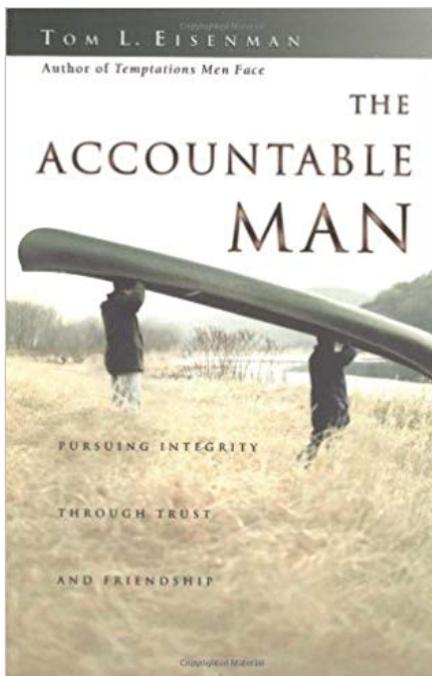
-excerpts from Dictionary.com

Today, we live in a world where friendship is defined by the number of acquaintances and followers on our Facebook page or Instagram feed. While social networks can help us stay connected at some level, they're hardly the building blocks of a close relationship. In my post *Where Did All My Friends Go?*,

I suggested that we're so stretched and overscheduled with work, classes, household chores, and family commitments, that there isn't a lot of time left to develop or nurture friendships.

So how do we develop trust with friends?

Stages to a Maturing Friendship



The Accountable Man
by Tom Eisenman

Tom Eisenman writes in his book, *The Accountable Man: Pursuing Integrity Through Trust and Friendship* that there are several stages to a maturing friendship.

The first comes by simply enjoying spending time with someone you like. Next is a deepening of the relationship through trust. The third is growing accountability.

Eisenman outlines several sub-characteristics of a maturing friendship that I'll cover in later posts but I wanted to set-up the first few traits with these three stages in order to emphasize that it takes time together to recognize and develop a relational depth and trust between men.

During the first stages of a developing friendship, you will likely realize that something begins to "click" between you and another guy. You call him out of the blue. You start talking with each other about common interests – sports, work, hobbies, volunteer activities. You find reasons to get together more frequently to watch the next playoff game or enjoy over dinner, a coffee or beer. There is a growing commonality between the two of you.

You also sense an increased ability to talk about things more personal like some problems in your family, frustrations at work, or even some surface-level struggles like a drinking problem. But the time that one of you throws the proverbial "fishing line into the water" about something a little bit deeper is when a greater honesty and intimacy enters into the relationship.

"The glory of friendship is not the outstretched hand, nor the kindly smile, nor the joy of companionship; it's the spiritual inspiration that comes to one when he discovers that someone else believes in him and is willing to trust him with his friend."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson.

You are beginning to develop a deeper level of trust.

Levels of Trust



There is more below the surface than you can see in everyone.

The first time one of you shares something a little bit deeper personally, the other may follow with the same. There could be some back & forth about our small struggles that eventually leads to the moment you know you can trust each other.

However, there is an implied level of trust but it does not become crystal clear at this point. Your trust still in development but is definitely progressing.

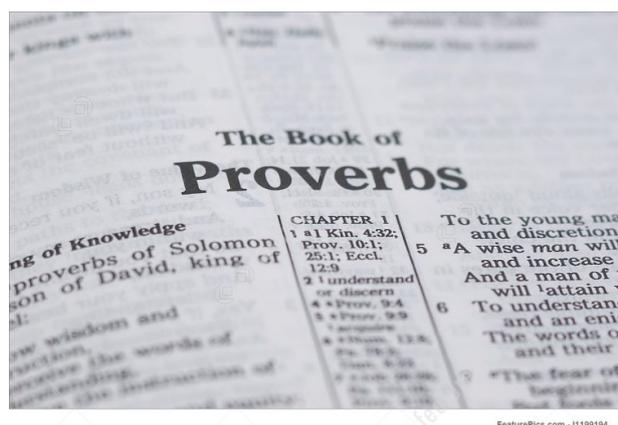
The deeper level of trust in a God Buddy relationship really begins when one of you shares something “below the surface” and the other responds with a sincere expression to help and support. It is then that one of you demonstrates and then states that you are someone who can be trusted to hold in confidence any of the sensitive, personal issues you discuss.

Trust is also earned not just given.

You can also lose trust as quickly as the wind blows the sand on the beach. So be cautious about how much you share at the beginning of your new relationship since you might scare him off and kill the friendship if you share too much quickly. So start slow.

Biblical Support

The book of Proverbs in the Christian Bible is full of wisdom to help you God Buddy relationships. Here are two verses that support this trait of Trust:



Proverbs: The book of wisdom

- *A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy person keeps a secret. –Proverbs 11:13 New International Version (NIV).*
- *Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe. – Proverbs 28:26 (NIV)*

God Buddies need trusted advisors and learn to use them often as their personal “board of directors”.

Most men grow up believing they could do life on their own and don't need to ask for help. Society tell sus the individualist, bold, self-reliant man is viewed as a hero. But the totally self-reliant person is eventually doomed for failure.

Unless they have a God Buddy.

The main writer of Proverbs, King Solomon failed to trust his advisors. Early in his life, he accumulated riches, had numerous sexual conquests, gained power and did not keep his ego in check. It was not until later in his life though, did Solomon begin to trust God and realize that everything else was "utterly meaningless" (Ecclesiastes 12:8 NIV).

Trust is Critical for GBs

Trust begets trust so once you say you trust a God Buddy, they should return the same level of trust to you. But it takes someone to be willing to first let them know they are allowing the other inside their wounded, sinful heart (Mark 7:21-23). It's only then that they know you trust them wholeheartedly and will keep everything said just between the two of you.

After you develop that initial level of trust with a new friend, you need to then agree on complete confidentiality, which is the topic for the next post.

How have you developed trust in your friendships? Feel free to comment below.