



WOW: Word Of the Week

EUNOIA

January 15, 2025

New words, different words, unknown words. I love them! Call me a logophile.

Eunoia. In Greek, εὐνοιά. Answering the question my friend raised when I brought this word up in a conversation, “Yes, it really does show up in the dictionary.”

My wife often describes her middle name as having five letters, four vowels with a consonant in the middle. Hardly enough information for a correct guess, and she helps only a little when she adds that the middle consonant is an “R.” (For those of you with high curiosity quotients, Eurie.) My Dominican friend is named Eulalio—I have often heard him mention that his name contains all of the vowels of the (Spanish) alphabet. Today’s WOW, eunoia is the shortest word in the English language that contains all five English vowels.

The word literally means “well mind, good mind, or beautiful thinking”. It can describe the state of having a balanced mind or the habit of thinking in a positive and constructive way. Other meanings include wholeheartedness, enthusiasm, eagerness, goodwill, kindness, and heartiness. Biblically, slaves are to serve with goodwill (Eph. 6:7). All are advised to be agreeable with opponents (the verb form is used in Matt. 5:25).

In the study of rhetoric, eunoia is the good will that speakers cultivate between themselves and their audiences, developing receptivity. (Some of you may also know metanoia, sometimes used as an English word, the Greek word for repentance. Or dianoia, cognitive capacity.) Most accurately, all of these are Greek words that have been borrowed in English usage.

Eunoia. A word for this week, a word for 2025. Be careful how you think! Guard your mind. Avoid “stinkin’ thinkin’.” Seek harmony with others. Be agreeable, easily persuaded. Easy to get along with.

Think like Jesus. Have the mind of Jesus, the attitude of Jesus.

In Romans 12:2, a paraphrase of Paul says we should abandon the chase for pleasure, possessions, and status—stop thinking and living like everyone else. Be transformed from the inside out. Be changed in how you think, to have your mind renewed so you can begin to understand God’s will for your life.

You probably have favorite thinking passages. Change your heart. Matt. 12:34, words come from our minds (hearts).

This month I am committed to sharing words to help us start the new year. Eunoia, positive and harmonious thinking, more and more like Jesus.