

## TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS

Most people like things that are tender. We like our steaks tender, the kids like chicken tenders, and most of us can appreciate a little legal tender. Tenderness in the biblical sense means to have a tender heart, be compassionate, and be merciful. All of these are qualities that Christians ought to possess. In fact, Jesus stated, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."* (Matthew 5:7). Do you want to obtain mercy from God? Be merciful. Do you want to obtain mercy from other people? Be merciful. Do you want to be treated with tenderness? Be tender toward others. Jesus also said, *"...whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them..."* (Matthew 7:12).

To be tender or merciful, one must be able to sympathize with others. This is exactly what Jesus did when he came to this world in a fleshly body. *"For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."* (Hebrews 4:15). Many times in his life Jesus displayed a compassion for people. In Matthew 9:36 we read, *"But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd."* In Matthew 14:14, *"And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick."* Mark records this in Mark 1:41, *"Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.'"* In reference to his friend Lazarus' death we read in John 11:35, *"Jesus wept."* He had compassion, and he is to be our example. He was even compassionate while hanging on the cross. How he was treated made no difference.

Do you have compassion? Are you tender hearted? Do you consider yourself merciful? It is important to note that if you are not, God will not be either. Jesus also stated, *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* (Matthew 6:14-15). Think about it.

**MJW**