Question: What does the Bible mean when it says, “There are six, yes seven”? Why doesn’t it just say seven outright, instead of first mentioning six and then adding seven?

Answer: This phrase reflects a common ancient Hebrew literary style known as *numerical climax* or *inclusio*. It’s a way of emphasizing the final item in a list by first stating a certain number, then adding one more to show that the last is especially important or significant.

In the original Hebrew texts, repeating numbers this way serves to draw special attention to the final point often the most critical or weighty. The expression “six, yes seven” means: if you think the list ends at six, be aware there is a seventh, which surpasses the rest in significance.

> *Proverbs 6:16-19 (NIV):*
> *“There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him:*
> *17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,*
> *18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil,*

> *19 a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict among brothers.”*

This passage reveals God’s moral standards. The seven things listed summarize behaviors that disrupt relationship with God and others, with the seventh *sowing discord among brothers* being the gravest offense. This aligns with the biblical emphasis on community harmony and peace.

> *Proverbs 30:18-19 (NIV):*
> *“There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand:*
> *19 the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the sea, and the way of a man with a young woman.”*

Here, Solomon marvels at the mysteries of life and relationships. The “four” represents a crescendo highlighting the complexity and wonder of human relationships, especially between a man and a woman, which is deeper and less predictable than natural

phenomena.

> *Proverbs 30:29-31 (NIV):*
> *“There are three things that are stately in their stride, yes, four that move with stately bearing:*
> *30 a lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing; a strutting rooster, a he-goat, and a king whose army cannot be counted.”*

This section celebrates majesty and dignity, culminating with a king an earthly authority who commands respect and power. The addition of the fourth item underscores leadership’s significance in God’s created order.

> *Proverbs 30:15-16 (NIV): Highlights insatiable things, emphasizing human limits and natural forces.*

> *Job 5:19 (NIV): “He will rescueWhat Does the Bible Mean by*

> *Saying “There Are Six, Yes Seven”? you from six troubles; in seven no harm will touch you.” God’s protection is complete and beyond what one might expect.*

> *Amos 1:3-4 (NIV): The prophetic judgment against Damascus uses the “three… four” pattern to stress certainty and severity of God’s punishment.*

The Importance of the Final Item

The repeated pattern points to the final item as the climax the key truth to grasp. Theologically, this reminds believers to pay special attention to the concluding teaching, often carrying the weight of the entire passage.

Love

Even though the Bible lists many qualities important for spiritual maturity, it emphasizes that love (agape) is supreme.

> *2 Peter 1:5-8 (NIV):*
> *“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;*
> *6 and to knowledge, self control; and to self control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;*
> *7 and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.*
> *8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

This passage highlights the progressive growth of Christian character. The final and greatest virtue l*ove* binds all others together and is the ultimate mark of Christlikeness (see also 1 Corinthians 13). Without love, other spiritual gifts or qualities are incomplete.

Do you have God’s agape love in your heart?

To learn how to receive and cultivate this selfless, unconditional

love, visit:
https://wingulamashahidi.org/2020/12/21/nitaupataje-upendo-wa-ki-mungu-ndani-yangu/

God bless you.

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