



Love

IS FOR

THE BRAVE

ITIEL ARROYO

e625.com

To the lovers who love with bravery

*And to Damaris, the soul whose
profundity I only begin to understand*

e625.com

LOVE IS FOR THE BRAVE

e625 - 2023

Dallas, Texas

e625 ©2023 by Itiel Arroyo

All biblical citations are from New International Version (NIV) unless stated as another version.

Translated by Sophia Leys

Edited by Sarah Hauge

Designed by **JuanShimabukuroDesign @juanshima**

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ISBN: 978-1-954149-49-6

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENT

PROLOGUE.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	7
01. HESED.....	11
02. A SCANDALOUS GENEALOGY.....	25
03. SKIN TO SKIN.....	39
04. EMBARRASSMENT AND APPEARANCE.....	55
05. EXCLUSIVE UNITY.....	71
06. SNAKES AND STONES.....	89
07. CROWN YOUR PARENTS.....	105
08. CATALYST OF UNITY.....	117
09. FAITHFUL.....	133
10. SEX.....	149
11. LOVE AND DESIRE.....	165
12. REDEEMERS.....	183
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	201

PROLOGUE

I love reading, and I believe that it has allowed me to develop a certain intuition toward books. I used to judge them by their covers, but I soon discovered that appearance has nothing to do with essence.

"What do you value in a book?" I was recently asked in an interview. My response was, "Today, I value a book not by how much it fills my mind, but by how it accelerates my heart."

The book you have in your hands hits the mark by turning words into precise instruments that reach the heart, flooding it with life.

Writing about love is a difficult challenge because few words have been used, manipulated, and distorted as much as "love" has. I am grateful to God that Itiel Arroyo did not shy away from the challenge and decided to confront it. The result is in your hands, and I can assure you that it will not leave you indifferent.

I dove into the pages you are about to read. I did so with pleasure and tranquility, and upon resurfacing from that adventure, I was in love with love. The author describes love in such a way that it is impossible not to be captivated.

I want to highlight several things about *Love Is For the Brave*:

It is a straightforward book. It doesn't aim at a hundred targets; it only addresses one. It pursues nothing more—and nothing less—than revealing to the reader the essence and content of a reality as wonderful as love. And it succeeds!

It is a transcendent book while also being relevant. It is transcendent because it points to the sky, and relevant because it makes us tread on the earth. As someone once said, "To leave a mark, the first thing is to have your feet on the ground." This book is a guiding force that anchors us to land.

The language Itiel uses is biblical without being religious, approachable without being simplistic, direct without being rude, and contemporary without ceasing to be elegant.

Love Is for the Brave turns the Bible into a delightful collection of journeys. This book helps us travel fascinating routes to the heart of Scripture, where each story transforms into a real, close, and tremendously instructive experience for the reader. Yes, that is the other quality of the book you have in your hands: It extracts from the Bible life for the spirit and emotion for the soul.

For these reasons, and many more, you are about to embark on a pleasurable journey. Ingest and digest the wisdom of this book because I assure you that you will emerge from this voyage having grown.

José Luis Navajo

INTRODUCTION

*Not always can we do great things, but we
can do small things with great love.*

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

When Luis first arrived in Kenya, he wondered how he and his fellow mission companions, all Spanish university students, could help in that hot African place. They boarded the plane without knowing what their mission would be upon arriving in Nairobi. It didn't matter if it involved digging a well, planting trees, or building a structure; they all had the same experience for it: none. However, Luis was certain that God had sent him to that place for a reason.

Eventually, they learned that their destination was to serve for a week in a hospice for dying children run by the Missionaries of Charity, founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. When Luis entered, he encountered a scene that broke his heart. He was in a dimly-lit shack, filled with stretchers and IV drips, full sick children, many of them so weak that they barely had the strength to cry out in pain.

Luis was literally stunned as he observed the sight. What could he do to alleviate so much pain? The lack of an answer left him paralyzed. Motionless. He felt useless.

