

Friendships

Friendships

- The wrong friends can lead you astray
- Proverbs 12:26; 13:20; 15:18; 16:28; 22:24–25; 25:19; 26:21
- There are many modern-day proverbs about friendships, such as “you’re known by the company you keep” and “a friend in need is a friend indeed.”
- The Bible is full of proverbs about friendships.
- We’ve all seen how easy it is to get sucked into the “wrong crowd” and end up doing things we know we shouldn’t because our friends are doing it.

Friendships

- Just as Proverbs contrasts wisdom and folly and the wicked and the righteous, it also contrasts good friendships with bad ones.
- Proverbs 12:26 and 13:20 both use antithetic parallelism to contrast between good and bad friends. These two proverbs say almost the same thing but in different ways. A righteous friend will guide his friends in the right direction, but a wicked friend will lead them astray (12:26, NIV).
- If you walk with the wise, you will become wise, but if you hang out with fools, you'll suffer harm because you'll make foolish choices, too (13:20).

Friendships

- Proverbs 22:24–25 vividly describes the dangers of friendship with wicked – we will get entangled in a snare, like an animal caught in a trap, so entangled they can't get out.
- The principle extends to more mundane behaviors; it can happen with friends who gossip a lot (16:28), people who are given to anger (22:24), and those who are quarrelsome (26:21), or deceitful (25:19).
- These people are like hot embers that can start a fire (26:21), a bad tooth or a foot that slips (25:19). They can cause us a lot of pain.

Friendships

- Proverbs is telling us that the wise are careful to avoid dangerous friendships.
- A more literal translation of the first line of Proverbs 12:26 is “the righteous chooses his friends carefully” (in the ESV footnotes as an alternative translation). The verb there is “to seek” or “to spy” such as when the 12 spies went into the promised land.
- This gives us the image of people who take time to “check people out” before they become close friends to make sure they’re someone they want to be aligned with or connected to.

Friendships

- You can be casual friends with anyone and everyone (wicked or righteous).
- A Christian should be friends with someone Proverbs would consider wicked (someone who doesn't follow God or His wisdom) because if no Christians ever did, how would that person ever hear about Jesus (Romans 10:14)?
- These verses are talking about becoming close friends with this person, throwing your lot in with them.

Friendships

- The Hebrew word for friend can be translated “companion,” not just a casual friend but someone you intentionally align yourself with as a companion, kind of like a partner.
- In that culture, friendships were not entered into lightly.
- They were an important way to make connections and gain honor and status in society.
- In the ancient world, close friendships could even be formally sealed with a covenant, just like a business or a marriage covenant.

Friendships

- The greatest example in the Old Testament is the covenant between Jonathan and David (1 Samuel 18).
- Scripture describes their relationship so beautifully, saying “The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (18:1).
- This imagery describes what a covenant friendship was – their lives were interwoven, interconnected.
- They could not be pulled apart; a friendship covenant was unbreakable.

Friendships

- It was a union of “a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).
- Like yarn woven together, their covenant created something new and stronger than either was on his own.
- Their friendship covenant was so strong that Jonathan went behind his father’s back to help David escape Saul.
- Their bond was thicker than blood.

Friendships

- Even without an official friendship covenant, people chose their friends carefully: those connections would either raise or lower their honor level.
- We have similar situations surrounding friendships, like considering how a friend choice might impact our social standing.
- But Proverbs is telling us to base our friendships not on who could boost our honor in the world's eyes but on who would be a better influence on us in following God.
- We should choose our friends based on who is righteous and wise.

Friendships

- True godly friends make each other stronger
- Proverbs 17:17; 27:4–10, 17; 28:23
- Proverbs teaches us that a true friend is someone who is there with you and for you through the hard times.
- He or she isn't just a fair-weather friend (17:17).
- This friend confronts you with love and grace when there is a conflict rather than gossiping behind your back (27:5).

Friendships

- He or she encourages you but holds you accountable when you need it (28:23) and “stir [you] up ... to love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24).
- Wise friends speak the truth even when it’s hard. Instead of telling you how great you are all the time (28:23), they confront you directly (27:5).
- Wise friends don’t crave sweet talk (27:6–7); they would rather be “hurt” by open rebuke so they can fix what’s wrong.

