

dishwasher! When you walk into a situation looking for ways to serve and show honor, you put to death the kind of pride that expects others to serve and honor you.

**James 4:10a—Humble yourselves before the Lord...** In other words, remember who you are compared with God. When we get this right, it's easy to gratefully accept the place He has put us and the little annoyances that come our way. God knows when every sparrow falls, and He knows that my grown son has a pile of empty plastic water bottles on his dresser that should be recycled. If God has ordained for me to either recycle them or live with it, I'm not going to question Him. But I have to see the water bottles in the light of truth—otherwise I may rebel against the situation and inadvertently rebel against the loving God who put me here.

**Ephesians 4:32—Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.** It becomes easy to forgive when we remember how we've been forgiven. What's an empty milk carton put back into the fridge, compared to my own massive debt of sin?

**Philippians 2:5-8—Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** When I consider Christ, the Son of God, washing the disciples' feet, and the creator of the universe suffering for me, it's impossible to imagine a chore that is "beneath" me. Let's pray that He will teach us to serve with humility, following His example.

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## Ladies: Read this *Before* You Nail His Socks to the Floor

Susan Verstraete

Every night for 45 years, he took off his socks and left them on the floor by the bed. And every morning, she picked them up and put them in the hamper. And every day, she resented doing it just a little more. At first, it was just a quick feeling of annoyance. Then she began to think about it off and on during the day. After a few years, it was a real sore point, and finally, full-blown resentment. One morning, after 45 years of picking up his socks, she took a hammer and nailed *all* his socks to the floor by the bed—well, all of them except the pair he was wearing. “If that’s where he wants his socks,” she thought, “that’s where they will stay.”



Can you identify with her feelings? I can. My friend had let resentment overcome her. The dictionary defines resentment as a deep, reflective displeasure against the conduct of the offender. It happens when we dwell on an offense, or when an annoyance is repeated (without being forgiven) over and over.

If we feel resentment, we can't just glibly excuse ourselves on the basis of our situation. No matter how someone else behaves toward us, resentment is still sin, and it leads to bitterness. And so, if you are considering something drastic like my friend, put down your hammer. There's a better way.

**First, don't "just do it". . .** Picking up the socks every day and ignoring the feelings attached to the situation can be deadly. If you

really can overlook his forgetfulness, great! But if you feel resentment or nagging annoyance, it's an indication that you need to think it through, and to preach truth to yourself to change your perspective about the situation. We usually want to avoid this hard work, choosing rather to let our ire simmer. But as believers, we don't have an option to indulge sin.

. . . **but do it.** All that being said, you still have to do it. The Bible says that if you know what is right to do and don't do it, it is sin (James 4:17). So if you come across a spill that someone didn't wipe up, or if someone didn't show up to teach *again*, you can't just walk away, and you can't indulge your resentment. You need to find a way to serve in the situation presented to you with a glad heart.

**Second, communicate.** It probably goes without saying that often (but not always) you should talk about, and to, the source of your resentment. I'm not suggesting you nag, but we have to remember that no one is a mind reader. Try saying, if you haven't, that one way your husband or family can express love to you is to let you know if they plan to miss dinner or [insert your situation here].

Remember that what they are doing is probably just a result of forgetfulness, laziness or habit, and isn't meant to be a personal offense. And also remember that, as Elizabeth Elliot reminds us in her book *Let Me Be a Woman*, everyone is married to a sinner—even your husband. It's just possible that I feel resentment because I am controlling, prideful or holding the people around me to unreasonable standards. If that seems possible in your case, it's worth discussing the situation with a wise friend. Just be sure you are really asking for perspective and don't slip into complaining.

**Third, preach to yourself.** The Bible has given us the truth we need to change our perspective in this situation. Consider reminding yourself of the following:

***Proverbs 14:4a—Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean.*** Or, to paraphrase, “Where there is no family, the house stays clean.” One of my friends was in danger of feeling resentful toward her husband for the pile of magazines, books, bills and other papers that was always piled by his easy chair. That is, she resented it until she pictured what it would be like to have that spot clean, and his chair forever empty. Is having a family worth the small annoyances? And at church—is the joy of watching children growing up in the knowledge of Christ worth the occasional sticky-sucker-on-your-chair incident?

***I Thessalonians 5:18—In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*** So everyone leaves their empty glasses and snack dishes out at night for you to pick up the next day—why would you be thankful? Maybe you can thank God that your family was home enjoying each other, or that God provided food and shelter, or that you can serve your family this way while your husband is serving your family at work. When I'm annoyed over petty chores, it helps me to think about how blessed I am compared to my grandmothers, who raised their families without indoor plumbing or electricity. How can I complain about replacing the empty TP roll compared to what they had to do? Gratitude banishes resentment.

***Romans 12:10—Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*** We are commanded to compete with others—to see who can be the first to make the coffee or empty the trash. How different life would be if all of us competed for the privilege of mundane tasks like unloading the