Suddenly, a sister of charity grabbed his face with her rough, work-worn hands and, looking into his eyes with authority, asked him, "Have you come to look or to help?" That question was enough to unfreeze him. The woman then asked him to hold a two-year-old child who wouldn't stop crying. She told him, "Hold him in your arms and give him all the love you are capable of giving." Luis didn't quite understand what she meant, but he wanted to be obedient to the nun's request, so he lifted the child from the stretcher and held him. The child was so thin that Luis could feel his bones

as he embraced him. He could literally see the movement of the heartbeat on the child's bare chest.

Luis remembered the way his sister would soothe her baby, and thought it might work here. He began to sing to the little one, to stroke his hair, to smile at him, and to give him kisses, as if he were his own child.

It was all he could think of, but he did it with all his heart.

The child stopped whimpering and smiled. A beautiful smile on a bony face dirty with mucus. A few minutes later, he fell asleep.

Soon afterward, however, Luis noticed that the child's chest had stopped moving. In panic, he rushed to the sister of charity who, placing her hand on the little one, confirmed his passing.

She knew from the beginning that the child was dying. She looked at Luis again, with eyes filled with light that contrasted with the darkness of that room. "This child died in your arms, and you, with your love, have preceded the love that God will give him for all eternity," she said.

Still holding the child's lifeless body in his arms, Luis began to cry and give thanks to God. In that moment, he understood the reason why Jesus had sent him there: to be able to offer in advance the love that God desires to give to people for all eternity.

THIS BOOK

When I heard Luis's story, the Holy Spirit spoke to me urgently: "I want you to precede divine love, to offer in advance a glimpse of the love God wants to give to people for all eternity. You don't need to go to Africa to do this; I want you to do it with the people I will put in your arms." Over time, I have come to understand that love, and being a carrier of that love in the midst of a world in agony, is a top priority.

Through the pages of this book, I invite you to join in this supreme calling. I do not do this in my own name—I do it in the name of

Love IS FOR **BRAVE**

Jesus, the one who descended from heaven to this dark and dying world because of sin, and who showed us the love of God in advance.

With this book, my goal is to challenge you to become a bearer of God's love in your world. I have made an effort to be very practical in describing what it truly means to love the people in your surroundings, primarily your partner, your family, and your community. As you read, you will discover that true love is connected to other virtues, such as courage, honor, commitment, protection, and forgiveness.

Secondly, I want to apologize. This book is not a comprehensive work on the depths of love. I believe I only scratch the surface of a topic that will take me a lifetime and a significant part of eternity to uncover. Instead, I focus on describing what it means to love in the midst of some of the challenges presented by the important relationships in our lives. I also admit that it is somewhat challenging for me to write about the art of love when so often I fail in my attempt to love as God expects. Like you, I am learning.

In this book, I want to share my deepest desire. I pray that as you read, the great love with which you are loved will be revealed to you. I pray that you will discover Jesus, the lover of your soul. Because only by feeling completely loved can you have the courage to love others.

**TRUE LOVE
CONNECTS
WITH OTHER
VIRTUES SUCH
AS COURAGE,
HONOR,
COMMITMENT,
AND
FORGIVENESS.**



M E R C Y

M E R C Y

M E R C Y

01

HESSED

THE WAY GOD LOVES

PIERRE
TEILHARD
DE CHARD

THE DAY WILL COME WHEN AFTER TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SPACE, WINDS, TIDES AND GRAVITY, WE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ENERGIES OF LOVE FOR GOD. AND THAT DAY, FOR THE SECOND TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD, WE WILL HAVE DISCOVERED FIRE.

Because I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Hosea 6:6 (ESV)

It is challenging for me to imagine a generation more confused than ours about what love is. We are constantly influenced by confusing messages about what love means.

I have heard some teenagers say that love is falling in love, mothers describe it as what they felt when they first smelled their baby's skin as they held their newborn to their chest, and fathers see it as making sure their children have what they need. Some spouses speak of love as respect, while some talk about love being shown through how people spend their time. Young people seem to focus on kisses and caresses, and the elderly value companionship and protection.

