

## LL34-Couples That Pray Together

Hi I'm Doug Weiss, and I'm Alvean Lyons, Welcome to Love Life

We take on some controversial subjects from time to time and we're about to step into one that has some degree of controversy around it because it has to do with how spirituality impacts relationships. There's a Phrase, couples that pray together stay together, and we were asked is there any truth to this?

Well yes, there is some truth to it but I think we need to explore the larger context around that so I'll start by telling you that I think this is about how people invest in their higher selves and not about what religion you practice or even whether you go to church, synagogue, or the mosque. It is about how the two of you feel about each other and about your faith in something greater than yourself. So I'll tell you that in the morning I have a habit while we're having our cup of coffee and getting ready for the day. We have a couple of daybooks and Peggy has given me the task each morning of reading from them. And we talk about them, whatever the thought is for the day. One of them happens to be a Vedic mindfulness day book so it's talking about intuition and the larger cosmic universe. But in very much the same way, as any Buddhist would tell you, that a Christian might talk about heaven and God, every religion has a sense of the higher being, the higher aspiration we have as men and women. The best part of ourselves, that's the glue that binds us together in a common faith. It's that belief and the work that we do to bring out the best possible person in each other that creates this very positive synergy in the relationship. We are joined by our desire to be the people that we were made to be. Relationships that are enduring almost always have as one of their attributes a common bond around the subject of faith whatever that faith may be.

I would have to agree with you completely and then much like you and Peggy, Matthew and I (I always talk about the shower, one day I'm going to write a book called The shower) when we shower together in the morning, he always leads us in prayer every single morning. I see it in our relationship. It is very similar to building a house. Just as there are the bricks there are all kinds of habits inside of a relationship. For us, prayer is the mortar that holds all of those together. We recognize that there is there is him and there is me and we both have our own experiences, our strengths and our weaknesses, our faith and our fears, but greater than all of those things is a God that we mutually believe in. Should we ever be unstable in our anchoring there is something that holds us together as individuals and us together as a marriage. I don't know who we would be if it were not for that anchoring quite honestly. I think that there's something to be said for a connection that is bigger than you, that is broader than you, that is deeper than you. It's not moved or swayed by the challenges you may individually or collectively face inside of the relationship and there's a level of loyalty to that much like a marriage has. There's you, me and there's our marriage. There's you, me and there's our relationship. That has to be bigger as a notion to each of us individually. I can submit my own individual issue to the greater cause of the us, and for us that is God. I am not tied up in what anybody calls God, who they are and what that means for them. I can just speak to what that means for us and how it has kept us stable. It has been the lynchpin of our relationship for nearly a quarter of a century at this point.

One thing that really struck me as I was listening to you, when things are going well in our lives faith is important and when things are not going well faith is important. It is not something you turn to just when you're challenged. You have to create the proper foundation for it early in life. There's a wonderful writer Richard Rohr, a monk, who's written a number of books and one of the themes that he explores (and there are some who brand him as a bit of a heretic for this) is about going to church, about going through the rituals of religion. Obviously, he's talking from a Christian perspective but this applies regardless. When I've read him on this subject I think about a phrase that a friend of mine once said. He said, we're putting on a play so we learn how to act. There's something about the structure of an ordered observance of your faith. whether that's something you do at home, whether you do that in your place of worship, however you do that, the regularity of the ritual prepares us to move beyond to the personal relationship that we have without higher being. It's that personal relationship that we need to turn to when we have adversity, that's where we're going to find the strength to deal with whatever obstacles we encounter; that's where we're going to find the courage to accept with serenity whatever the day dishes up for us. And it's where we find the fundamental

conviction on which our faith is founded. That is, that there is a truth greater than the truth that we can apprehend with our eyes, our ears and our sense of touch, and that's where we need to turn when adversity comes our way both as individuals but even more importantly as a unit so that the you and I together face whatever this challenge is and we grow stronger as a result of it instead of falling apart. I think that's the reason that couples that pray together stay together, when this is working the way it's supposed to.

