

Positively Speaking

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The Leaning Towers

The Leaning Tower of Pisa, one of the world's great landmarks, was originally designed to stand up straight. It began to lean shortly after the onset of construction in 1173 due to a poorly laid foundation.

The word "pisa", I've heard, actually means "marshy land", which might explain why history's most famous church bell tower started going off kilter before it was even completed.

Several years ago, it looked like the Leaning Tower of Pisa was headed for toppling. Moving one-twentieth of an inch each year, it eventually ended up 17 feet out of plumb.

Alarmed architects and engineers puzzled over it, and in 1990 created a plan to remove 38 cubic meters of soil from underneath, straightening the tower by 18 inches. Now, they say, it is stable for another 300 years.

Perhaps you will be surprised to learn that The Leaning Tower of Pisa is NOT the most tilted tower in the world.

In November 2007, that honor was given to the Leaning Tower of Suurhusen in Germany. Though not as beautiful or old as her sister in Pisa, the 15th century Suurhusen bell tower is the greatest leaner on earth. You don't have to pretty to be crooked. Once again, the sway from vertical is due to marshy soil and a faulty foundation.

So these twin towers teach us an important lesson. If you want to stand straight, you need to have a firm foundation.

Parents, if you want to grow good adults, start them off right when they're young. This is the most important task for mothers and fathers. Teach them the depths of truth, character and integrity in their childhood, and when they are old, they will display it.

Engaged couples can build a great marriage by building on the firm foundation of selfless love, faith and trust. Marriages built on shallow soil seldom last. A life, built on the rock solid foundation of God, faith and the Bible, will stand straight and strong through all the storms of life.

Now, if you've started off wrong, and find yourself leaning, there's still hope -- but it always goes back to foundational issues.