So, with so many different interpretations, what is love really? What does it look like?

Politics defines love as a right, biology as an instinct, and neurology as chemistry. Some claim that love is blind, others say there is love at first sight, and I have even heard that love justifies everything.

Honestly, it is easy to feel confused with so many definitions of what it means to love, especially when these definitions sometimes contradict one another. And while this word remains undefined in the hearts of this generation, our world experiences a terrible shortage of lovers.

In fact, this confusion becomes evident when we consider the image that comes to mind for our generation when we talk about being a lover. Some people tense up just hearing the sound of that word. Have you noticed how this precious word has been distorted to the point where it has become something terrible?

In our current culture, a lover is seen as someone who engages in a romantic relationship with another person who is married, maintaining a secret relationship focused on seeking pleasure. Indeed, the word "lover" has become synonymous with adultery, lies, and betrayal. It is a word that leaves behind a trail of destroyed marriages, children poisoned with hatred, and even the abortion of unintended babies.

As if this distortion of the term were not enough, our culture has worn out the word by using it in absurd ways, to the point it has been robbed of all its power. We say, "I'm a lover of classical music" or, worse yet, "I'm a lover of hamburgers." Is it possible to use the same word to describe what we feel for a piece of meat and what we feel for a person?

**WORDS HAVE THE
POWER TO SHAPE
OUR THINKING.**

Although it may seem like harmless speech, I am convinced that words have the power to shape our thinking. To put it differently, a change in language leads to a change in mindset. If you pay attention to the sound of your inner voice, you will realize that whenever you think, you do so through the language you have learned.

In fact, as you read these printed words, the meaning you believe they have is shaping an idea in your mind. Therefore, the meaning they have for you will condition your way of thinking. Ultimately, what we think becomes what we speak.

THE POWER OF WORDS

This is a spiritual principle revealed in the Bible: Words have the power to create realities. If you pay attention to the opening lines of the Bible, you will discover the first attribute of divinity: God speaks.

In the poem of creation, we observe that God created the cosmos by speaking; He created reality through His words. God said, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3 ESV), and light emerged from the essence of His words. God continued to speak, and what He said

was created through the power of His words. Before anything else existed, there was the mind of God, and when He put words to His thoughts, this reality we call the universe came into being. Space, energy, and matter arose from the words of the Eternal.

Let me give you an example to better illustrate this idea. If you take a smartphone and begin to interact with its applications through the screen, you see colors, lines, and shapes that, when combined, project an image, such as a sailboat sailing on the sea at sunset. Your eyes perceive that combination of colored pixels, and your brain interprets the image. But if you think about it, that image you see—that combination of colors, lines, and shapes, that boat, that sun, and that water—is a projection: the product of a programming language. In the deepest layer of that image, beyond the illuminated pixels on the device's screen, there is a binary code, a language formed by ones and zeros that, when combined in the correct way, create the reality you see. In other words, what you see on the smartphone screen is actually created by a language.

I imagine that when scientists manage to split the atom to its most fundamental essence, they will hear the sound of God's voice, the vibration of His words. Because that is what everything in the universe is made.

When God set out to create life, He created it through His words. He spoke to the earth, and it produced vegetation; He spoke to the water, and it produced marine animals. God spoke to each ecosystem, and from them emerged biological life that would depend on that atmosphere to live. The environment from which they originated would sustain them. I cannot help but be moved when I think that when God created humans, He did something different from what He did to create everything else. God spoke to Himself and said, "Let us make mankind in our image" (Genesis 1:26 ESV). In this way, the spirit of man was produced from the essence of the Trinity, and it is sustained and dependent on that atmosphere to live. God is the habitat of the human spirit; therefore, the human spirit cannot survive apart from God, just as a fish cannot survive outside of water or a plant cannot endure without being rooted in

the ground. It is true that God formed the body of the first human being from the dust of the earth, which is why our bodies require the nutrients of this ecosystem to stay alive, but our spirit comes from God and cannot survive if disconnected from divinity.

