

HESED LOYALTY

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When my husband and I got married, my twin brother jumped into a video being made for us, threw a fist in the air and declared, "BROTHERS FOR LIFE!" We laugh

every time we watch it. And when I see that picture of my boys it is the phrase that comes to mind.

If you inventoried your top standards for the most [fortified friendships](#) of all time, there's a good chance "trust" or "enduring commitment" would fall on that list. We long for loyalty, right? Because we were not made to be alone. I can think of few gifts more powerful than knowing there is an unwavering love that does not hinge on moment by moment valuations of an offering, or even calculated chemistry, but a steadfastness of love that endures.

According to the [Bible Project](#), "hesed" is a Hebrew word that basically combines love, generosity and enduring commitment all into one. Sounds amazing, right? And guess what?!

That has been offered.

"The LORD descended in the cloud and **stood with him there**, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in **steadfast love** and faithfulness...' — Exodus 34:6 (emphasis mine)

God stood there with Moses. And he introduced himself. He offered insight into his character, and the original Hebrew word for "steadfast love" was "hesed." If our right standing with God hinges on trust, then "hesed" is one of the most powerful relational promises ever to be made. I don't know about you, but it blows my mind that the God who designed us for rich relationship offers something we could never perfectly offer back. *And if we could emulate this* (even in an imperfect form)... well, our friendships would certainly become fortified. And while we won't do it perfectly, we sure can value, revere, and fight for it, right?!

Ruth offered this to Naomi. (See book of Ruth!) Naomi had nothing to offer Ruth. It was not a conditional offer. They were imperfect women with some wild ups and downs in their story, and hesed loyalty *mattered*.

Friendships with fortitude have staying power. They are steadfast. Generous. They are loyal.

So how do we do this?

Honestly I'm still working pretty hard on this. But I think one possibility is that we stop requiring that our people be perfect. We're not. They're not. So maybe we actually get comfortable with grace, be willing to be sharpened and do some sharpening, and make the powerful declaration that you. will. not. leave. Even in the ugly. Even in the moments when they blow it. And we don't leave each other in the muck of our sin-scarred moments, but we generously lend our strength and stick around to revel in the beautiful shaping that happens when God engages us.

Who do you need to speak your promises of hesed friendship to? What friendship might you fortify by making clear your commitment is not conditional? Being that kind of safe place may just contribute to next level friendship. Let's foster fortified friendships, because people are eternal.