

Tenderness:

**Concern, gentle affection, or
warmth toward another**



Christians are to be different than the angry, mean, hurtful people of the world. 1Peter 3:8 tells us, *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous...* (NKJ). God created marriage to be a *place of tenderness*. There is no place for the harshness most all of us dish out to our spouses all too often. We are to be concerned about our spouse's welfare - to genuinely care about what is going on with him or her. There should be gentle affection in the marriage relationship - holding, caressing, demonstrating love through our soft touch. And there should be warmth, not coldness towards our spouse - being kind-hearted toward him or her. It is not about feelings, it is about obedience; doing things God's way - giving of ourselves whether we feel like it or not.

Friends, it was easy to be tender towards our spouse at the beginning of the relationship; it almost came naturally for most of us. But too, often in the busyness and stress of everyday life, we let down our guard and even become harsh with our spouse. We don't take the time to connect with our spouse or only connect in the way we feel connection - i.e. speaking our own love language rather than speaking our spouse's love language to him or her. Do we even ask how our spouse's day has been? Do we show that we care for him or her?

It simply does not require a lot to be tender with our spouse! It is a matter of seeking to understand rather than be understood, caring about what our spouse feels or thinks, speaking softly rather than harshly, making requests rather than making demands. As *Christians*, we *should* have the mind of Christ. Yes, we are not perfect, but do we even *desire* to have the mind of Christ, to walk in the ways He demonstrated? John reminded us that love is giving of ourselves just as Christ gave Himself for us (1John 3:16). Showing tenderness to our spouse, even if he or she doesn't deserve it, is a decision to love our spouse.

Dr. Randy Carlson wrote in his book *Starved for Affection* that Tenderness fosters connection with others - it makes people feel cared for. A simple touch of the face, a hug, or a tender, caring word demonstrates that someone is valuable and important to us. You *can* do that, but *will* you? Show your spouse that you are concerned for him or her. Give your spouse gentle affection and demonstrate warmth toward them. It is what Jesus would do.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Learn about the 5 Love Languages at 5lovelanguages.com

Discover your spouse's emotional needs at www.marriagebuilders.com

Articles to check out:

10 Tips to Increase the T.E.N.D.E.R.N.E.S.S. in Your Relationship by Barton Goldsmith
Psychology Today

You Matter To Me: Keys For Keeping Tenderness In Marriage by Camille Foster
Utah Mental Health Services