



## Prayer Tip: Build Your Foundation Step By Step.

(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))

### Prayers That God Cannot Answer

Another reason that prayers may not be answered is that God may not, in fact, be able to answer your prayer. Why is that? We often say God is all powerful, but we forget that He has imposed limitations on Himself and His creation in the interests of the greater good. The greatest good of all is true love. For love to be true, both people must freely choose that love. Therefore, God will not interfere with force over anyone's heart.

By God's design, He will not force us to love Him. By His design I cannot force my children to love me. All I can do is try to create a positive and loving environment that can greatly support the development of a love relationship, but nobody, not even God, can guarantee specific results regarding love.

If God created us in such a way that some outside force, like Himself, could make us change our love, then other outside forces besides God could also make us change. Our hearts would be totally vulnerable to outside forces that could change them. Then you'd have the case where love would not be eternal. Then true love could not exist. We'd be more like robots. Obviously, this is not what God wanted, nor what we'd want.

Therefore, in affairs of the heart, you may have to pray for a long, long time for some particular result to happen if other people and events are involved. It takes time for circumstances to be moved into the right sequences and position for some particular result. But in the end, other humans can never be forced against their will to do what you want them to do by God, or anyone else.

Think about how hard it is to change yourself. You know that it's even harder than that to change another person. It's harder still to change someone when you are limited to thoughts and prayers and you can't use a physical voice or body. In the end people have to change themselves. And for most of us, we are only occasionally open to changing ourselves on any given day.

Obviously, if God can't or won't change someone's heart, then is God really all-powerful? If we think of "power" in terms of physical force in this physical world, then clearly there are limitations on what God does. God designed the universe of laws and principles that function from the tiniest particle to the biggest galaxies. You won't see Him/Her breaking those laws. But thinking about a definition of "true power", we would want power that is eternal and unchanging. Our physical lives are short compared to our eternal lives. Once in the spiritual world then there is no more physical power. What is important in the next life is love and relationships. The power of love is the only true power that we need to try to understand.



## How Laughter Can Save Your Relationship

By E. Lisitsa, The Gottman Institute Staff

According to Dr. Gottman, sharing humor with your partner is one of the most effective ways to strengthen your relationship.

Surprising each other with random acts of hilarity, enjoying playful back-and-forths, giving yourselves to the moment - these are ways in which your time together is gradually filled with a sense of laughter and joy.

As Dr. Gottman explains in *The Relationship Cure*, all that playfulness requires is a "willingness to turn toward another's sense of silliness... and have a little bit of fun!"

In everyday situations, you often have the chance to react to situations in a variety of different ways. Imagine the following scenario:

Lila asked her husband Charlie to help her in the backyard on a sunny afternoon. She's been having some back pain and wants to untangle a particularly stubborn thicket of weeds, creeping steadily closer and more alarmingly to the rose garden that she loves. To add further cause for delight to an already wonderfully pleasurable activity, the rain from the night before has caused enormous sludge puddles through which they are constantly forced to squelch in their relatively useless leaky boots. Charlie obliges, but isn't being particularly helpful, not knowing a cabbage from a daffodil.

As Lila grows more and more irritated by his incompetence and he grows more and more annoyed by her maddening micromanagement, she tops everything off by accidentally splashing him with the overabundant mud. Covered in mud, Charlie turns towards Lila. He has two choices. He can express his exasperation at the entire state of affairs in which he has been mired, or he can look at their mutually muck-covered state and see the humor in a completely absurd situation.

Looking at his wife with a mischievous glint in his eye, he dips his finger into a bit of reddish dirt on his jacket, and draws a frowny face with it on her arm. With the paradoxical air of an exhausted rogue, she draws two streaks of red dirt war paint across his cheeks. He returns the favor. Now laughing hysterically at their mud-covered selves, they are able to see the hilarious nature of their predicament, and the end of their struggles are punctuated by fits of hysterical giggling.

What has Charlie done in the scene above? He has done something incredible: he has converted a potentially explosive situation into a moment of hilarity. By engaging his wife in play, he has made them into a team - sweaty, exhausted, trapped in muck, a hilarious double act. Relieving tension, he has alerted his wife to the comedic value of their plight! Remember the endless wisdom of *Mary Poppins*: "In every job that must be done, there is an element of fun. You find the fun, and - SNAP! - the job's a game!"

Luckily, most moments you share with your partner are much easier to fill with laughter. **The power of shared laughter is invaluable to building your shared meaning and friendship - the quality which Dr. Gottman tells us is a predictor of the ultimate success or failure of your relationship.**

Apply this principle in your own life, and watch the connection between yourself and your partner deepen and thrive!

# Parenting Tip

## Stable Marriages End Up Twice As Wealthy As Singles

By Melissa Thoma

It turns out, according to the Census Bureau, that lasting marriages create more wealth for their partners than single life.

A 15-year study of 9,000 people found that those who married and stayed married during that time built up nearly twice the net worth of people who stayed single.

In fact, married couples realized the equivalent of an extra 4 percent of income growth annually.

What accounts for this marked difference in wealth creation? Nothing jumps out in the data, but several things jump out at me as I think about my own marriage. First off, if both people in the marriage are working, they're likely making more than a single individual would make.

But there are other considerations, as well.

For example, it's just common sense that two people live more efficiently together than separately. And two people who are intimately connected feel comfortable sharing more than the average set of roommates shares. It's just more reasonable to share large expenses like cars, homes, vacation rentals and major appliances with the person we plan to be with for the lifetime of the purchase.

And then there is the motivation factor. Part of the juice behind marriage is the drive to set goals and achieve dreams with the help and support of a lifelong partner. We know that reaching goals is greatly helped by being accountable to a group rather than simply depending on yourself.

Behavioral change programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Weight Watchers are successful largely because of the extra support that comes with being accountable to a group.

Wealth-building is a slow, difficult process that requires

judgment and perseverance. Having the accountability and support of a spouse surely adds to the success of the endeavor.

How about the added resources of marriage?

Marriage brings a network of familial support in the form of parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews who all know something or someone who can help you along the way. As often as we might feel life would be easier without all that additional family, we have to accept that the larger network of folks who are invested in our marriage are also invested in our future and our goals. . . .

Each of us looks at the world a little differently. When we bring those complementary outlooks together, we usually hit on a solution that is better than what we would have arrived at individually. That's the beauty of shared resources. None of us knows it all. A couple can create more and better together.

While the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, most often we

tend to zigzag to our goals. Life just doesn't work as neatly as math. But one little observation I've made about being married to my husband is that when I am about to zig, sometimes Martin stops me before I zig too far. And when Martin is about to zag, I'm usually the one who can catch it and catch him.

Perhaps that means that by working together toward common goals, we can forge a little straighter path for ourselves and get there a bit faster. Maybe that is contributing to our wealth-generating ability.

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