



My studies this week in 1 Corinthians 13 took me into a deep dive into understanding love. We often take for granted simple, every day words like love. We think we know what they mean, because we know what we want them to mean to us. To understand what Yah means as opposed to what culture, experience, wishful thinking etc would have us believe, we need to set aside preconceived notions and look at the concrete Hebraic definition and examples set forth in Scripture. True, Biblical love is not a warm fuzzy feeling derived from the one on whom we have set our desire, although that is a possible side effect.

Greek thought:

Koine Greek has many words for love, attempting to capture and compartmentalize all the various situations and expressions, but never fully getting to its fundamental root. Ancient Greek has at least 9 different words for love. Many of these are used in the New Testament and/or Septuagint.

Agape (Strongs G26) is by far the most used. It is the word used throughout 1 Corinthians 13 and in places like 1 John 4:8

The one who does not love does not know Elohim, for Elohim is love.

It is the selfless love that Yah has for us and that we are to reflect and share with others.

Philia (Strongs G5368) is an affectionate love of friends. It is contrasted with agape in the conversation between Yeshua and Peter in John 21:15-17.

15 When, therefore, they had eaten breakfast, יהושע said to Shim'on Kēpha, "Shim'on, son of Yonah, do you love (agape) Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Master, You know that I love (phileo) You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again, the second time, "Shim'on, son of Yonah, do

you love (agape) Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Master, You know that I love (phileo) You.”

17 He said to him the third time, “Shim'on, *son* of Yonah, do you love (phileo) Me?” Kěpha was sad because He said to him the third time, “Do you love (phileo) Me?” And he said to Him, “Master, You know all, You know that I love (phileo) You.” וְשִׁמְעוֹן' said to him, “**Feed My sheep.**

Eros, while not used explicitly in Scripture, it is implied in relations between a husband and a wife as it is a romantic and passionate love.

Storge (stor'-yee) (part of Strongs G5387 *philostorgos fil-os'-tor-gos*) is a familial love used in combination with G5384 *philos* in Romans 12:10

In brotherly love, tenderly loving towards one another, in appreciation, giving preference to each other;

G5387

φιλόστοργος

philostorgos

Thayer Definition:

- 1) the mutual love of parents and children and wives and husbands
- 2) loving affection, prone to love, loving tenderly
- 2a) chiefly of the reciprocal tenderness of parents and children

Part of Speech: adjective

A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: from G5384 and *storge* (cherishing one's kindred, especially parents or children)

Ludus, also not used in Scripture, but denotes a playful love or “crush” / “puppy love” between youth.

Philautia (Strongs G5367) is a selfish love expressing ideals opposite to agape love. A derivation of this word is used in 2 Timothy 3:1-5

1 But know this, that in the last days hard times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of self (philautos G5367), lovers of silver (philarguros G5366), boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, thankless, wrong-doers,

3 unloving (astorgos G797), unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control,

- fierce, haters of good,**
4 betrayers, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure (philedonos G5369)
rather than lovers (philotheos G5377) of Elohim,
5 having a form of reverence but denying its power. And turn away from
these!

Pragma, (Strongs G4229) A mature love, as in an older committed couple which is more a matter of fact or pragmatic (sensible and realistic). It is most often used in Scripture to describe deeds done, or a “thing”. From G4238 prasso: to practice, perform repeatedly or habitually.

Mania, (Strongs G3130) An obsessive, addicted, stalking, co-dependent, extreme jealousy type of love. Expressed not as a type of love, but rather as madness or a frenzy when Festus tries to dismiss Paul’s testimony in Acts 26:24.

While all of these describe expressions of love as we commonly understand it, they don’t really get down to a concrete definition. What is it to be selfless and love like Yah?

Biblical Hebrew doesn’t have all these nuances although we see many of them in action. Love in Hebraic thinking isn’t determined by the situation; it isn’t conditional. It isn’t a feeling, it is an action – a behavior toward another. This can be a father toward a son, a husband toward a wife, a friend toward his buddy, or even a neighbor toward an enemy. Yes, you read that right, even toward enemies! Hebrew uses the root word ahab.

