



## Prayer Tip: Ask God Questions.

(From: [The All-Time 10 Best Tips on Prayer](http://www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf) by Jim Stephens, [www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf](http://www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/10-Tips-Prayer.pdf))

Jesus said in Matt. 7.7, "Ask and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." Also in Matt. 21.22, he said, "And, whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."

This is a very important point to remember about the dynamic of our relationship with God. A parent is always interested in giving to his or her children, however, the parent wants input from the child. When I buy clothes or a new toy for my children, I always want to know first what size, what color, etc. do they want.

God too wants to hear from us. Naturally, He prefers to hear us express the needs of our hearts more than our needs for physical possessions because that's where His primary concern for our happiness lies. However, He does listen to our material needs as well.

I have often found it helpful to write down a question and then pray about it. Usually I write down the answer as I receive it and this has been a wonderful experience. What I mean is that I write down the thoughts that come into my mind in a "stream of consciousness" manner. The answer can often be complicated and even take several stages to develop so writing it down is really the only way that I could practically receive the full answer. Just as in a conversation, one thought builds upon another. If I was just listening, there wouldn't be enough substantial thought for me to grasp the idea and hold it so I could follow step by step to the whole understanding. If there are several ideas as part of the answer, it's very hard to get it unless I write it down.

The value of writing may not make sense until you try it, but I sincerely urge you to try this technique. I don't imagine it works for everyone, but for me it has led to some wonderful experiences.

After my initial prayer question, many thoughts start flowing into my mind and may eventually go off in a totally different direction that I never would have thought of. By writing it down, God leads me to a deep, definite, and personal message that He had for me that I never would have thought of on my own.



## Why Do Men Stonewall in Distressing Situations?

By Gary Thomas

When a woman doesn't understand the way a male brain works, she risks behaving in a way that will create an extremely destructive male response. That response is something that researchers call "stonewalling". Stonewalling describes how men may shut down emotionally and verbally, ignoring you (or anyone else, even another man) and essentially withdrawing from the conversation.

Understandably, few things irritate women more than being tuned out. Women are designed for communication and their bodies reward them with a chemical called oxytocin when they are sharing with another person. However, men are not designed this way and it is a stereotypical male action to "tune out" when he is in an emotionally uncomfortable situation. Why is that?

A biological reason helps to explain what's going on: The male cardiovascular system remains more reactive than the female and slower to recover from stress. Marital confrontation and stress activates his body for vigilance and it actually takes a greater physical toll on the male.

Therefore, it's no surprise that men are much more likely than women to attempt to avoid conflict and distressing situations.

Michael Gurian, author of [The Wonder of Boys](#), warns that most men don't immediately like to talk through distressing emotional events of any kind (frustrations at work, issues in relationships, or disappointments in life). This is because talking about such issues usually brings them cognitive discomfort. In other words, it hurts men to talk through hurtful experiences!

For women, talking through hurtful experiences can be very helpful and physically comforting because of the release of oxytocin. Because of the way the female brain works (with the release of oxytocin), talking through emotional issues has a calming effect.

The opposite is true for most men. Such discussions of emotional experiences can create anxiety and distress. Women probably feel soothed by talking through problems. However, for men, it can feel like torture. That's why men sometimes tune out, i.e. stonewall. It's a desperate (though admittedly unhealthy) act of self-defense for them.

When women come to understand this information, it can be very useful in their relationships. A verbal barrage back and forth will take much more out of her husband than it does out of her and besides that, it will take him longer to recover from such an episode.

This research helps explain why women who react when a man is struggling with his emotions by criticizing him, complaining, or displaying contempt will actually have the opposite result than what she wants. Women desire to effectively communicate with their men, but understanding how they are designed differently is very important rather than assuming he "should" be like her.

