

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner
MA-MFT

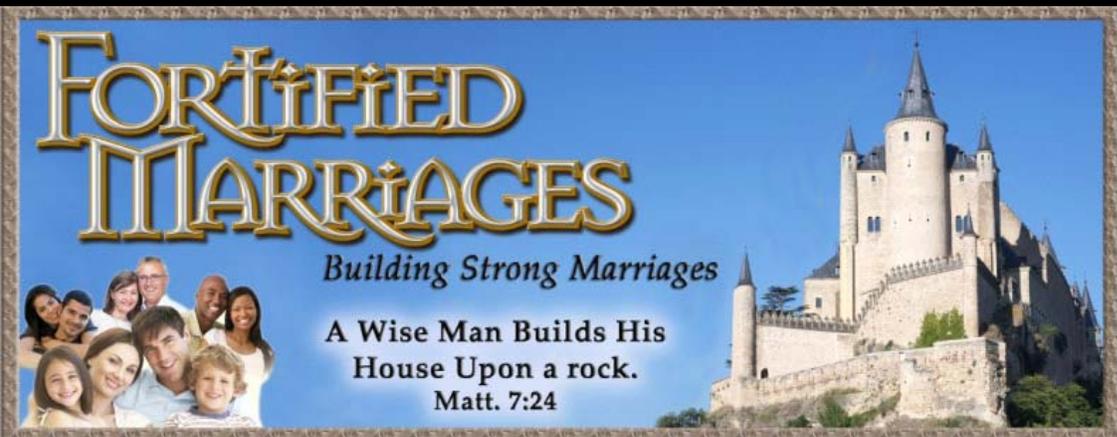
Visit our website

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.



Building a Positive Marriage

Good marriages don't just happen; they are made. The majority of couples marry expecting they will live happily-ever-after. When troubles come or a spouse fails morally, people often wonder what they have gotten themselves into. They did not sign up for the problems. Yet, John recorded Jesus saying, "in this world you will have trouble." Paul brought this closer to the marriage relationship in 1 Corinthians 7:28, when he wrote; "those who marry will face many troubles in this life." We live in a broken world, groaning for the return of Jesus Christ and no one is perfect, but many couples expect perfection from their spouses and few if any problems in life. It is a fairy tale and unattainable in this life-time.

So what do we do? Consign ourselves to a marriage and life of misery? No, Jesus went on to say in John 16:33 that we could take heart because he has overcome the world. Building a positive marriage requires a proper focus; a focus on the One who has overcome the problems of the world. It does not mean that a spouse overlooks the sin of his or her mate, but it does mean that couples are to have Christ-like attitudes. It is a matter of dwelling more on the positive than the negative attributes of one's spouse as seen in Philippians 4:8 reminding believers to think about the noble, true, and praise-worthy things, rather than the negative.



Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Philippians 2:5-8

The point is that we are to live as the Christians we profess to be; loving one another, dying to self, turning from sin and forgiving on another as God has forgiven us. The positive marriage is not a trouble free marriage, but it is a marriage of unity, oneness and other centeredness. We build this type of marriage by first clothing ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (Colossian 3:12). We continue by considering our spouse as our partner, the person God has put into our lives - 'for better or worse.' Healthy boundaries are important, but a positive marriage is, in reality, an attitude, a choice we make.

Making a Choice For Your Marriage

Couples go for counseling because of *real* problems in their marriage: adultery, pornography, drug or alcohol abuse, physical abuse or communication problems and not understanding each other. Every problem is a real problem, yet, some are more difficult to work through. The couples who make it through the problems are the couples who move their fo-

cus from the negative to the positive. This is not easy and only can be done with God's power and help (Philippians 4:13). We have seen this in counseling many times; a couple comes for counseling, but one or both spouses remain focused on the negative: 'it's his or her fault, if he or she would do things right, I wouldn't do the things I do.' Or, 'I know our whole marriage has been a lie, because he lied to me about this problem.' Or 'it's too big a sin, I can't forgive.' the list could on for a long time. When spouses turn from the self focus of how wronged they have been, they can begin to heal. One wife told us that she could never trust her husband again because of his pornography problem, in fact, she would never trust any man again, because of the hurt of men in her past. Yet, as her husband continued in open and honest communication with his wife, and demonstrated that he could be trusted, she began to open herself up to him. It has taken quite some time, but they are building a trust in their marriage that they had never had before. The wife had to trust God and allow Him to work in both her heart and her husband's heart and make a decision to look at the positive.



Couples must make a choice for the marriage and look for the positive rather than the negative. Everyone gets into ruts through busyness, facing a season of problems; or for a myriad of reasons, and most couples will at some point get stuck in negativity. Couples in healthy relationships realize where they are and change to make their marriage positive again. Others just let it go, 'not wanting to stir the pot, we're surviving,' Or only will look at the their spouses rather than taking ownership for their part in the problem. If repentance is required, the spouse who hurt the other must repent and seek forgiveness. Some hurts will take time to heal, but they will only heal if spouses focus on what positives they do have in their relationship.



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

Do you have a positive marriage? A marriage in which husband and wife live at peace with one another (most of the time), working together to meet the challenges you experience in life? If so, keep it up and allow the Lord to use you to help other couples, because probably 75-80% of marriages are not positive. Too many marriages are on the edge and will be lost with the next big problem they encounter.

Do you have a negative marriage? A marriage characterized by criticism and demeaning comments, where you and your spouse seem to argue over virtually every problem that comes up? You don't have remain there or worse, leave the marriage. You can turn your marriage around. It requires work and may need the help of a Christian counselor, but you *can* build a positive marriage.

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PO Box 7385

Chandler, AZ 85246

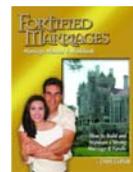
Phone: 480-699-2515

E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com

Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Go to the *Resources Available* page to find a lot of great resources, including resources and ideas to help spark romance.
- Boundaries, Communication, and Conflict Resolution resources are available also.
- 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.



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>.