H157

אהב / אהב

'âhab / 'âhêb

BDB Definition:

1) to love

1a) (Qal)

1a1) human love for another, includes family, and sexual

1a2) human appetite for objects such as food, drink, sleep, wisdom

1a3) human love for or to God

1a4) act of being a friend

1a4a) lover (participle)

1a4b) friend (participle)

1a5) God's love toward man

1a5a) to individual men

1a5b) to people Israel

1a5c) to righteousness

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) lovely (participle)

1b2) loveable (participle)

1c) (Piel)

1c1) friends

1c2) lovers (figuratively of adulterers)

2) to like

As we can see, it covers a multitude of situations and relationships. So how are we to determine the concrete meaning behind a word with such a broad scope? This is where the beauty of the pictographic understanding of Hebrew comes into play. Here is what Benner's AHLB has to say:

1094) אָהַב (אָהַב HB) ac: Give co: Gift ab: Love: The pictograph אָ represents one who is looking at a great sight with his hands raised as when saying behold. The אָ is a representation of the tent or house. Combined these pictures mean "look toward the house" or "provide for the family". One does not choose the household which one is born into, including tribe, parents, children and wife (as marriages were often arranged by the father), it is a gift from God. These gifts are seen as a privilege and are to be cherished and protected. (eng: have - as given)

אָהַב (אָהַב AHB) **Love:** The expressions and actions toward the family, which one was privileged with.

Let's look at each letter like he does and then see how these play out in Scripture.

Ahab is spelled aleph א hey ה bet ב

Aleph pictograph is the ox and represents strength, leader, head, first, father.

Hey pictograph is a person with arms raised up, like one seeing someone far off and waving. The modern picture is looking out a window. Both represent behold, to see, understand, observe.

The bet (vet) pictograph is a house/tent floor plan. The house/tent concept can be extended to mean us as individuals. We see this in the New Testament when Sha'ul

speaks of us as being members of Christ's body (family in His house) in the chapter preceding the love chapter (1 Corinth. 12) and in Romans 12:5

so we, the many, are one body in Messiah, and members each one of one another.

As well as in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4

1 For we know that if the tent of our earthly house is destroyed, we have a building from Elohim, a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens.

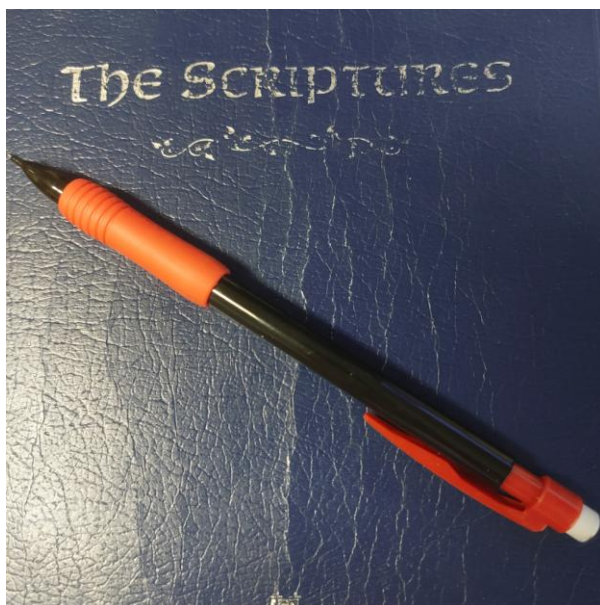
2 For indeed in this we groan, longing to put on our dwelling which is from heaven,

3 so that, having put it on, we shall not be found naked.

4 For indeed, we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we wish to put it off, but to put on *the other*, so that what is to die might be swallowed up by life.

Putting it all together we see the concrete meaning of love is: with all our strength/ability to look toward, see and understand the house and all its needs to function properly (to be "good", tov).

Hebrew descriptions are all about function, not nuance details (keep in mind the various Greek words for love to contrast). In Greek/Western/English thought, if I ask you to describe this pencil, one might say, "it is black and red, about 6" long, made of plastic, mechanical, with graphite and a white eraser." In Hebraic thought, one would simply answer, "I use it to write with". Do you see the "function" as the defining characteristic there?