Friendships

- “Iron sharpens iron” (27:17) is one of the most often quoted proverbs in the Bible, but have we really thought about iron banging against iron?
- This is not a painless process; it hurts.
- He or she knows this is real love because the friend is trying to help improve him or her. This is “earnest counsel” (27:9).
- A wise person doesn’t surround himself or herself with “yes men/women” or flatterers but with friends who offer wise counsel that helps him or her to grow in faith.

Friendships

- In your closest mutual friendships, you need to surround yourself with friends who are like iron, relationships in which you are willing to admonish and rebuke one another in love so you both will become more like Christ.
- This is how the body of Christ works best: sharpening one another, being willing to speak truth to one another even when it's hard, and even harder, being willing to receive that hard truth with humility when it is given.
- This is a wonderful way to grow in God's wisdom.

Friendships

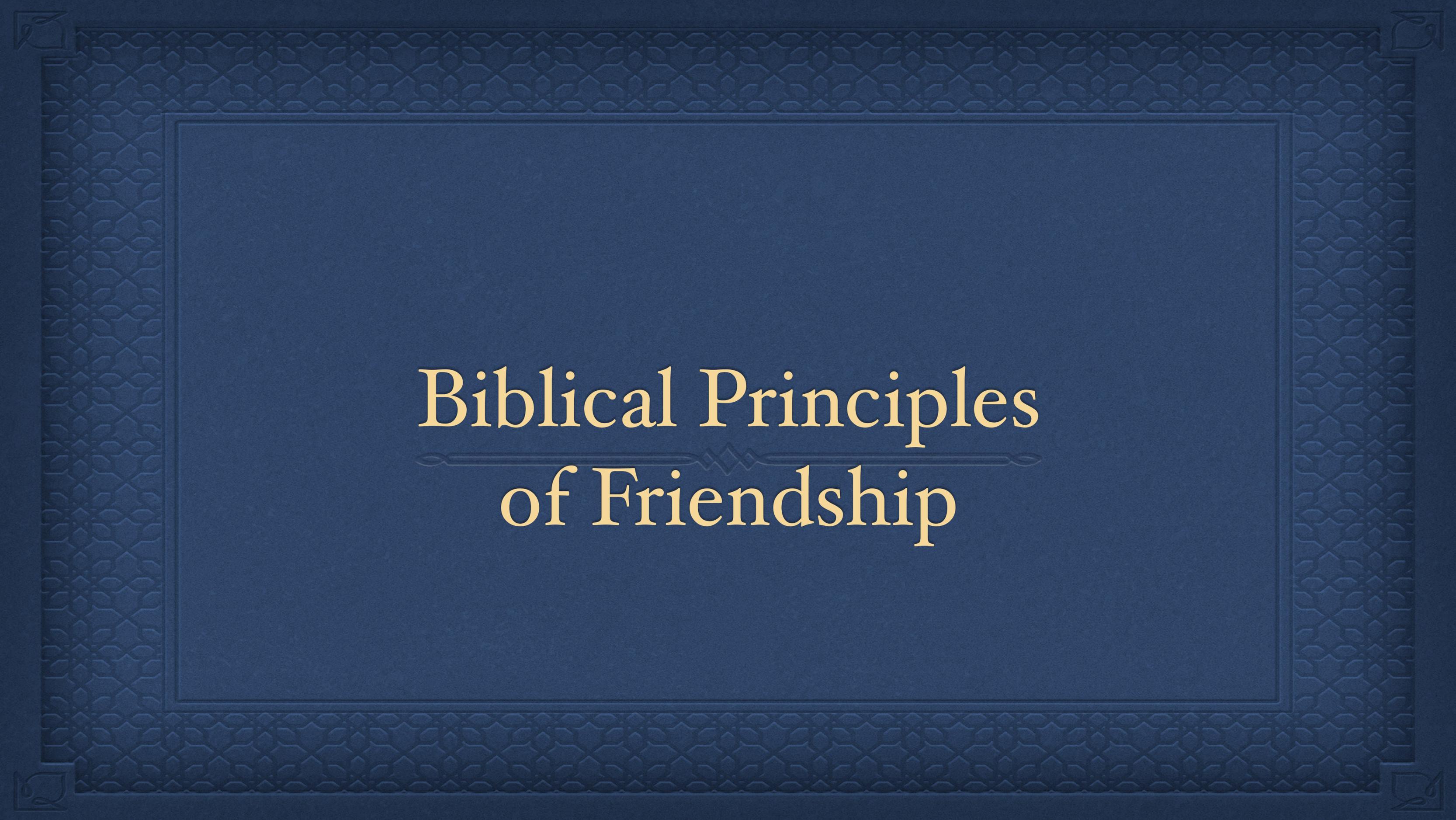
- True godly friends are closer than family
- Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:10
- Proverbs describes “a friend who sticks closer than a brother” (18:24).
- We saw how that was true in David and Jonathan’s lives, and many of us have experienced this with our friends.
- How many of us have close friends who are more like family than our actual brothers, sisters or cousins? How many of us have a mentor who is more like a father or mother than our actual parents?

