

Her Needs

I. A Wife Needs TLC in Christian Marriage

A woman needs tender, loving, care in Christian Marriage. So let me elaborate on what TLC means from a wife's point of view.

1. **TENDER** – communicates gentleness. Your wife needs you to be tender to the touch, not rough. She needs you to be tender in the way you look at her. Sometimes a husband's eyes communicate anger or hostility or frustration. She also needs you to watch the way you speak to her. Wives would say, "Speak tenderly, please." The fact is, sometimes a man's voice can sound gruff even when he doesn't intend for it to. One wife tells her story in a letter. "When my husband came home from work yesterday, the house was a wreck and the kids were driving me wild. When I told him I just couldn't handle it, do you know what he did? He took me out into the laundry room, put his hands on my shoulders, looked down into my face and said very quietly, 'Now, just calm down.' Then he put his arms around me, pulled me against him and just held me for five whole minutes without saying a word. I can't explain to you how good it felt to be in his arms like that. I began to slowly relax and escape from my stressed-out world. Then he said, 'Now let's tackle this and see if we can get those little "buzz saws" fed and into bed early tonight. Then we'll get a sitter and you and I will go to that quiet little pizza place and be together, just you and me.'"

Many men develop the macho mind-set during childhood and never stop to see how destructive it can be. A physically big man may consider it beneath himself to be tender; a physically small man may be too threatened to be tender. A plain vanilla man may have been "trained to think, that to be tender is to be a sissy. "Don't ever cry. Don't ever let your feelings show." However, men need to understand that women thrive on tenderness. And it not only causes them to respect our masculinity all the more, but to admire the sensitivity of the man as well.

2. **LOVING**: Loving means understanding or at least making an effort to understand her thoughts as well as her behaviour. It means recognizing her ability to do certain things and encouraging her to do them. It also means that when you recognize that she's uncomfortable in doing certain things, you shouldn't force her to do them. Loving also means remembering special days like her birthday, wedding anniversary etc. Even more so, it means making very difficult or tedious days easier. For example, let's say that a wife's mother died on September 12th last year. You could put an "x" on your calendar at work. Then you might do one of several things, according to your personality and financial condition. You might call during the day and say, "I was just thinking about you. I know today is going to be difficult. Can you take some time to have lunch with me?" Or, "Hey, let's not cook tonight – we'll eat out." Sending flowers would be another way a husband could help to make that difficult day a special day. Flowers communicate a tender and thoughtful message. Your wife will appreciate your being a part of her life in this way and it's so easy to do with a few red "x's" on your calendar.

3. **CARE** – communicates respect. It means treating her as a person worthy of dignity and honour. Care means that you allow others, especially her family and her children to see you caring for her that way. It also provides protection – the kind of protection a person would give to a very rare and precious gem. She needs those things. They make her feel special. Protection, attention, closeness without passion, security and safety from the "cold north winds" that blow about the marriage, encirclement in arms that are strong all show you care about her. That's what women are asking for, longing for, and praying for. A wife needs to feel protected in three ways: First she needs to know

that her husband is there for her if she needs physical protection. Next, she needs to know that she is secure and financially

A husband's ability to consistently provide for her and the children is a sense of security that she needs. Finally, the wife needs to feel covered and secure spiritually when it comes to her relationship with you. The Bible says that the weapons of this warfare are not carnal. In other words, we are in a spiritual battle. She needs to know that her husband is a praying man and that he listens and follows the leading of God.

Are their men listening? Let's now see the next need a wife has in Christian marriage.

II. A Wife Needs Communication in Christian Marriage

In marriage seminars a particular couple consistently asked the women to complete this statement, "I wish my husband would love me by . . ." Over the years they saved the replies and produced a list of the "Top 20 Ways." At the very top are the needs of communication. Even a lady in her late seventies changed her response from a little by writing, "I wish my husband would have loved me by listening to me." No matter how long we live, women never outgrow the need and desire to be listened to. Communication doesn't come easily. It takes a lot of time and commitment. And the truth is, very few people like to listen. Listening is largely a lost art. But one of the most important ways a wife feels loved is when her husband listens to her.

Men need to learn to listen between the lines. A couple was attending a conference in a city near the ocean. It was Sunday afternoon in October and a football match was going on in the Television! Their schedule was full and that afternoon was the only time they would have to explore and enjoy the beach. The wife approached her husband and said, "let's go for a walk on the beach." "I'm watching the game, my favourite team is playing." "But we won't have another chance, our schedule is so full." The wife says. "I'll tell you what - why don't you go walking and I'll watch the ball game." And he did, and she did! She later readily confessed the walk was not at all like she had hoped. It was more of a "regaining-her-composure" walk than a lovely, stroll down the beach she had envisioned.

