

## FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

Visit our website

[www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://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-deductable and make the ministry to couples locally and internationally possible.

### Your Marriage: Freedom or Bondage?

Marriages are deeply affected by whether couples live in freedom or bondage. Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1; that “it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” Christ died so that His followers could be free. The context in that we are free from the sinful nature and do not have to be in bondage to sin. In counseling, we see many people who are in bondage; sin, past hurts, woundedness, wrongs they have done or wrongs done to them. Bondage destroys a relationship, but a couple living in freedom; Christ’s freedom are liberated. They are free to be who they were created to be. Free to communicate and express themselves to each other in peace and without fear. Bondage drives a wedge between husband and wife, freedom brings unity and oneness.

Paul continued in Galatians chapter 5, writing that we are not to use our freedom for sinful or selfish reasons, but to serve one another in love (verses 13-14). Peter reiterated this principle in his letter (1 Peter 2:16-17). We are to live as servants of God, loving Him and loving our neighbor—especially our closest neighbor, our spouse. Unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, spitefulness, holding onto hurts; it is all bondage that keeps us from loving our spouse for who he or she is. The marriage relationship (contrary to what many in today’s culture say) is not bondage. At least it shouldn’t be. It should be the one place we can safely express ourselves to another person and receive care, love and understanding.



Evaluate your marriage; is it a place of openness and safety for both you and your spouse? Is it a haven, a safe harbor where you both can be refreshed and strengthened to meet the challenges of the world? If it is, praise God, keep working at it! Perhaps you can help another couple discover this freedom. If not, what can you do to bring this freedom about? Do you need healthy boundaries in your relationship? Seek counseling, do something to change the relationship before it is too late.

### Moving from Bondage to Freedom

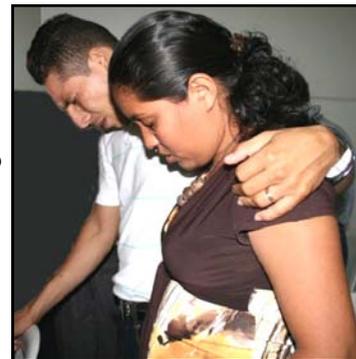
Abuse is perhaps the worse sort of bondage possible in relationships. Typically, a wife is in bondage to a physically and/or emotionally abusive husband who makes it a point to ensure that she knows that no one else would ever want her and that she is unlovable and unworthy. Unfortunately, the husband is also in bondage; bondage to his own fears and feeling of unworthiness. Attempting to make himself feel better, he puts down his wife and children to make himself feel better, but it does not work and the couple ends up in a vicious cycle

that often leads to damage to both spouses and their children.

If you are in this situation seek help! If you are being abused, get to a safe place. Help is available for both husband and wife to help them work through the issues, but safety is the number one concern. Abused women too often have nowhere to turn and cannot even safely turn to the church—this must change! Men, there is absolutely NO justification for abuse. Christ's example of sacrificial love clearly spells out how husbands are to love their wives, if you are having a problem with this, seek help from your pastor, a trusted mentor or a Christian counselor.

We, the church of Jesus Christ, must stand against abuse in all its forms; willing to confront abusers and help abused spouses. It is not an easy thing to do and is counter to our individualistic culture that resents someone "sticking their nose" in their business. The Bible teaches that the church is a community in relationship and abuse is a sin that needs to be exposed openly. Living in Christ's freedom means that we will address sin issues that come before us, not turn away and ignore it.

It is difficult, but a couple, with help, can work through bondage issues (even abuse) to achieve a healthy marriage relationship. It begins with building healthy boundaries; taking ownership for what is ours and accepting responsibility for our own behavior and actions.



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

Living in freedom begins with understanding and accepting who you are *in Christ*. If you have accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, you *are* a child of God, a son or daughter of the King of kings, Lord of lords and God of gods. Now it is a matter of living out who you are.

Healthy boundaries are critical to healthy relationships and they begin with *you*, not others. We all understand physical boundaries, but personal/relational boundaries can be a difficult concept to grasp. *Everyone* can use help

with boundaries, please check out the boundaries information on the Fortified Marriages website.

Evaluate your life, are there areas of bondage? Speak honestly with your spouse and gain insights from each other in this area. Seek to develop a relationship of freedom and teamwork with your spouse that will bring oneness and unity in the marriage and be a testimony for a great and loving God. We were created to be free; to walk closely with God and our spouse. You *can* do it!



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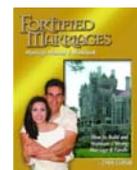
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Website: [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

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## Resources Available at [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

- Click "Crisis Info" to download a helpful resource list—including abuse help resources.
- Under "Resources Available," find resources and helpful information Your Identity in Christ, Boundaries, Communication and more!
- 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.
- Articles and information are also available to learn more about God's design for marriage.



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Fortified Marriages is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization seeking to build strong marriages to withstand the storms that will come. Please consider partnering with us to affect marriages and help couples leave a Godly legacy. Ministry partners may donate to the cause of building strong marriages, become monthly contributors, pray regularly for the ministry, or by letting others know about the ministry. More information is available at <http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com/page.php?22>.