

Do You Have a Space Invader?

Men are notorious for nurturing superficial friendships that center around the safer subjects of sports, business, sex and almost anything other than what's most important.

We men protect our reputation and ego by surrounding ourselves with other men who want the same thing, and don't want to expose any true vulnerabilities or be held accountable for behaviors. "How's work going?" "Did you see the game last night?" is easier than "How's the marriage?"

Over the last 15 years, Every Man Ministries surveys reveal that only 1 in 10 men over 30 have someone in their lives they would call a "true friend" who knows them at a deep or personal level. The irony of this reality is that we also know the margin of victory for men at the personal level is often ... one other man, who is a true friend, who "gets under the rock" with you on the deep issues of life.

So, whether or not you've got a close friend, here are the 5 "Cs" we know that move men from the "red zones" of life to the "end-zones" of celebration.

1. **Consistency.** The principle of frequency, meeting regularly and connecting on an ongoing basis gives men a go-to guy for all things besides the typical chit-chat small talk. Breaking consistency can lead to isolating, which is the enemy to forging new character in Christ.

"And let us consider how to spur one another to love and to good works. Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but let us exhort one another, especially as you see the Day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25, MEV).

2. **Confession.** The principle of authenticity provides men a confidant who you can be honest with, and who will tell the

truth even when it hurts. This may be men's highest hurdle, because we are afraid of lowering the veils and opening our lives, beliefs and concerns and (gasp) sharing our feelings. Your friend will not have all the answers, but will be someone to confess true struggles that all men fight. This is a friend who is authentic, not synthetic, and will be frank instead of flatter.

"Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much" (James 5:16, MEV).

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13, MEV).

3. **Care.** The principle of empathy gives men an ally in the "good fight of faith," one who cares about the needs, hurts, hopes and dreams of another. It's masculine empathy from masculinity, which is not femininity. When tough times arise, and they will, men need men who care enough to be attentive, available and willing to assist.

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17, MEV).

4. **Confidentiality.** The principle of safety gives men an environment to dig deep without being condemned for struggles. A true friend will honor the code of confidentiality, and be able to "talk about anything." Within this umbrella of safety, men can confide true issues with living a life serving Christ and others, transforming concerns into convictions. But it takes a brother who will help hold you accountable within the code.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1, MEV).

"My eyes shall be favorable to the faithful in the land, that they may live with me; he who walks in a blameless manner, he shall serve me" (Ps. 101:6, MEV).

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17, MEV).

5. Completion. The principle of maturity involves having a friend who can hold a position of authority in your life. God is designed for vertical authority, but a friend can provide horizontal authority, standing in your blind spot. He will be able to see things about yourself that you may not, and have the ability to guide you towards completing the character maturity issue in your life. This kind of friend can bruise your ego so it may be healed by Christ.

"Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful" (Prov. 27:5-6, MEV).

"Let the righteous man strike me; it shall be a kindness. Let him rebuke me; it shall be oil for my head; let my head not refuse it. For my prayer is continually against their evil deeds." (Psalm 141:5, MEV).

Men need one man to pursue victory in all areas of life. Even Jesus had John. Moses had Aaron. David had Jonathan. Paul had Timothy. Greatness comes from one great friend.

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