WOW: Word Of the Week

Lovingness

June 3, 2026

In search of words! Our tendency is toward simple words. What about more complex words? Complex shades of meaning. I used the word "love" fairly soon in my current serie of WOWs. To speak and write about love is expected. Today's word is perhaps unexpected. Lovingness!

I have been posting more materials in Spanish – on my website, YouTube channel, and on Facebook. Recently I posted a link to a video I prepared for an annual international conference of church leaders. The subject was the tendency of the pulpit to isolate preachers. Preachers easily withdraw from the people they seek to serve and touch with the gospel. Looking back across 60 years of ministry and mission work, 40+ years of weekly preaching assignments, I am convinced that the primary work of the preacher is done outside the pulpit, among the people, among those in greatest need of the Good News of Jesus. I have shared that perspective continually as I have worked to train and mentor preachers and church leaders in the U.S. universities, Latin American Bible institutes, seminars and conferences around the world.

A Venezuelan brother with whom I have worked in the past wrote in response to the video. "May God bless you greatly in God's mission. I always remember one of your phrases about the Christian life: 'Loving what God loves!'"

There it is! Not just love. Not an abstract, unfocused, generalized "I love everybody." Charlie Brown famously said, "I love the world—it's the people I can't stand!"

Here is something deep, even profound if I may say so. Loving what God loves is challenging. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. The love Jesus demonstrated served others and was self-sacrificing. Loving what God loves demands that we go out of our way for the well-being of others. Loving goes to the extreme. Loving takes the focus off me, my desires, my bucket list, my luxuries and experiences.

Not just loving – lovingness! The state of being loving. "To express warmth, affection, and tenderness; an actionable, outward demonstration of love through care, kindness, and devotion." Lovingness, caringness.

Love justice, love mercy. Love people. Love one another. Love can be so bland, blasé, blah. Love may mean nothing more than "I harbor no ill will." Or, "I am not against that." No commitment. No time invested. No effort to help. The God who is love calls us deeper.

Loving, lovingness, will never let us get off so easily!