Let's go back to the beginning to see how this picture understanding plays out in the text by example. With every day of creation Yah (aleph =father) uses His power/strength/wisdom (strength of mind/spirit) to behold the house [ha'shamaiym (the heavens) v'et ha'erets (the earth)] He is building and then with understanding creates/gives/provides each day what the "house" needs in order to function (produce "seed" after its kind) the way he wants it to function/be fruitful/continue. Day 6 He creates man and sees an area of need for a companion so He creates woman (Genesis 2:18).

In the garden, Yah placed man to tend and guard. These are the elements of headship; the rights and responsibilities of man. Genesis 2:15

And יהוה Elohim took the man and put him in the garden of Ēden to work it and to guard it.

Work: H5647

עבד

ʿâbad

BDB Definition:

1) to work, serve

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to labour, work, do work

1a2) to work for another, serve another by labour

1a3) to serve as subjects

1a4) to serve (God)

1a5) to serve (with Levitical service)

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to be worked, be tilled (of land)

1b2) to make oneself a servant

1c) (Pual) to be worked

1d) (Hiphil)

1d1) to compel to labour or work, cause to labour, cause to serve

1d2) to cause to serve as subjects

1e) (Hophal) to be led or enticed to serve

{sidenote, no wonder Yeshua washes the feet of His disciples, demonstrating the correct/clean/pure position/dominion (represented by feet) of man is as a servant.}

Let's break this word down so we get a concrete/functional definition of work/servanthood.

Ayin ע - eye, to see, watch from

Bet ב – house/tent

Dalet ד – door, way, path

Work = To watch/observe from the tent door

We see Abraham demonstrating this act of headship (serving house) in Genesis 18:1-3

And יהוה appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamrě, while he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day.

2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and saw three men standing opposite him. And when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground,

3 and said, “יהוה, if I have now found favour in Your eyes, please do not pass Your servant by.

Guard: H8104

שמר

shâmar

BDB Definition:

1) to keep, guard, observe, give heed

1a) (Qal)

1a1) to keep, have charge of

1a2) to keep, guard, keep watch and ward, protect, save life

1a2a) watch, watchman (participle)

1a3) to watch for, wait for

1a4) to watch, observe

1a5) to keep, retain, treasure up (in memory)

1a6) to keep (within bounds), restrain

1a7) to observe, celebrate, keep (sabbath or covenant or commands), perform (vow)

1a8) to keep, preserve, protect

1a9) to keep, reserve

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to be on one's guard, take heed, take care, beware

1b2) to keep oneself, refrain, abstain

1b3) to be kept, be guarded

1c) (Piel) to keep, pay heed

1d) (Hithpael) to keep oneself from

AHLB: 2853) שָׁמַר (שָׁמַר ShMR) ac: **Guard** co: **Brier** ab: **Custody**: A close watching of something for guarding or protecting. Shepherds constructed corrals of briers at night to protect the flock from predators. [from: שָׁמַר - from the thorns used in constructing a corral]

V) שָׁמַר (שָׁמַר Sh-MR) - **Guard**: To watch over or guard in the sense of preserving or protecting. [freq. 468] (vf: Paal, Niphal, Hitpael, Piel, Participle) [kjv: keep, observe, heed, keeper, preserve, beware, mark, watchman, wait, watch, regard, save] {str: 8104}

Let's break this word down so we get a concrete/functional definition of guarding/watching.

Shin ש – something sharp (context of thorn hedge for protection)

Mem מ – might, to come from, water - flow downstream

Reysh ר – head, person, chief

Guard = Protecting, mighty, chief or a person who makes a strong hedge of protection.

Adam was put in the garden to function as the person who sat in the headship position, watching from the door to welcome and feed visitors, direct servants, or protect the precious gift from Yah; the wife (within tent). All of this is done so that the house serves its purpose of being blessed and successful and producing after its kind. This is depicted as one watching over the trees in the garden so that they provide life giving sustenance to his family so that they survive and thrive (go forth and multiply Gen 1:28).

Genesis 2:9

And out of the ground יְהוָה Elohim made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the midst of the garden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam is to ensure the trees continue to produce fruit by pruning, fertilizing, etc. Yeshua uses this example of headship in a parable in Luke 13:6-9

6 And He spoke this parable, "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his

vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

7 “And he said to the gardener, ‘Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down, why does it even make the ground useless?’

