

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner
MA-MFT

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.

A Loving Marriage; a Choice, not a Feeling

Throughout history marriage has been about choice, not feelings. It is interesting that even today, the majority of marriages occurring in the world are “arranged” marriages. Parents choose their child’s future mate and the children learn to love their spouse. Western culture has made *feelings of love* the determining factor of marriage and while there certainly isn’t a problem with marrying someone because one *feels* love, those feelings or lack of feelings should not drive the decision to remain in a marriage or leave. In Genesis, Chapter 4, God asked Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.” Doing what is right in one’s marriage is to fulfill his or her vows, even when the feelings are not there.

People marry promising to remain with their spouses through the good times and bad for as long as they both live. Yet, they too easily break those vows, made before God and man, for any and every reason. One writer commented; “We didn’t learn to break promises and (marriage) vows from big bad bullies at school – we learned from watching our parents deny every word they once said to each other.” Another woman commented that she wished her cancer ridden husband would just die, she wasn’t getting any younger and would need to find another husband. Is this what we have come to as a society, that we dump husbands or wives simply because they have not lived up to our expectations of how life should be? Today, feelings and expedience tend to rule relationships rather than Godly commitment.

Scripture teaches that we are to know the truth, believe the truth, act on (or obey) the truth and that the feelings will follow. Counseling couples, we have found that often, couples need to work through issues and learn skills so they can get to the point of beginning to do things to express love to each other. Then their relationship begins changing dramatically. Problems such as abuse, addictions or adultery require additional or specialized counseling, but most couples do not face these types of problems, they face the challenges of everyday life. So, what can you do to enhance feelings of love between you and your spouse? Could it be a matter of changing your attitude, dying to self or accepting your spouse as he or she is? Pastor Jamie Rasmussen recently said, “When you don’t feel like keeping your vows, allow them to keep you.” Invest in your relationship because it is the right thing to do, not because you feel like it.



No Love to a Lot of Love

One couple came for counseling because the wife was fed up with being treated poorly. Jim wasn’t a bad person, he loved his wife and children, but there was a lot of negativity and harshness. Sheila felt put down, discounted, unloved and that she couldn’t do anything right.

Sheila finally had enough after one difficult argument and she gave Jim an ultimatum; “change or I’m leaving you.” Jim realized his wife was serious and agreed to counseling with her. In anguish, he said he did not want to lose his wife and would do anything to keep their marriage together. During counseling, they gained an understanding of their differences, learned Biblical principles for marriage and built relationship skills. Jim and Sheila turned their hearts toward each other and *decided* to demonstrate love for each other on a daily basis. Not only has it greatly improved their relationship, but their children have seen the difference and the changes have made a difference throughout their family. They continue to work on their marriage and grow in their love for each other. Sheila says that she didn’t feel love for her husband before, but now can truly say she loves him. Jim says that without their church’s marriage ministry and counseling, he doesn’t know if they would have made it and he is extremely grateful for the tools available to help get their marriage on the right track. Jim still tears up when he speaks of how close he was to losing the love of his life. Sheila knows she made the right decision to remain and work through their problems.

Do you need to turn your heart toward your wife or husband? The Bible commands husbands to love their wives and not to be harsh with them and also commands wives to respect and support their husbands. It is not always easy, but it is a choice we have to make. Will you make that choice today?

Action Point: What are *you* going to do?

I cannot tell you how many times I have heard someone say; “I don’t know where this came from. Yeah, we had some problems, but things weren’t *that* bad.” The marriage relationship is something that must be continually cultivated and built up. A fortified marriage is a marriage that is strong to withstand the storms that *will* come against it. We will have problems, are you and your spouse ready to face those problems *together*? Your marriage is what you make it; if you put little into it, it will be weak and fragile, but if you put a lot into your marriage, it will grow healthy and strong. Don’t wait until there is an ultimatum like Jim; invest in your marriage now!

If you are experiencing problems in your marriage, seek help! Like Jim and Sheila, go to your church or go

for counseling. Other organizations listed below can also help.

American Association of Christian Counselors:
www.aacc.net

Association of Marriage and Family Ministries:
www.amfmonline.com

Divorce Busting: www.divorcebusting.com

National Association for Marriage Enhancement:
www.nameonline.net

Save My Marriage: www.savemymarriage.com

Saved Marriage Network:
www.savedmarriagenetwork.com

The Third Option: www.thethirdoption.com

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PO Box 7385
Chandler, AZ 85246

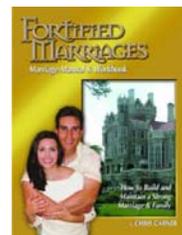
Phone: 480-699-2515

E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com

Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

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: Marriage and counseling resources are on their way to Liberia. Carmen and Chris leave March 19, arriving in Monrovia, Liberia on Sunday the 20th. They will help with counseling at the All-Liberia Crusade through March 27. The following week, they will present training and work with churches to build marriage and counseling ministry in Liberia. Please pray for this project; that the planning and details would all come together. For more information, visit our website. Your tax-deductible contributions still will help with materials and travel expenses.

