

5.

WITH

There are just some friends you can call at any hour of the day, in any season or circumstance and you know they'll have your back. They are with you through it all, to the end. Let's talk a little about what it takes to walk toward that kind of relationship and the effect such friendships can have in our lives and on the world around us.

Q1: Who are the real people or fictional characters you view as having epic amounts of integrity and loyalty?

For all the testing Job went through, and all the questions we have about why he had to endure such tragedy, he is still known for steadfastly staying in relationship with a God he trusted to support him. The Psalmist writes words that Job could have said:

"Your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to you."

Whether from God or from key characters in the biblical narrative, steadfastness in loving is core to our faith heritage.

Q2: When have you felt steadfast love, even in times you didn't think you deserved it?

“YOUR STEADFAST LOVE IS BEFORE MY EYES, AND I WALK IN FAITHFULNESS TO YOU.”

Sometimes steadfast, loyal and principled friends show up in our lives miraculously. Like the surprising people who show up to visit you when you are sick, or the student who stands up for your argument in class. Even Ha’adam (the earthling) in Genesis 2 is provided a partner when they most needed one.

Q3: Who is someone you might walk toward, to be a steadfast friend in times of need?

Imagine a world where everyone knew that loving friends were all around. What a different place we could inhabit if that experience was more common! What a transformation could happen if steadfast relationships replaced isolation and competition!

ACTION: Win the game.

If you’ve ever wanted to win at the game “If You Love Me Honey Smile,” here’s how. The game presumes that if a person looks you in the eye and says “If you love me honey smile” that you’ll laugh (and lose) because the experience is awkward and weird. But if in your mind you remember that you really do love this person because Jesus calls us to be steadfast, loving friends with them - then the moment becomes beautifully solemn and you won’t get the giggles! Go through your social media stream or yearbook and find a person to meditate on - remembering that you do love them. And next time you see them, tell them - and try not to giggle.