When God breathed His breath through the nostrils of that piece of clay shaped like a human body, He placed a part of Himself in man, a spirit in His image and likeness. And I will venture to say that one of the reflections of God bestowed upon human beings was language, that attribute that distinguishes us from any other animal on the planet Earth. Language gives us the ability to reason and imagine, to communicate with other human beings, imprinting ideas in the minds of those who hear our words, creating abstract concepts in thought, such as beauty, forgiveness, or dignity. It is through words that we define what is good or bad, just or unjust, true or false. We shape the world around us through language. Ultimately, through the gift of speech that God has given us, we create the concepts that will drive our souls, give meaning to our reality, and govern our world.

God gave us language so that we could continue His creative work. He gave us words so that we may use them to build a world that reflects His goodness. However, we can also do the complete opposite.

Satan is so aware of this principle that he uses it to create toxic realities that destroy human beings. In the first conversation Satan had with humans, he used words to twist their thinking about who God is. By subtly manipulating the words that God had spoken, Satan distorted their original meaning and made humans believe that God was untrustworthy. Satan's words literally shaped a toxic thought in their minds that ended up separating them from God. That is what he did then, and it is what he continues to do now: distort the meaning of words so that they no longer signify what God intended them to mean.

This satanic strategy is highly noticeable in the media. For example, in news broadcasts in Spain, the word "abortion" is not used, but rather "voluntary pregnancy termination." Likewise, the term

"euthanasia" is replaced by "death with dignity." One day, during a conversation on television about the romantic affairs of celebrities, a commentator mentioned infidelity, and the host corrected him by saying it was "unfaithfulness." I have also heard interviewees share their versions of events by saying, "This is my truth."

But if there is one word that Satan has most taken upon himself to distort in our generation, it is the word "love." That is why, in this book, I dare to challenge you to restore that word to its original meaning by embodying it in your own life. I challenge you to become a "lover," but one according to God's design. Because true lovers are those who love, and the meaning of love can only be determined by the One who created it: God Himself, the One described in the Bible as true love.

HESED

I have begun writing this book by speaking about the power of words because it was through one word in the Bible that my understanding of love was revolutionized. I do not exaggerate when I say that my mind felt an impact when I discovered this Hebrew word. I literally had to rethink everything I thought about love and seriously question whether I knew how to love. The power of this word changed my reality.

I thought I knew how to love until this word painted a picture in my mind of a kind of love that I did not know. When I read it, I could closed the door to my room and, putting my face to the ground, prayed to God: "Forgive me for practicing such mediocre love, I pray that you teach me to truly love." Years have passed since that prayer, and I am still wrestling with the implications of that word and discovering what it means. I am referring to the word *Hesed*.

Hesed appears hundreds of times in the Bible. It primarily refers to the relationship God has with His people, but it also alludes to the relationship God expects His people to have with one another.

The mystery of this word that has captivated me is that it is untranslatable. Yes, you read that correctly. There is not a single word in any other language that fully represents the meaning of *Hesed*.

Its meaning is so deep and rich in nuances that translators have had serious difficulties translating it into Spanish. There is not a single word in my native language that fully represents the complete meaning of *Hesed*. Ultimately, translators have chosen to translate it in different ways throughout the entire Bible:

Mercy
Tenderness
Faithfulness
Goodness
Grace
Covenant

Some translators render it as “covenantal love” or even as “unfailing love.” It is fascinating! Or at least it seems that way to me. Because the truth is, that word encompasses the sum of all those other words. *Hesed* is a type of love full of mercy, tenderness, faithfulness, goodness, grace, and covenant. It is a love that does not run out, that fights and persists. A love so loyal that it never gives up. *Hesed* is a word so wide, high, and deep that you can get lost in it.

You could dedicate your entire life to discovering what it means. Probably that is why I have written this book—because I want to better understand its meaning.

I need to know.

Why? Because, ultimately, *Hesed* is the way God loves me. And I believe there is no more important revelation for my soul than that.