Instead of reacting with fury to a stonewalling husband, it's best for a woman to think about taking a breather and asking herself, "Why is my husband tuning me out?" The answer may have something to do with the way that he, being a man, is experiencing the emotional stress of the situation. If a woman reacts to a stonewalling husband with the same behavior that he is reacting to by the stonewalling, she'll only reinforce it.

Some good advice is to be gentle, be patient, and give him time.

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Content taken from [Sacred Influence: How God Uses Wives to Shape the Souls of Their Husbands](#) by Gary Thomas

# Parenting Tip

## The Five Languages of Apology:

### How to Experience Healing in All Your Relationships

By Dr. Gary Chapman and Dr. Jennifer Thomas

#### Book Review by Jim Stephens

This is one of the most powerful and profound books I have read in years. The insights it gives into problems that arise in human relationships are amazing. Page after page I was impressed with the depth of this research and its practical application to our day to day lives.

Relationships between husbands and wives, between parents and children, between friends, between co-workers and others are all negatively effected when we make mistakes. If we don't know how to successfully reconcile through the apology process, the relationship remains damaged and even worse takes another step toward a final and permanent breakdown.

This book was based on research with several thousand interviews asking people what it takes for them to really believe that an apology is sincere. The breakthrough conclusion is that people are very different in what they consider a true apology. What one person will accept is often not acceptable to another person.

What you might offer as an apology because it is acceptable to you may not be what the other person will accept. Based on your apology, you expect forgiveness and reconciliation. But if it is not forthcoming, you are confused and frustrated, even resentful. This can lead to compounded problems in the relationship and long standing quarrels and misunderstandings.

If "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" were your expectations in an apology situation, then it's easy to see how you might never be satisfied.

The book also contains an important chapter on "Apologizing To Yourself". This chapter is very insightful for many people who are trapped in self-condemnation and unable to love themselves.

In the back of the book is a 20 question quiz that allows you to discover your Apology Language. Just taking this quiz without doing anything else was a deep experience for me and showed me many deep insights into the concept.

Print out and take a full profile survey here:  
[www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/ApologyProfile.pdf](http://www.themarriagelibrary.com/Resources/ApologyProfile.pdf)

I highly recommend this book. You should know that it is a very challenging read which will hit you very squarely in the heart.

Here are the "Five Apology Languages" in their briefest form.

#### Expressing Regret — *"I am sorry."*

If the person you've hurt has this language, they will want to know "Do you understand how deeply your behavior has hurt me?" You need to say you are sorry and what specifically you are sorry for.

Show remorse. It doesn't count if the person is only sorry that they *got caught!*

#### Accepting Responsibility — *"I was wrong."*

If the person you apologize to has this apology language, they want you to accept responsibility for what you did or said and acknowledge that it was wrong.

Name your mistake and accept fault. Note that it is easier to say "You are right" than "I am wrong", but the latter carries more weight.

#### Making Restitution — *"What can I do to make it right?"*

If someone has this apology language, they really want to know "do you still love me?" Your behavior seemed so unloving to them that they wonder how you could love them and do what you did. Is any debt owed or repayment due? How shall I make amends to you? Do they need help dusting themselves off and getting back up on their feet?

#### Genuinely Repenting — *"I'll try not to do that again."*

When this is someone's apology language, if your apology does not

include a desire to change your behavior, you have not truly apologized. Whatever else you say, they do not see it as being sincere.

Repentance- literally means turning around 180 degrees. Engage in problem-solving. Don't make excuses.

#### Requesting forgiveness — *"Will you please forgive me?"*

If you offend someone who has this apology language, the words "will you please forgive me?" are the words they want to hear.

Requesting forgiveness is the way to touch their heart and is the way that feels sincere to them.

Be patient in seeking forgiveness and reconciliation. They may need some time or greater clarification.

Sincere apologies are a precious gift. They impart a feeling to the receiver of being deeply valued. Further, they smooth the way to true forgiveness and reconciliation. May you surprise others with the transparency, humility, and boldness of your apologies!

#### Compliments of the District 1 Marriage and Family Ministry, FFWPU

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