

The Four **Greek** words for love in the Bible.

### AGAPE LOVE

Agape love is the highest level of love referenced in the Bible. This form of love is everlasting and sacrificial. It does not expect love in return. It is the love God showed when Jesus died on the cross to give us salvation.

- ♥ 1 John 4:8
- ♥ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- ♥ John 3:16

### STORGE LOVE

Storge love is familial. It is the natural love one has for their family. It is the love that comes naturally when you spend enough time with someone or grow up with someone.

This type of love can withstand many trials, is protective, and loyal.

- ♥ Luke 8:40-56
- ♥ John 11:1-44

### PHILEO LOVE

Phileo love is friendly. It is the natural love one has for their friends, especially close friends. David and Jonathan had this kind of love for each other.

The word phileo is expressly used in the Bible and refers to the warmth and affinity shared by close friends, almost as if those friends were actual siblings.

- ♥ Romans 12:10
- ♥ John 11:33-35
- ♥ John 11:36

### EROS LOVE

Eros is sexual love. It comes from being sexually attracted to someone. This love is demonstrated in Song of Songs.

- ♥ Song of Songs

### Scriptures on Love:

John 3:16  
John 15:13  
1 John 4:18  
1 John 4:19  
Romans 5:8  
Nehemiah 9:17  
Romans 8:35  
John 15:13  
Psalm 86:15  
1 Corinthians 13:7  
Deuteronomy 7:9  
1 Peter 4:8  
Jeremiah 31:3  
Colossians 3:14  
1 Chronicles 16:34  
Romans 12:9-10  
2 Corinthians 5:14  
Ephesians 4:2  
Proverbs 17:17  
Luke 6:35  
Colossians 3:12-13  
Proverbs 10:12  
1 Corinthians 16:14  
Psalm 136:26  
1 Corinthians 13:4-5  
Romans 8:37-38  
Ephesians 2:4-5  
Zephaniah 3:17

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# Love



“THOUGH THE  
MOUNTAINS BE  
SHAKEN, AND THE  
HILLS BE REMOVED,  
YET MY UNFAILING  
LOVE FOR YOU WILL  
NOT BE SHAKEN”.  
ISAIAH 54:10

One of the **Hebrew** words for ‘love’ is hesed pronounced (kheh-sed”), which is actually a difficult word to translate into English. That is because there is a range of meanings for hesed. Hesed is a completely undeserved kindness and generosity.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, “Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love (hesed) for you will not be shaken”. (Isaiah 54:10)

Hesed is not just a feeling, but an action. It intervenes on behalf of loved ones and comes to their rescue.

### **Hebrew Understanding of Love**

Hesed is not a romantic, infatuation kind of love. It is a faithful, reliable love. When a wife prays for years for her husband to know God. It is parents lovingly caring for their autistic child. Hesed is faithful. It is loyal. And Hesed is love put to action. And most importantly, hesed is the unfailing love God has for YOU.

### **Meanings of Hesed in the Bible**

Hesed is one of the most fundamental characteristics of God, consistent with what we know about His covenantal nature. Hesed is wrapping up in itself all the positive attributes of God: love, covenant faithfulness, mercy, grace, kindness, loyalty—in short, acts of devotion and loving-kindness that go beyond the requirements of duty.

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, we see hesed translated in a number of different ways; steadfast love, mercy, kindness, and goodness. While these synonyms develop our understanding, they only just skim the surface of this multifaceted, rich word.

### **Hesed – Love in Action**

Perhaps the most effective way to grasp its meaning is to see hesed in action.

In the book of Ruth, we meet Naomi. She is living in a foreign land and has lost not only her husband, but her two sons as well. While she has two beloved daughters-in-law, she makes the difficult decision to leave the life she and her family have established in Moab.

Naomi decides to return to her native Judah. Naomi encourages her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to stay in Moab with their families, and to find new husbands.

In those days women without a husband were in a vulnerable position. These two women could most likely remarry easily – they were still young and had no children.

### **A Love that Extends to Loyalty**

Orpah considers this, and with a heavy heart agrees to stay in Moab. Ruth however remains with Naomi. She even further solidifies her bond with Naomi, with her now famous declaration: “Do not urge me to leave you or return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.” Ruth 1:16

Ruth had every right to start anew and pursue a husband from within her own people. However, by affirming her fidelity to Naomi and the people of Israel, Ruth chose an unknown path. She was a widow and an outsider. But she was also a foreigner from a people the Israelites had enemy history with.

She affirms how important Naomi is to her, despite these other considerations. Ruth clearly had a strong relationship with her mother-in-law, so much so that she forsakes the easier path. Her display of hesed – the love and loyalty to Naomi is just one of multiple examples found throughout the story of Ruth.

### **Hesed Love goes Above and Beyond**

Another translation for hesed is lovingkindness. Lovingkindness is an interesting word in the English language. Built out of two other words, it combines the definitions of both and more. It means tenderness and consideration towards others. Those are the key words capturing the essence of lovingkindness; it is always towards others. This is an outward expression, not one of self-seeking motivation.

Many English Bible translations use the word lovingkindness in Psalms. Alternatively, some translations use “steadfast love”.

Here’s a few examples from Psalms.

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies...” (Psalm 103:3-4 NKJV)

“Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? [or] thy faithfulness in destruction?” (Psalm 88:11 ASV)

“Let not the floodwater overflow me, nor let the deep swallow me up; and let not the pit shut its mouth on me. Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.” (Psalm 69:15-16 NKJV)

Each time we come across lovingkindness in these passages the Psalmist is suggesting hesed as the covenant love. Even though it’s not a word we commonly use, it has a unique way of pointing to the enduring love of God.

### **Hebrew Definition of Unfailing Love**

“Hesed is never merely an abstract feeling of goodwill, but always entails practical action on behalf of another”.

How can we tangibly show our love to God and His people? Hesed. It is through a hesed kind of love that we worship Him and serve others. Through the abundance of hesed that God shows us, we can in turn be abundant in our expression of hesed love for others.

This is a strengthening truth, a reliable foundation. Today, no matter what you face, you can rely on God’s hesed. In the best way, His love is predictable, tenacious, and unchanging.

**“Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love – hesed – for you will not be shaken.” — Isaiah 54:10**