THE UNEXPECTED QUESTION

A friend asked me an unexpected question:

“Itiel, if God appeared before you and offered to answer just one question, what would you ask Him?”

I am convinced that there are plenty of immensely important questions for humanity, such as:

What was the origin of the universe?

Is there life on other planets?

What is the cure for cancer?

I don't know what your question would be. At the risk of seeming egocentric, the response I gave to my friend came from the depths of my being. It was almost a reflex.

"I would ask Him: How is Your love for me?"

Since I was a child, I have heard that God loves me. I have sung that God loves me and read that God loves me. I know it is the truth because the Bible says so and because Jesus became a man to tell us on the cross.

**KNOWING
I AM LOVED
BY GOD SETS
ME FREE.**

I do not ignore this fundamental truth. But I admit that my soul longs to hear it in every possible way. I want to understand all the nuances of God's love for me. I want to feel it, to be filled by it, to be marked by it. I have come to understand that I have been created to be loved by God, and the more this truth takes root in the most fundamental springs of my identity, the higher my life will be elevated.

Knowing that I am loved by God sets me free.

It sets me free from the fear of failure, of falling, or of making mistakes.

It sets me free from the chains of people's opinions, even from the chains of my own opinions.

It sets me free from anxiety about tomorrow.

Knowing that I am loved by God makes me brave, because one who knows they are loved can love with courage, can give, serve, forgive, and honor—heroic acts in a world governed by selfishness.

The revelation of divine love is like wings for a bird. How sad it is to live crawling when we have been created to fly!

For that reason, the word *Hesed* has become so important to me. I want to discover its hidden meanings because *Hesed* represents the way God loves me. But furthermore, it is the way God expects me to love the people around me.

And probably that is the correct order, because you cannot love others with *Hesed* if you have not been shaken by the *Hesed* of God for you.

Being a person full of *Hesed* is my calling, and it is yours too.

GOD WANTS *HESED*, NOT RELIGIOUS SACRIFICES

During the time when Jesus walked the earth, the meaning of the word *Hesed* had become so distorted in the minds of people that it had ceased to produce the effect for which God had intended it. Satan had managed to steal the power of that term, using those who were supposed to protect it to do so. He distorted *Hesed* through the religious leaders, those who called themselves the "guardians of the word of God," but failed to preserve it.

In several instances in the Gospels, we read how Jesus was harshly criticized by the religious elite after associating with people stigmatized by religion: lepers, tax collectors, foreigners, prostitutes, and others who were wounded by the disorder of their lives. Jesus approached them when religion dictated that these people should be isolated. Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, raised His voice to reclaim the meaning of a word that had been forgotten.

"Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'" (Matthew 9:13)

Jesus spoke these words referring to the prophetic discourse of Hosea (Hosea 6:6), where *Hesed* is translated as "mercy." What Jesus was telling them is, "If you are unable to understand the meaning of *Hesed*, you are missing the core of the divine message. For more than ritual sacrifices, solemn feasts, or liturgical worship, God wants *Hesed*. God desires to see embodied in you a love filled with compassion, loyalty, and tenderness, a love that does not give up on difficult people, but persists in embracing them until what is broken in them is fused with the warmth of *Hesed*. God longs for you to practice *Hesed* with one another before engaging in any other religious matter. If you do not grasp this priority of God, you do not accurately represent God in this world. Go and learn what this word means. Do it out of devotion to God and for His purposes in this world."

Jesus spoke these words many times and in many ways to the religious leaders, so much so that they wanted to kill him. And I believe He continues to say it today. He still cries out with tears.

THE PRIORITY IN JESUS' SCHOOL

On another occasion, a teacher of divine law asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was. He asked this question because each teacher prioritized certain commandments over others, and these nuances distinguished the different rabbinic schools of the time. Some schools prioritized a certain way of dressing, others focused on the manner of performing purification rituals, and still others emphasized specific Sabbath restrictions. There were as many schools as there were different interpretations of a commandment! And all of them were divided and believed they were better than the others. This greatly angered Jesus, because while the teachers of the Law prioritized secondary details of divine law, such as tithing even the smallest mint leaves from their garden, they forgot the main thing: practicing *Hesed*.