Husbands typically don't come factory equipped to hear what their wives are actually communicating. She was really saying, "Love me today by strolling down the beach with me hand in hand." He didn't hear that message. A husband must learn to read between the lines.

A wife needs her husband to communicate with her on an emotional level. She wants him to be willing to reveal his feelings and to become vulnerable. A woman is generally a people-centered person - and intuitive, emotional creature. She longs to share those deep inner thoughts and feelings with her husband. In other words, she wants him to be her best friend. Is this difficult for a male? Most definitely! Is it worth it? 100% Yes! It's not that a woman simply wants to talk about herself, although that's important at times. She wants to know her man's deep feelings, his dreams, his hurts, his doubts, his secrets. That's what establishes a very intimate oneness and wives need that just as husbands need to be praised and respected.

III. A Wife Needs Noticing or appreciation

How long has it been since you have said to your wife, "You look so pretty tonight?" How long since you've told her just how much you appreciate all the things she does to make your life more comfortable? A woman needs that kind of noticing. She wants to dress for her husband, to please him, but how will she know if her husband don't notice her and say, "That's my favourite colour on you." Wives need that kind of attention from their husbands and not some other man!

IV. She needs top priority in his life

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” Ephesians 5:31

In order for you to effectively love your wife, you have to completely leave your father and mother. Is Paul suggesting you cut your ties with your parents? Of course not. The Bible says we need to honour our mother and father if we want our days to be long on this earth. Paul says this because he understands it is impossible to be joined to your wife if a husband is still emotionally attached to his parents. For example, he might still want to share the problems and struggles of his life with parents and seek their advice and trusts it more than he does his wife's. Or he may spend too much time either on the phone with his parents or at their home or compares his wife with his mother. Doing any of the above things will not cause your wife to feel loved. As her husband, he must understand that his wife and his mother have two different positions in his life. A husband cannot place his mother in the position God has given his wife. The union between a husband and wife supersedes the original family ties. And the wife needs to know that. She needs to know that she is the “queen bee.” She needs to know that her husband values her above all others. As his helpmeet she should be his chief adviser, resource person, and consultant. If he has a problem with his wife, he needs to talk to his wife about it and not talk about it to his mother or co-workers. If a husband needs help making a difficult decision, he needs to get the advice of his wife. After all, that's why God gave her to the husband and she is his helpmeet.

V. Needs Nonsexual affection -

She feels most loved when the husband can touch her without having ulterior motives. In other words, let not the husband wait until he is in the mood to have sex before he touches his wife. Let him hold her hand, place his arms around her as they both watch television programme. She needs a hug and a kiss without ending in the bedroom. The more she is touched outside of the bedroom the more she will feel loved and the more receptive she will be to her husband's touches inside the bedroom. Let the husband know what she enjoys. A wife's enjoyments are completely different from her husband's. Be interested in getting to know your wife and the things she enjoys. Go shopping with her, not to hold her shopping bags but to find out what kind of clothing she likes. Find out what her favourite colour is, her favourite food, her favourite way to relax.

VI. Needs acceptance and listening ears

If your wife expresses a preoccupation about anything - whether it's the financial situations, somebody's health, or even something that is seemingly as minor as the toilet seat being broken - do not belittle her concern. So many women have shut themselves down over a period of time after they have been criticized over and over by their husbands every time they bring to his attention something that may bother her but appear to be minor or a "stupid worry" in his opinion. Even if a husband does not conjure up the audacity to call her concerns "stupid" or "crazy", he can shut her down if his tone points to such words. This happens many times unintentionally. There is a time to be silent and just listen. There is a time to just offer a comforting hand only. But let not the husband make a habit of shutting her up. Otherwise, he will find himself trying hard to figure her out because she can become shut down and distant about sharing her thoughts.

VII. Needs patience and time

Many men say they've changed but are self-righteous about it. A man can stop mistreating his wife in one way but criticize her for various things. Let him be humble enough to nurture her where she is

and help her out of her stumble. Emotionally, she may be really wounded. A bandage of smiles will not remedy the problem. Let him Pray for himself and his wife. If the wife is not responding to his positive efforts after so many negative incidents, he needs to be patient with her. Based on whatever has happened to shut her down, the way back into her heart might be a long journey. She may be so deeply hurt or lost her trust in him that she may need time. Consistency in a husband's change will help her develop trust. At the beginning of a relationship, anybody might trust a few nice gestures. But someone who has been through an emotional storm needs consistency in order to trust again. Just like consistent bad treatment might convince a spouse that the other is rude, harsh and reckless, consistent fair treatment can gradually reverse the damage.

Of all the things God wants a husband to give his wife, none is more important than what Christ gave—His own personal being. When a man takes a woman to be his wife, he makes her part of himself; he cannot afford to shut her out of his life. May God help him to love her the way He wants her to be loved by her husband.