Friendships

- Proverbs tells us that a friend who is near is better than a brother who is far away (27:10). This could mean physically near, but it can also mean emotionally or spiritually close.
- The bonds we have with our brothers and sisters in Christ through the Holy Spirit can be closer than a biological bond.
- Godly friends aren't just friends, they are family.
- The Bible says when you become a Christian, you enter God's family as an adopted child, a co-heir with Christ.

Friendships

- In Christ, you have a bond with these people that is greater than even your bond with your biological family. You have the same purpose, the same values, ethics and beliefs, and the same mission to build God's kingdom.
- Most importantly, you all have the same Holy Spirit dwelling inside you, growing His fruit in you, molding you into the image of Jesus.
- The Spirit creates unity that can bond together in love even the most opposite people in the world (Ephesians 4:1–6). When the Spirit binds us, we can have a completely different friendship than anything the world could ever offer.

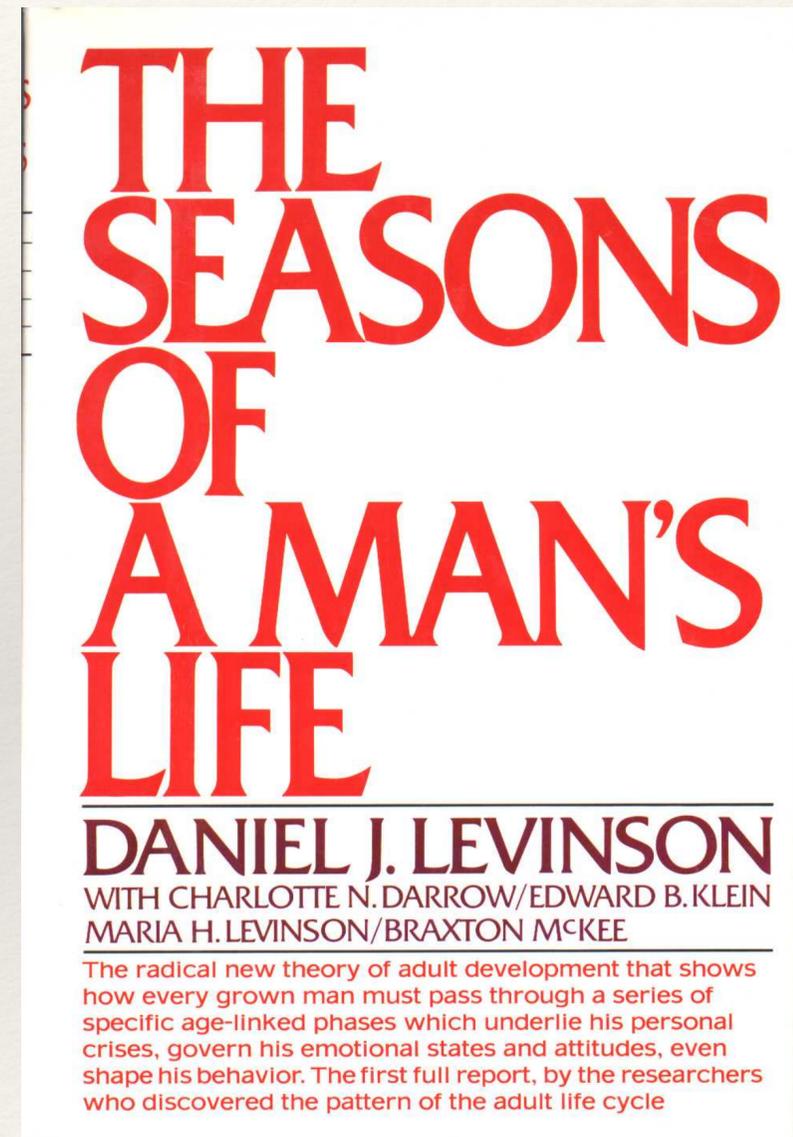


Biblical Principles of Friendship

Male Friendships

“In our interviews, friendship was largely noticeable by its absence In general, however, most men do not have an intimate male friend of the kind that they recall fondly from boyhood or youth.”

David Levinson



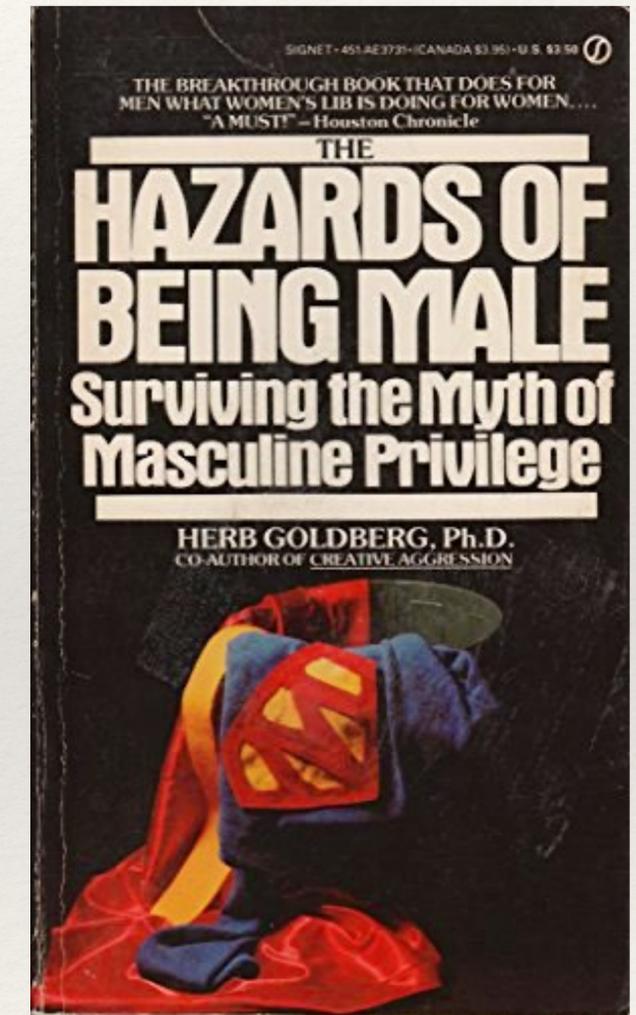
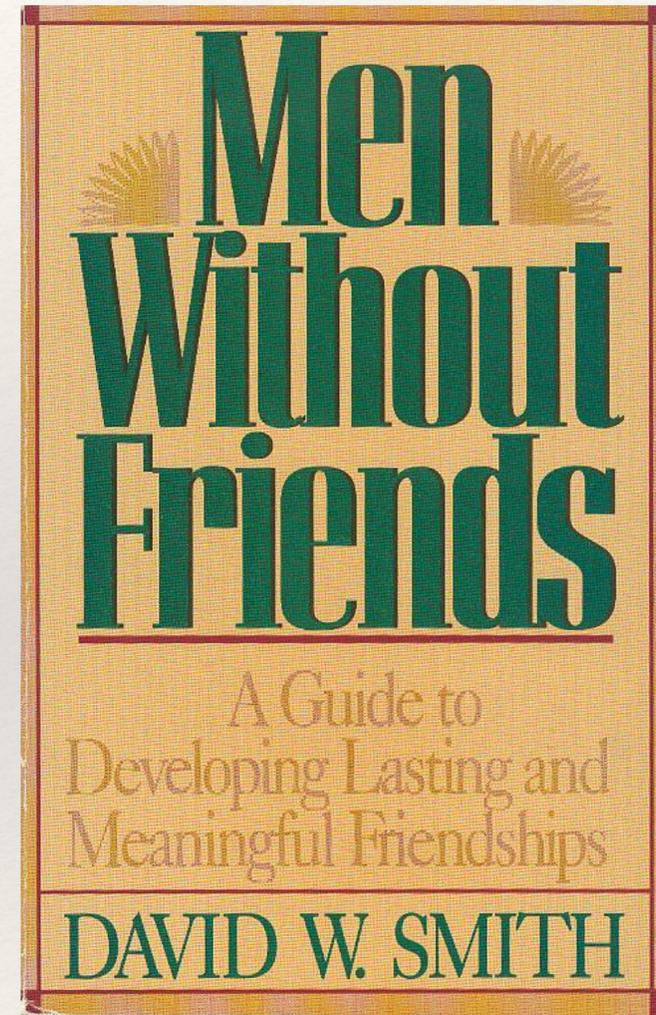
Male Friendships

