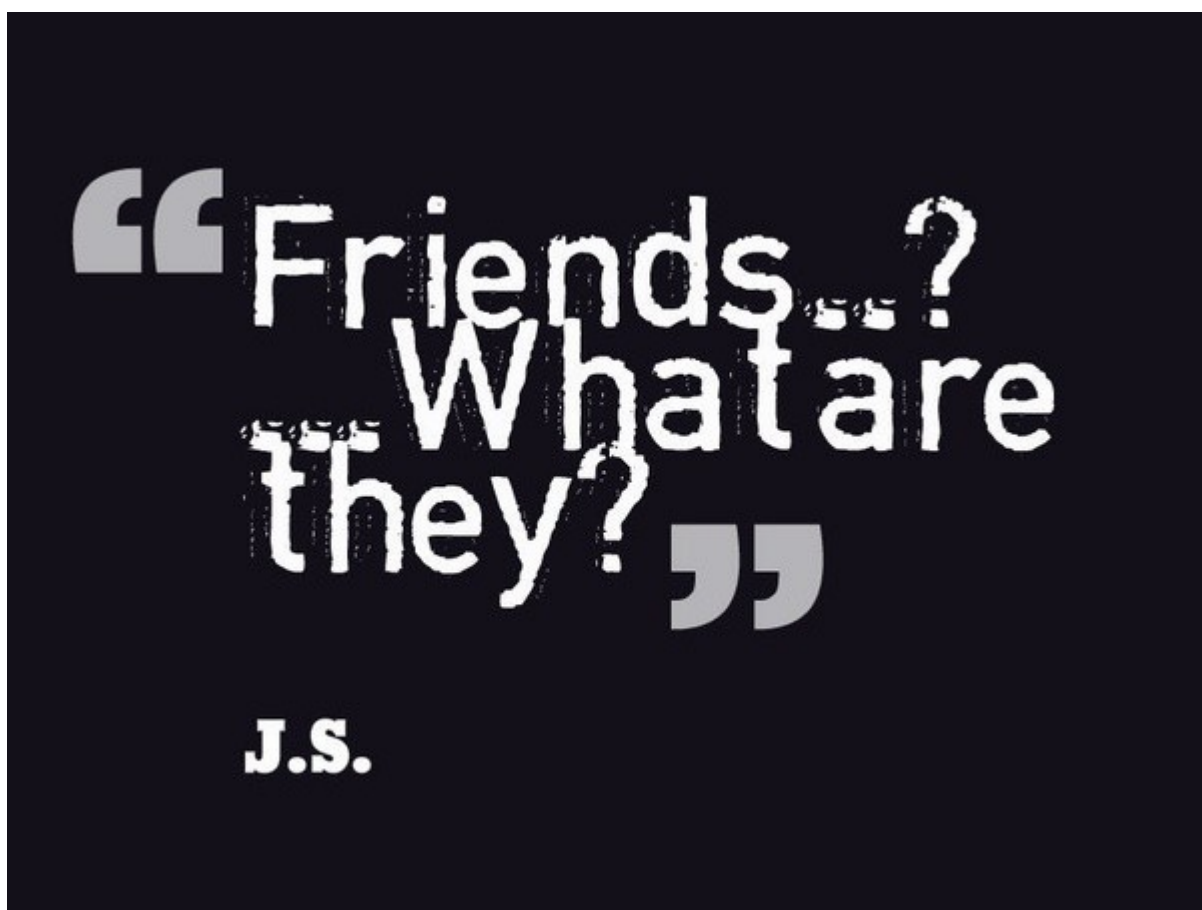


Why Men Need Friends

In my series of opening posts on this blog, I explained why men need more authentic and genuine friendships or what I began calling “God Buddies” more than 10 years ago. At that time, I saw the need (and had the need myself) for some deeper relationships with a small number of guys. Today, many men today have only shallow acquaintances. If they have any friends at all!



Before I explain further why men need friendships –and especially why we need God Buddies, let me briefly recap my opening posts.

Recap

In *Where Did All My Friends Go?* I wrote that our relationships with childhood friends, high school chums, and college buddies, all change as we move into adulthood. Dealing with the stresses of adult life often leads to isolation and many men medicate with workaholism, over-eating, drinking, drugs, gambling, pornography and anger.

Next, in *Loneliness: a Huge Threat to our Health*, I referenced a Boston Globe article in which Billy Baker wrote the biggest threat facing middle-age men isn't smoking or obesity. Baker suggested it is actually loneliness and that many of us are starved for friendships. I then suggested that men often hide behind our "masks" and create isolation, which may actually be killing us physically, emotionally, and spiritually!

Then, in *Stress: The Other Component of Friendliness*, I gave some brain science about how the body's hormones help us cope with today's high levels of stress. Without a proper balance of oxytocin (the hormone that helps our social connection) and vasopressin (a hormone associated with fight-or-flight behavior), we withdraw and have difficulty with all our interpersonal relationships. One study even suggested a "bromance" is just as powerful at boosting a man's resilience to stress and extending his lifespan as a romantic relationship.

Well, I believe a God Buddy can also help in many ways so let me provide some biblical context for this next set of posts.

Man Needs Help

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. "

–Genesis 2:18

The Bible tells us that God first created the world, then made human beings in His own image (Genesis 1:27). The Creator said "It was good" and rested on the seventh day. Scripture goes on to tell us that man sinned against God's commandment in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 2) and needed some help. In the traditional sense, God then made a woman from the man. The essence though is that man, left on his own really does need help from others.

In his book *The Hazards of Being Male: The Myth of Masculine Privilege*, author Herb Goldberg asked adult men if they had any close friends. Most of them seemed surprised by the question and usually responded, "No, why? Should I?"

Many experts conclude that women have better relational skills than men and are more successful at making and keeping friends. Men, on the other hand, are frequently more isolated and competitive and therefore have fewer (if any) close friends. We push away or have no helpers.

The reality is that God had a better plan for humanity but we all need helpers.

God Buddies Can Help

Stay with me as I begin to lay out more about the basis of why I believe God Buddies are so important.

Until then, what do you believe...is a man good by himself?

State your case below in the comments.