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### Reflection on Epic of Gilgamesh (Tablets 1-5)

*“Gilgamesh said, “Courage, dear brother, this is no time to give in to fear. We have come so far, across so many mountains, and our journey is about to reach its goal. You were raised in the wild, with your own hands you have killed marauding lions and wolves, you are brave, your heart has been tested in combat. Though your arms feel weak now and your legs tremble, you are a warrior, you know what to do. Shout out your battle-cry, let your voice pound like a kettle drum. Let your heart inspire you to be joyous in battle, to forget about death. If we help each other and fight side by side, we will make a lasting name for ourselves, we will stamp our fame on men’s minds forever.”*

*Enkidu saw his dismay and said, “Dear friend, great warrior, noble hero, don’t lose courage, remember this: ‘Two boats lashed together will never sink. A three-ply rope is not easily broken.’ If we help each other and fight side by side, what harm can come to us? Let us go on. Enkidu answered, “Why, dear friend, do you speak like a coward? What you just said is unworthy of you. It grieves my heart. We must not hesitate or retreat. Two intimate friends cannot be defeated. Be courageous. Remember how strong you are. I will stand by you. Now let us attack.” Gilgamesh felt his courage return.”*

- “Epic of Gilgamesh” Chapter V.

When I first read Epic of Gilgamesh, I thought it was a weird book. I didn't understand what the book was trying to talk about reading the first two chapters. The more I started to read the book, the more I realized the beauty of this story. At the beginning of this story, we can see the main character Gilgamesh desiring a friend, but not any kind of friend but an intimate friend. Another highlight of this book is how the main character embraces his humanity rather than his divinity. A summary of the five chapters of this book it's about two friends, Gilgamesh and Enkidu going on this hard mission to go kill Humbaba, the protector of the Cedar Forest. What

made this journey a hard or even impossible mission is that no one has ever confronted or attacked Humbaba and made it out alive. Even though many people tried to stop Gilgamesh from taking such a journey, Gilgamesh was a man of courage, so even though many people tried to stop him, his courage led him to still take his journey because he was focused on the glory to come rather than the present. But one thing Gilgamesh understood very well is that he knew he couldn't accomplish this mission alone. This is where Enkidu comes into the picture. Enkidu was someone who was very afraid and did not want to go on this mission because of his fear of death. While Enkidu was filled with fear and doubt, Gilgamesh became the friend he needed the most. Gilgamesh encouraged Enkidu by reminding him of his past experiences and letting him know that he got trained for this. Not only that, but Gilgamesh would encourage him by letting him know that if they are both together who could go against them? Little did Gilgamesh know that the encouragement that he gave Enkidu would be the same encouragement he would hear from him on the day of battle.

What I learned from these chapters is how it's so important to have someone by your side. How precious and rare is to find a friend who will be there in your bad, hard, and lowly times. How precious it is to have a friend that believes in you when you cannot believe in yourself. How beautiful it is to have a friend that reminds you who you are, in your lowest moments when you start to doubt yourself. Something that I learned from this story is that life is not meant to live alone. We are not meant to do things alone especially if it's hard. It is so necessary to have someone on our side. It is so much better to have someone than be alone and the reason why it's because we have someone who can keep us accountable. We have someone who can encourage, challenge, and push us.

This became such a beautiful lesson to me and it's something I can relate a lot with. As I was reflecting on the chapters I read, I got reminded of a time when I was going through a very hard time. Personally, I am someone who doesn't like to be vulnerable, especially showing my weaknesses because first, I don't like to be seen as weak, and second, I don't want to be a burden. I remember I would always go out and put on a fake smile acting as if everything it's okay. I would be good at it to the point that the people around me did not know I was going through a hard time. They would ask me "how are you?" and with a big smile on my face I would say "I'm good thank you". But it came to a point that whenever I would come home and be alone, I would always burst into tears. I started to ask myself why don't share my problems with my friends. and I realized it was because I had the fear that people would leave me if they heard my ugly side of me. I had this thought that I had to be a certain way for people to love me and accept me, and if I am someone they don't want they will leave me. Due to that fear, I never dared to show my true self to anyone. I was broken and alone.

But one day in my brokenness, the Lord met me. He comforted me by telling me that He fully knows me, and He fully loves me. He comforted me by letting me know, He would never leave me or abandon me. He will always be that friend that will walk by my side, that friend that will be there with me in my struggles and hardships, that friend that will hold my hand and encourage me to do the things that I'm afraid of because He will do it with me. How beautiful it is to have a friend that you know has your back. The greatest lesson God gave me in this season is how He became that friend for me, in the same way for me to become that friend for someone else. The Lord always gives to us so that we can also give to others. We receive in order to give back. I received such an amazing friend. A friend that's loyal, brave, loving, faithful, gentle, and accepting. So I will also become that friend for someone who needs a friend.