- David Smith – author of the book

Men Without Friends

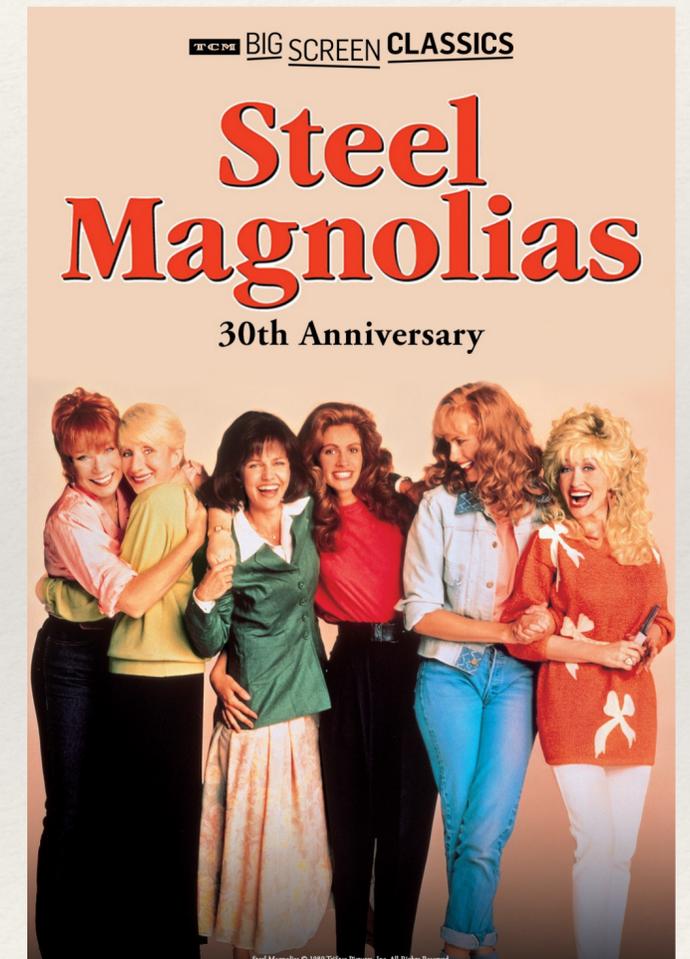
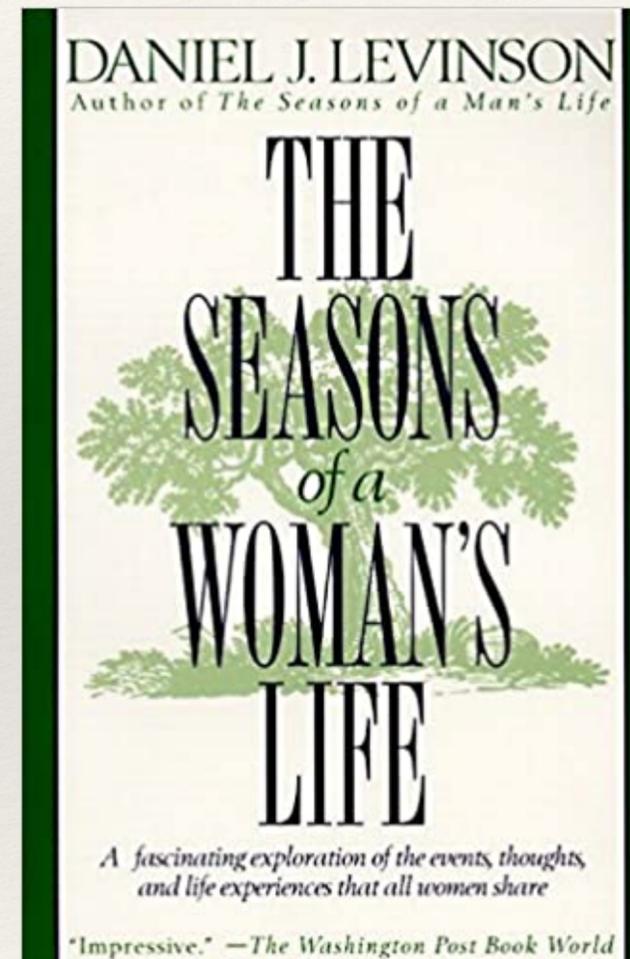
- Herb Goldberg – author of the book

