

Heal Your Frazzled Marriage With These Small Acts of Kindness

The first command God gave mankind was to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:28). But fruitfulness involves more than merely growing physical fruit.

As a Christian, the Spirit of God has already been planted within you. Now it's your job to cultivate the seed of His nature—and it is not going to be an easy thing to do all the time.

The farmer's seeds must push through a layer of dirt in order to reach the sunlight. That dirt outweighs that little seed, and it will have to struggle hard to break through. In the same manner, God's Spirit has to push through the dirt we call our flesh.

Our flesh may be innately selfish, rude and indulgent. The Spirit of God inside of us is none of those things. Thus, there is resistance. There is conflict. And in marriage, these can pose numerous problems in the way we communicate with our spouse.

Take the case of James, who came home after a rough workday. The computer program he'd worked on for weeks wasn't running. After a tense meeting with his concerned boss, James headed home exhausted.

When he opened the door to greet his pregnant wife, he was confronted with the words, "I hope you won't work all hours of the day when the baby is born!" Without saying a word, James watched his wife set out the meal she had prepared hours earlier. He knew he was desperately in need of something, but couldn't put his finger on it.

Then there's Charlotte, a homeschooling mother of four, who also had a tough day. Shortly after her husband left for work, one child developed a fever combined with nausea.

After a stressful day of serving as both impromptu nurse and school teacher, Charlotte was preparing dinner when her husband entered and said with a smile, "This house looks like a disaster area. What did you do all day?" Not returning the smile, Charlotte became defensive as she set the table. She also needed something, but felt too overwhelmed to express it.

What James and Charlotte each needed was an act of kindness. James needed a hug and a "Boy, I'm glad to see you, you hard-working man." Charlotte needed her husband to notice her overwhelmed state and come to her aid.

Every spouse needs kindness daily. Many of us feel that life is like an overworked, fast-moving engine. In mechanical terms, an engine receives a constant supply of motor oil to prevent friction and overheating. Likewise, random and intentional acts of kindness lubricate marriage relationships, easing life's friction.

An offer to help, a smile and a kind word will reduce the heat of everyday responsibilities. Knowing that someone cares enough to notice and say thank you makes the day-to-day routine a little easier to handle.

Kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and when it's displayed, it can make anyone feel special. Think about the last act of kindness your spouse did for you and how it made you feel. The fruit of kindness is sweet to the soul.

You've got it in you through the Spirit of God. The power of kindness dwells within you, ready to be released. Any act of kindness you show to your spouse plants a seed that will eventually grow into a fruit-bearing tree of kindness. Will you reap a plentiful harvest because of your continual planting and nurturing, or will your harvest be small?

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