8 “And he answering, said to him, ‘Master, leave it this year too, until I dig around it and throw manure.

9 And if indeed it bears fruit, *good*. But if not so, you shall cut it down.’ ”

Adam was also given instruction as to not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and should have used wisdom to do one of three things: 1 made a hedge around the tree (harder for him to tend, but would have kept family out). 2 saw the serpent coming and interceded so it didn't have access to Eve and/or used his authority as husband to negate her "vow" (coming into covenant with serpent by believing his words and eating) and then acting as high priest to serve her by making atonement with Yah (certainly not "throwing her under the bus" like he did Genesis 3:12). 3 Made a hedge around his wife so that she would not be tempted by the tree. This last option can be accomplished in either a positive or negative way. He could daily pass on and instruct the command of Yah, reminding her of the work he needed help with and in so doing, keep her from idle time to wander near that tree. Or, he can be overbearing by confining/hedging her. (Was this his method? Where did she get the idea to say, don't touch it"? Was that out of her own mind, or did Adam get carried away with "hedge making" thinking it was a good idea to add to the command, "look, babe, just don't even touch it to be safe, ok"?)

Ok, we (ahem, I mean I) am getting off the point. Back to the topic of love. . .

Love is:

To look carefully at something or someone, to see and understand what they need in order to function properly and then provide it.

This may be water, nutrients, or sunlight for a tree. It may be food, clothing, shelter, touch, connection, guidance, safety, etc. for a wife or children. What I find fascinating and beautiful is that Yah tells us what He needs to function properly. Yes I did just say Yah "needs" and "has a function". Yah's function is to be GOD, EL. That is who He is to His people, His function. In order for Him to fulfill His function as our Elohim, He needs for us to obey His Word/Commands/Torah. He tells us this in 1 John 5:3

For this is the love for Elohim, that we guard His commands, and His commands are not heavy,

Just for fun, let's substitute our new definition in the place of love.

For this is *seeing and understanding what Elohim needs in order function properly as*

Elohim, that we guard His commands, and His commands are not heavy. If we do not guard (shamar) His commands, then He, quite literally, is not our El. He is still THE El, most high, don't get me wrong, He just isn't *our* El if we don't obey. All creation obeys Him. Even the rocks will cry out if we don't shamar His commands.

Let's look at how Messiah demonstrates this in His interaction with the rich young ruler in Mark 10:20-22. Pay close attention to certain key words (underlined).

20 And he answering, said to Him, “Teacher, all these I have watched over from my youth.”

21 And יהושע, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One *matter* you lack: **Go, sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven. And come, follow Me, taking up the stake.”**

22 But he, being sad at this word, went away grieved, for he had many possessions.

The man had been shamar-ing the commands, making Yah El at least by the letter of the law at any rate. Yeshua looks at him, understands the depth and intent of his heart, not merely his outward appearance and claims of obedience. He loves him! He doesn't just pass over where he is lacking to become all that he desires. Yeshua doesn't fear (psychologically fawning) speaking the truth to him, in that love. Yeshua doesn't merely tell him what will make him feel good about himself. Yeshua gives him what he needs to hear; clear instructions that apply to *his* specific need, for correction in his path toward everlasting life. Yeshua, in that simple combination of looking and loving understood exactly what the man needed. Unfortunately, the man didn't want to acknowledge his need. He didn't want to submit, to accept correction and be obedient, thereby robbing Yah of what He needed to fulfill His role as His El. He trusted in his possessions rather than trusting in Yah. He loved the temporary riches of the world rather than believing in the promise of treasure in heaven.

In conclusion, we, as believers, as the body/of Messiah are to be known by our love.

John 13:35 **“By this shall all know that you are My taught ones, if you have love for one another.”**

The greatest commands are to love Yah and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Matthew 22:37-39 **And יהושע said to him, “ ‘You shall love יהוה your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your being, and with all your mind.’**

38 “This is the first and great command.

39 “And the second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’

We know what it is to love Yah; to obey His commands. What do we need to see/ understand about our needs and the needs of others to function as husbands, wives, children, brothers/sisters and friends? What do we need to do to provide for those

needs?