I would deeply deeply concur and I think that it is what, if we were to use just contextually Christian faith and the scripture that says that being not equally yoked is really speaking to. I fundamentally believe that it was always the intention of The Creator that inside of our relationship would be such a safe space that it would be a restorative component of our lives. So that as we have to face challenges we are fighting for each other rather than with each other, and because we allow our faith and our relationship with God to be the center of our lives we then come home to be filled back up and prepared for everything that we must face as we step out of those doors. When we get a chance to be able to connect on the levels that allow for the love of God, the love of our Creator, the love of our understanding to be able to flow inside of our relationship, it really cannot be broken. It allows for a faithfulness to something bigger than any one of us or any individual or issue. I just find it to be so restorative and so valuable inside of my relationship that I just can't imagine my relationship without it.

I should say here that I do go to church regularly. We're not fanatics about it when we were on vacation. We found out that in Italy, during the summer months in many small towns there really isn't the same kind of opportunity to participate that you would have perhaps in this country. But that didn't bother us. We weren't concerned about the fact that we didn't go to church. For us the experience is as much about appreciating the other people who are there and appreciating and using the conversation that ensues as a starting point for thinking about something in our lives. So often it is our habit afterwards to go out and have breakfast together and invariably we wind up talking about what we just heard. Sometimes we agree, sometimes we don't agree but generally speaking we have some really rich conversation that comes from the introspection over those thoughts and that's really the purpose behind attendance. It's a place that grounds us for the week. It reminds us of our attention to something other than ourselves; it slows us down and it makes sure that we're setting time aside for this observance not just the fifteen or twenty minutes in the morning when we read through the devotionals. I've said before on these podcasts that my relationship (and I could write about this in Love Life and Internet Dating) my relationship with God is very personal. I talk to him all the time, in the car .....

I even ask for parking spaces

we have a regular conversation and any time in the course of the day I will talk to him. I will say things like God give me grace for this moment, you've asked me to do this thing, and I don't know what I'm doing here Lord, I mean I'm in over my head and I need you to help me see how to approach this particular challenge. I will make requests like that all day long. Now I don't want you to think I get voices coming back, I don't. It doesn't work like that. I do I hear promptings and I get cues and I find that after I've had that kind of conversation things will either open up or they will stay opaque. When they stay opaque that's my sign that says it's not ready wait for the time to come and be still in this moment. Wait, I am with you.

It's very intimate for me and for us. God is very much a best friend and so I laugh about all kinds of things. I talk to God about all kinds of things. I even invite him in sometimes before Matt and I are intimate. I may say hey God, be in this so that I can show him how much I love him in the way that you communicate love through us and have given us the privilege to enjoy each other in this way. I invite him into anything and everything at any given moment and I think that it's so important that whatever your faith is you make room for that principle that you believe in through your practice. I know what you believe by the way that you live. You shouldn't even have to say to people what it is that your faith is because your life is its own publication.

You're giving witness.

We live our love and all kinds of ways. Our faith is just an extension of that love. That you invite him into all of

these things because the truth is, he's there anyway, so you might as well acknowledge Him. He's part of your life friends, everybody be you good or bad you get there by the way you participate. He is ready to forgive, ready to love absolutely every instant, but you have to extend the invitation and open the door.

We're just so appreciative of our listeners and the time that you spend with us. This is an interesting topic and one that we will probably touch on again sometime down the road, but in the meantime if you have thoughts for a subject that we should discuss please write to us at [doug@lovelife.digital](mailto:doug@lovelife.digital) or [alvean@lovelife.digital](mailto:alvean@lovelife.digital)

We want to thank Chelsea Washington, our producer, Todd Washburn, our Recording Engineer and the entire Love Life family, including you, our listeners. We'll be back next week with another episode. Until then, have a wonderful week. Bye folks.