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# Love

## This Week's Common Theme Across Religions

In 1938, Harvard University began conducting its Study of Adult Development, tracking the lives of 700 men who grew up in Boston in the 1930s and '40s to study and compare their levels of physical and mental well-being throughout their lives.

Psychiatrist George E. Vaillant, one of the directors of the study, explained in his book, *Triumphs of Experience* (2012), "The seventy-five years and twenty million dollars expended on the Grant Study points, at least to me, to a straightforward five-word conclusion: "Happiness is love. Full stop."



This new empirical data supports the very ancient wisdom of love's supreme importance, recorded as the underlying tenet expressed by all religions.

Love is about much more than just romantic relationships. The classical Greek thinkers delimited seven types of love: eros (erotic or sexual love), philia (love of friends; friendship), storge (familial love), ludus (playful love), pragma (practical love based on duty), philautia (self-love), and the one that Paul uses agape (universal love).



Across religions, it is clear that we are meant to widen our circle of love as much as possible. By loving all, we are not just giving, but being open to what we will receive from millions of people whom we may or may not even directly know.

### Christianity

"Love your neighbor as yourself."  
—The New Testament (Luke 10:27), Christian text

"Once for all, then, a short precept is given you: Love, and do what you will."  
—Augustine of Hippo (Homily 7), Christian Saint

### Islam

"Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, 'You will not enter Paradise until you have faith and you will not have faith until you love each other.'"  
—Hadith, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 54

### Judaism

"This is what the Holy One said to Israel: My children, what do I seek from you? I seek no more than that you love one another and honor one another."  
—Sefer Ha-Aggadah, collection of Jewish writings

### Baha'i

"Ye were created to show love one to another and not perversity and rancour. Take pride not in love for yourselves but in love for your fellow-creatures."  
—Baha'u'llah, Baha'i prophet

### Sikhism

"She whose heart is full of love is ever in full bloom joy is hers for she has no love of self only those who love you conquer love of self"  
—Guru Nanak, Sikh prophet

### Hinduism

"This supreme Lord who pervades all existence, the true Self of all creatures, may be realized through undivided love."  
—The Bhagavad Gita (8:22), Hindu text

### Buddhism

Let all-embracing thoughts for all that lives be thine an all-embracing love for all the universe in all its heights and depths and breadth, unstinted love, unmarred by hate within, not rousing enmity."  
—The Buddha (Sutta Nipata, Book 1, Sutta 8, verse 148-49)

### Modern Psychology

"Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one 'object' of love. If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment or an enlarged egotism."  
—Erich Fromm, social psychologist and philosopher

This is part of a weekly series of over 50 common themes across religions. Stay subscribed to read about next week's theme!

Akhil Gupta

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