

# FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

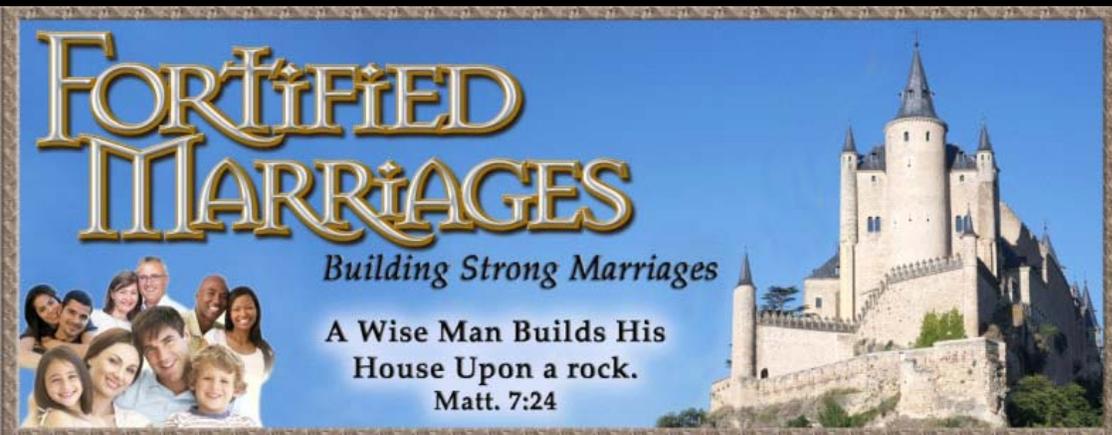
Visit our website

[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.



## Protecting Your Marriage

Many think that their wedding rings will protect their marriages, some believe their wedding vows will keep their marriage safe, others believe their belief that their marriage is for life will protect them, one . These may be good, but in and of themselves they will not protect your marriage. Protecting your marriage begins with a commitment, but couples must set healthy boundaries and continue to grow in their marital relationship and their relationship with God to ensure that their marriage will go the distance.



The concept of boundaries is difficult, but healthy boundaries are essential to a strong marriage. Boundaries begin with the individual; taking responsibility for one’s own behavior and accepting ownership for those things that belong to him or her. It is also a matter of giving others responsibility for their behavior and allowing them to accept ownership of those things pertaining to him or her. The concept of boundaries extends to guarding self and the marriage relationship. It is saying no to the bad and yes to the good as seen in 1 Corinthians 6:12.

Personal boundaries often are not accepted in society today, but they are an integral part of a Christian’s relationship with God. God holds people accountable for their behavior and there are areas he reserves for himself. Salvation is from God, it is not something mankind can take credit for. Jesus stands at the door and knocks (Revelation 3:20), but he only comes enters when invited. People must develop healthy boundaries in their lives to hope to have healthy relationships with others.

Protecting the marriage means that the marriage relationship must come before relationships with all others - except for God. It is important that couples take the steps to guard their marriage relationship and protect it from intruders. The prideful person who states that ‘he or she would never fall to the sin of adultery,’ deceives himself because anyone *could* fall to adultery. The Bible tells us to not only guard our heart (Proverbs 4:23), but also that the heart is deceitful above all things (1Samuel 17:9). Unfortunately, we are *all* too close to a fall to sin. We must guard ourselves and build protective barriers around our marriages.

... So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.  
~ Malachi 2:15

Transparency and openness between husband and wife are critical; there should be no secrets between spouses. It is also important that couples take time for each other to build spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical connection. It is a matter of cultivating friendship with each other. Protecting your marriage requires an investment.

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## Marital Intruders

Couples must defend themselves against the intruders that *will* come in their marriage. Busyness is a serious problem for couples today. If they do not take the time to connect and build intimacy in their relationship, couples will grow apart. They do not grow together naturally, it requires making an investment of time and energy into the relationship. Children are a blessing from the Lord, but they also can intrude into a couple's intimacy and oneness, as will extended family, job, hobbies, and even ministry. None of these things are bad, but couples must work to keep them from disrupting the marriage relationship. To guard against intruders, couples must take steps to ensure that they make time for the two of them. It may be a date night, regularly going for a walk together or possibly locking themselves in their bedroom for a couple of hours of alone time.



Couples need accountability in their lives and marriage to guard against intruders; accountability to each other and to others who can speak into their lives. It is not about legalistically policing each other, but again, protecting their marriage. Jesus said that Christians are to do what it takes to avoid sin (Matthew 5:28-30) and author Jerry Bridges advocates almost going to extremes to protect one's marriage; we have to do whatever it takes to protect our marriage.

Too often couples do not do what it takes to protect their marriages. They allow intruders to draw them apart and at times even allow sinful intruders of pornography or adulterous relationships to severely damage or destroy their marriages. Couples must be especially careful about outside relationships; when one spouse has relationships with people of the opposite sex that do not include the other spouse, there is the potential for disaster. It is important to think of the marriage relationship as an entity that must be protected. Working together, couples can plan to protect their marriages and keep the intruders out.

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

What do you do to protect your marriage? Do you do anything at all? Or just allow the flow of life to carry you along? Work together with your spouse to create a plan to protect your marriage. Set healthy boundaries and do not allow intruders to invade or damage your relationship.

Take a look at the resources available below to help you strengthen and protect your marriage. If your marriage is floundering, get help! See your pastor, a Christian counselor or a mature Christian couple you can talk to. The worst thing you can do is nothing. You must do something to build a strong marriage.



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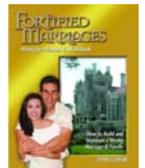
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Website: [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

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

- Go to the *Resources Available* page to find a lot of great resources, including resources and ideas to help spark romance.
- Boundaries resources are available also.
- Check out these books: *Hedges* by Jerry Bridges; *Boundaries in Marriage* by John Townsend and Henry Cloud, & *Divorce Proof Your Marriage* by Gary & Barbara Rosberg.
- 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 Ministry* 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>.