



BRIDGES

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Six Words for Love

Do you realize that the English language has over 1,025,000 words, and more words are added to it every year? According to the Oxford English Dictionary, about 4000 new words are added each year which means a new one is added to the English language every 30 minutes. In September of 2022 alone, there were 370 new words added to the English Language. Here are some of the new words added.

- “**Dumbphone**,” which is the opposite of a smartphone.
- “**Greenwash**,” which is when someone (marketing, politicians) makes something seem more environmentally friendly (or less damaging) than it really is.
- “**Yeet**,” which is a word “used to express surprise, approval, or excited enthusiasm.”

You can read more about these new words at [merriam-webster.com](https://www.merriam-webster.com).

It is shocking that despite the English language having the most extensive language vocabulary in the world, with more words being added to it every day, there are some words that our language lacks. ***In particular, our language for LOVE is extremely limited.*** Due to this lack of love words, we English speakers are forced to use just one word, LOVE, to describe multiple kinds of relationships. For example, we love ice cream and love our pets and love the weather and love our children and love our spouses, and so on. AND since we have just one word (Love) to express affection for nearly everything, there is a constant misunderstanding about what the word love actually means. We, English speakers, are not good at talking about love.

The Bible, on the other hand, excels in the language of love. Did you know that there are six unique words for love in the Bible? Or, to say it in a different way, there are six unique words in the Bible that each describe a different kind of relationship, but when translated into English, they are all translated as “Love.” Here are the words and the relationships they define.

1. **Phileo** – The love that exists between friends. The Phileo love is born out of shared in-common interests.
2. **Eros** – A romantic love that exists between a man and a woman. The Eros love is experienced as a powerful emotional feeling and physical attraction.
3. **Storge** – The familiar type of love that exists in families. The Storge love is a natural love that we have for things familiar to us, especially our parents and children.

4. **Agape** – A love for someone as an act of the will. The other three loves (Philo, Eros, Storge) are naturally occurring loves between family, friends, and romantics. Agape is not a natural love in that it does not just happen. Instead, Agape love is where a person chooses to love another person for no reason at all. It is a love that God has for us. It is the love that Jesus calls us to have for each other and even for our enemies. When people talk about love being a choice, they are talking about Agape love.

5. **Aheb** – A Hebrew for love that is best compared to the Greek word agape, Love as a choice. Thus in Hebrew, this word for love is often described as God’s tender love and mercies. It is the love that cherishes the beloved.

6. **Hesed** – A Hebrew word for love based upon promises given. Hesed love may be the most misunderstood word for love in the Bible, yet it is the most important. All the other words for love describe an external situation that may change. Friends fall out, romantic love dies,

families move away, and sometimes it is very hard to choose to love. Hesed love is different, for it is a love anchored not in the present feelings of affection or even the ability to choose but in past promises made. Hesed love is only hesed love if a promise has been made and that promise is kept. Therefore hesed love is manifested as steadfastness, faithfulness, and loyalty. It is the love that is created and exists within a covenant-like marriage. ***And it is the type of love that defines God’s love towards us in Christ. His love for us is anchored in the promises of the covenant. Promises that He is forever faithful and steadfast to keep.***

Thus when the Bible says that God loves you, it not only means that God has chosen to love you but has committed himself to you through the promises of the New Covenant, promises that he is faithful to keep.

“So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose (His Great Love), he guaranteed it with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:17-19).”

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Trent Eastman

