

A Word Study by Pastor Melissa Scott, Ph.D.

The Hebrew Words Translated “Love”

אַהֵב	BDB 12	Love, joys of love, that in which a person delights earnestly desires— this word implies the mind as having fixed on an object or person
אַהֵב		Occurs 140 times in the Old Testament Used for love, affection – pure and impure, divine and human [See examples: Genesis 22:2, 27:4, Leviticus 19:18, 1 Kings 11:1, Deuteronomy 10:12, 11:13, 22, Amos 5:15, Psalm 119:167, Also, Hosea 2:5(7), and unusual Zechariah 13:6]
דֹּר	BDB 187	Paternal, relative, beloved sometimes “uncle” Canticles (Song of Solomon) 1:2, 4, 13, 14, 16 / 2:3, 8, 9, 10, 2:16, 17 / 4:10, 16 / 5:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 5:10, 16 / 6:1, 2, 3 / 7:9 etc...
חָבַב	BDB 285	To cherish, to hide in the bosom, to love fervently, kindle, be set on fire (the Aramaic translates it “to make love”) Deuteronomy 33:3
מִחְמָד	BDB 326	Pleasant, lovely, desire of the eyes, to take pleasure in, desire, wish, attempt, entice— most often used as a verb for people or things visible to the eye
חֶסֶד	BDB 338	Lovingkindness, mercy [very large subject matter and definitions are too many to list here] 246 times in the Old Testament → half of them are in the Psalms
חִשַּׁק	BDB 365	Be attached to, love, press together, hang on, connect, join, unite Deuteronomy 7:7, 10:15, 21:11, 1 Kings 9:19, Psalm 91:14, Isaiah 38:17
עָגַב	BDB 721	To be charmed, delight in (impure), inordinate affection or lust Ezekiel 23:5, 7, 9, 12, 16, 20, 33:31, 32, Also Ezekiel 23:11 / Jeremiah 4:30
רָחַם	BDB 933	Only one time in the Qal (simple action) Psalm 18:1 “I will love thee, O Lord” (Englishman’s Hebrew list) tender, mercy, bowels of mercy
רֵעַ	BDB 945	Friend, companion, fellow

These are the most common words used in connection with expressions of love. Other Hebrew words may convey the idea of, or expression connected with love but they are too vague or ambiguous for this study.