

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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Visit our website

www.fortifiedmarriages.com

to find out more about the ministry and how you can get involved.

The website also has a great deal of marriage resources and links to other marriage organizations available.

Donations are tax-deductible and make the ministry to couples locally and internationally possible.

Marriage: A Life-Long Commitment

Commitment is foundational to a strong marriage, yet too often commitment is seen as a by-product of one's satisfaction in his or her marriage. Miller & Perlman in their book, *Intimate Relationships* reflect the culture's view and defined commitment represented as an equation:

A person's commitment to the relationship is based on his or her

$$\text{Satisfaction Level} + \text{Investment in the Relationship} - \text{Available Alternatives} = \text{Commitment}$$

level of satisfaction and the amount of investment in the relationship (time, children, etc.), less the alternatives available to him or her. The reality of this view happens every day; people are committed to their marriage relationships only if satisfaction level and their investment are better than the alternatives.

$$\text{Commitment} + \text{Investment in the Relationship} = \text{Satisfaction Level}$$

Contrary to the culture's view of commitment, Biblical commitment is the basis for the marriage relationship. A couple committed to each other

invests in their relationship which raises satisfaction level. This can also be seen in an equation: If satisfaction in the relationship is low, one or both need to make an investment into the relationship. This may be emotional; meeting needs or actively listening and communicating openly and positively, or it may be something tangible; spending time together or doing something for one's spouse. The "investment" will vary from couple to couple, but the important thing is to remember that marriage must be viewed as a life-long commitment. Satisfaction level will fluctuate over time and it can be raised with a purposeful, ongoing investment into the relationship.

From "I'm leaving you" to Committed for Life

Ray and Mary (not their real names) never had an easy marriage; both previously married, they had problems almost from the very beginning of their marriage. When Mary became convinced Ray was having an affair, their marriage went from bad to worse and when he finally confessed to the affair, she was at the end of her rope. She thought she couldn't work through the pain and wanted to leave and hurt him. Through counseling and genuine repentance on Ray's part and being completely open and transparent, they were able to work through the infidelity and many years of a dysfunctional relationship. When we last met with them, they both agreed that they had never dreamed they could have the marriage they have today. While they are not thankful for the pain of the infidelity, they are thankful that they now experience oneness in a way they never imagined. Now committed to their marriage and God, they are making the ongoing investment to keep their relationship going in the right direction.

Marriage Ministry: Expanding Your Commitment

It seems that many couples are getting more involved with “marriage ministry.” God is reaching out to a lost world and many are beginning to understand that divorce is *not* the answer to a less than perfect or even a bad marriage. The divorce rate is far too high, especially in the church. Additionally, we now see many couples not marrying, but simply cohabitating.

You may have that life-long commitment in your marriage and the “D” word may not be part of your vocabulary, but this does not mean you sit back, take it easy, and not work on your relationship. We all have to continue working on our marriages. If you are growing as a Christian and married, you should be involved in marriage ministry to some extent. Before you say; “Not me!” Let me point out some aspects of marriage ministry that you can get involved with. This does not mean that you will counsel couples or go into full-time marriage ministry, but you



can expand your commitment to your own marriage and serve God through your marriage by:

- Working on your own marriage.
- Educating yourself about God’s view of marriage.
- Being pro-marriage in an anti-marriage culture.
- Praying for marriages in your sphere of influence.
- Praying for this ministry.
- Point a couple with marital difficulties to helpful resources.
- Mentoring a younger couple.
- Promoting marriage ministry in your church (we can help).
- Giving to this ministry on a regular basis.

Your marriage should be a testimony to your children and others. Being used by God to help or save a marriage is very rewarding and positively affects generations! Expand your marriage commitment; commit to being used by God to help other marriages in one, or even all of the ways above. Let us know what you are doing or how we can help.

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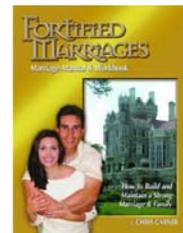
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Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Click “Links” to find organizations to help strengthen marriages.
- Click “Resources” to discover many excellent marriage materials.
- Click “Manual” to learn about the Fortified Marriages manual and workbook.
- Click “Crisis Resources” to download a helpful resource list.
- Articles and information are also available to learn more about God’s design for marriage.



Liberia Update:

God has provided over \$20,000 of marriage and counseling resources to go to Liberia. Additionally, He has graciously provided for our travel the end of March. Please continue to pray for this project as we seek to raise up a marriage and counseling ministry in the war ravaged nation. We also will participate in the All-Liberia Life Festival Crusade featuring Franklin Graham.

There is a continuing need for help. If you would like to participate, contact us or visit our website: <http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com/page.php?20>