The Hazards of Being Male



Female Friendships

- David Levinson also did a study of female friendships and life stages.
- Women tend to bond easily (have those “Steel Magnolia” bonds).
- But as more women entered the workforce, the time they could devote to friendships diminished.



Biblical Principles of Friendships

- Conviction (biblical belief)
- Covenant (bonding)
- Commitment (faithfulness)
- Candor (honesty)
- Confidentiality
- Concern (respect)

Conviction

- God-centered basis of belief. Biblical friendships should be more than ones in the world.
- Psalm 1:1 – “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly.” 2 Corinthians 6:14 – “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”
- David / Jonathan (1 Samuel 20)
- Moses / Jethro (Exodus 18)
- Paul / Timothy (1 Timothy 6)

Covenant (bonding)

- Covenant of Jonathan with David (1 Samuel 18)
- Don't really have covenants today.
- Jonathan took off his robe, armor, bow, and belt. David offered his loyalty.
- What do you do for friends today?

Commitment (faithfulness)

- Proverbs 14:20 and 19:4 – wealth adds many friends.
- Proverbs 18:24 – “there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”
- Do you have such a friend?
- Proverbs 27:10– “Do not forsake your own friend.”
- Are you that kind of friend?
- Romans 12:15 – “rejoice with those who rejoice” and “weep with those who weep”

Candor (honesty)

- We need someone to give it to us straight (e.g., Grady Wilson).
- Proverbs 17:10 – “Reproof is more effective for a wise man.”
- Friendship involves accountability.
- Proverbs 27:6 – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”
- Friends tell us what we need to hear.
- Proverbs 27:17 – “Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

Confidentiality

- A true and faithful friend keeps confidences, does not spread rumors.
- Proverbs 16:28 – “a slanderer separates intimate friends.”
- Proverbs 17: 9 – “he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.”

Concern (respect)

- David did not turn against Jonathan because his father wanted to kill him.
- Jonathan didn't see David as a threat to the Saul or him.
- David chose not to define his friendship as a job opportunity nor a threat on his life.
- Proverbs 25:17 – “Let your foot rarely be in your neighbor's house, lest he become weary of you.”
- Some friendships border on exploitation.

Ten Most Impressive Words

- “Mother” — the most revered word
- “Death” — the most tragic word
- “Faith” — brings greatest comfort
- “Tranquility” — most peaceful word
- “Love” — most beautiful word
- “No” — coldest word
- “Revenge” — cruelest word
- “Alone” — the bitterest word
- “Forgotten” — saddest word
- “Friendship” — warmest word

Resources