Jesus gave a response to the teacher that would establish the priority of his rabbinic school: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your

strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus declared that this commandment was more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices (Mark 12:33).

Jesus made it clear that the entire divine message can be summarized in this commandment that has two directions: "love God" and "love your neighbor." It involves two relationships, a vertical one with God and a horizontal one with people. However, they are not two separate commandments but one. And if anyone tries to fulfill one direction while ignoring the other, they fail completely.

**JESUS SHIFTED
THE FOCUS FROM
RELIGION TO
RELATIONSHIP.**

It is more important than all the sacrifices and burnt offerings that were performed in the temple of Jerusalem. This statement may not seem very impactful to you, but it was startling to the Jews who heard it at that time. Understand this: The entire Jewish identity was linked to the temple of Jerusalem and the rituals performed in it. The city revolved around it; it was the central building and the reason why Jews from all over would make an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Those sacrifices and burnt offerings had become their national identity, what set them apart from other people, what made them special in their own eyes. Then Jesus stands at the entrance of that place, points to it, and says, "God doesn't really care about all the animal blood they pour on that altar if they forget about love. The temple may be what moves your hearts, but love is what moves the heart of God."

The religious authorities wanted to kill Jesus every time he opened his mouth because he shifted the focus from religion to relationship, from sacrifice to mercy, and from the temple to the people. It was too revolutionary then and remains so now.

RECOVERING THE MEANING OF TRUE LOVE

I admit that I tremble at the thought of one day standing face to face with Jesus, when He will look at me with eyes that penetrate the soul and lay everything bare. I tremble because on that day, I will have to give an account of how I have lived the life granted to me on this earth, and in that encounter with Jesus, there will be one question that surpasses all others, the primary question in the school of Jesus: "Itiel, did you love people?"

I believe that in that conversation with Jesus, love will be the standard by which the greatness of my life will be measured. How I treated the hearts of the people around me will either elicit applause from the angels or make them look away in embarrassment due to my mediocrity. And although I know that Jesus' love for me is sufficient to save me, I want to perceive in His gaze an expression of satisfaction.

That's why I am restless with the question I want to answer in this book: What does it truly mean to love the people around me? Because this world speaks of love, but it does not resemble Hesus. Someone claims to love their children while being unfaithful to their spouse; another says they love their parents while living in a way that causes them worried, sleepless nights; another insists they love their partner so much that's why they control them, checking all their messages and sometimes yelling at them. I have heard many say that giving sex is giving love, as well as the notion that all different ways of loving are to be respected. But perhaps what frightens me the most to hear is that anything goes in love.

But no! Not everything goes! That kind of love is a distortion; it is not the original. It is nothing but another fallacy of the Serpent. Why? Because if you detach love from truth, it ceases to be true love. Because if you detach love from faithfulness, it ceases to be true love. Because if you detach love from responsibility, it ceases to be true love.

You cannot castrate the word Hesus; you have to accept it with all its implications. Otherwise, you will not have true love. And that is

Love IS FOR BRAVE

what the following pages are about: discovering the connections of love with sacrifice, forgiveness, patience, honor, and other virtues that make up the mosaic of what true love is in the significant relationships of our lives. Through different stories from the Bible, we will seek the answer to the question with which this chapter began.

I pray that you discover what *Hesed* is and that this type of love possesses you. Saint Augustine, the bishop of Hippo in the 4th century, said: "Love, and do what you will: if you keep silent, let it be out of love; if you cry out, let it be out of love; if you correct, let it be out of love; if you forgive, let it be out of love. May the root of charity exist within you; from this root, nothing but good can come forth."



Downloads
Subscription



Recursos
gratis



Store



Chat



Magazine



Online Education
www.institutoe625.com



Events

Seminars



Books

e625.com