

## The Case for Tender Men

How many times do you see men cry? Ok, besides at a funeral? There is a scripture in the bible in Ephesians, Chapter 4, and Verse 32. That would be in the New Testament or in the back half of the bible. It says, "And be kind to one another, tender-hearted." I wonder how many men have ever read this passage and think, "That doesn't apply to me." From an early age, many men are taught not to cry, not to show feelings, not to be tender towards their wives and children.

There is a real need in our nation right now for men to be fathers who love and lead their families—who are not afraid to be tender. I heard a story some time ago that makes the point. Desperate to reach out to her unfeeling father, this girl got herself arrested for shoplifting. That didn't work that well, so she decided to stop eating. She developed anorexia and, later, a brain tumor that the doctors concluded was partly caused by her undernourished condition.

She said, "I was lying in my hospital bed near death with all kinds of tubes coming out of my body when my father finally came to see me," the girl said. "We talked for about an hour, and then he got up to leave. As he opened my hospital door, I guess I just went crazy and began to scream. "You just can't say it, can you?" She screamed even louder, "I'm going to die and you still can't say it." Her father said, "Say what?"

He finally broke down and began to weep. He moved to her bedside and through his tears said those words the young woman needed to hear so desperately.

It has been my experience to hear men say this, "He knew I loved him or She knew I loved her." What a joke! What a pitiful excuse! And I say, "He just read your mind, huh!?" It is one of the biggest cop-outs I hear on a regular basis. Our wives yearn to hear it, our own parents yearn to hear it (even in the midst they might never said it to you) and our kids desire to hear it—cry out for it. Fathers need to be tender. Fathers' hearts need to be knitted to their children's souls. Real men can be gentle men...the others, I hate to say it but you need to "buck up and face reality and quit being so self-centered about you." Just give it a try and I promise you that it will set you free in a flood of emotions that you have wanted to express and desired to say. It will literally change the lives and relationships you love more than any single thing except two: "I am sorry and I love you."

