

## **More than Soap**

**By David Wright**

One night I saw a TV commercial promoting laundry detergent. The ad promised that the product gave sheets a wonderful lavender scent. The stuff worked so well that a married couple going to bed angry would find themselves in an entirely different mood as soon as they got a whiff of the clean sheets.

How stupid do advertisers think we are? For one thing, the scent of laundry detergent is usually overpowered by the stronger fragrance of fabric softener. For another, an angry wife doesn't march into the laundry room and wash the sheets so that her angry husband will relax as soon as he sniffs the lavender scent. More importantly, no soap on the market magically resolves marital conflict.

Ending each day in marital harmony is a good idea, though. It's God's will, in fact. "Be angry but do not sin," the Bible says, and "do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4:26). Paul's teachings in the context of this verse are far more likely than laundry soap to close each day in domestic peace:

Be honest and gracious in speech (Eph. 4:25, 29, 31). This conduct eliminates arguments before they start. Most wives won't quarrel with kind husbands who always tell the truth.

Be "tenderhearted" (Eph. 4:32). A humble spouse works through misunderstandings quickly. In many instances a sincere and prompt apology is required.

Forgive "one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). A true disciple never forgets that he is hopelessly lost without the grace of God. This deep awareness of personal sin makes it easier to extend the gift of forgiveness to a husband or wife.

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