

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner
MA-MFT

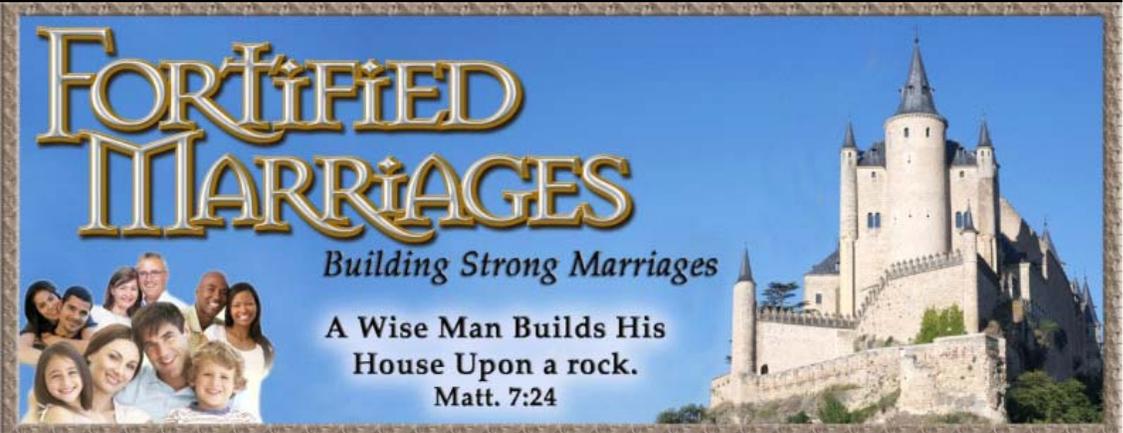
Visit our website

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.



Oneness in the Marriage Relationship

It is interesting how much marriage resembles our relationship with the Lord. Oneness is one of these areas; similar to our sanctification, oneness is a instant event, but also a life-long work. We are *one* when pronounced man and wife, but then we continue to work out that oneness for the rest of our lives together. What is oneness? There are various definitions, but Genesis 2:24-25 not only tells us that marriage is a *oneness* between husband and wife, but it provides a definition of oneness: "A man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." The *naked and feeling no shame* points to an openness, honesty and vulnerability that should characterize our marriage. Oneness is two living in unity and harmony; there is a new identity for the two, yet each does not lose his or her own individual identity.

Oneness can be a lofty concept, but practically, it means that husband and wife are to live in consideration of his or her spouse. A person cannot live as a single person, making his or her own decisions without regard to the spouse and expect to grow in oneness with that spouse. Intimacy, openness, honesty and vulnerability are required to live in oneness with one's spouse. Simply, oneness means that a husband and wife live a *shared* life together. They work *together* to meet the daily challenges of life and share their fears, hurts, failures, joys, triumphs, blessings, hopes and dreams. Amos 3:3 comes to mind here; "Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?" Husband and wife are to be companions; traveling through life and sharing life with each other.



Oneness is a gradual process, a husband and wife must grow in oneness throughout their lives together. It requires work. Our flesh tends to be selfish, self-centered and against working with this very different, almost foreign person we are married to. It is a great mystery that a man and woman can be two completely different individuals and yet be *one*. Yet, it happens and it is wonderful to see a couple living out God's plan for their marriage. Strive for oneness in your marriage.

Growing in Oneness

Oneness requires togetherness. To achieve oneness a couple must be together spiritually, emotionally, physically, and intellectually - in essence, in every area of their being. It does not mean that they are alike in all of those areas, but that they do have connection in each of the areas. It may be difficult to find points of connection, but if you are diligent and creative, you can find them. Pray together, study the Word of God together, find common interests and things you can pursue together. Work together through challenges of life -it is possible!

Oneness When Life is Difficult

The “new normal” – a term surely to become cliché in this generation’s cultures wars, but for Don and Peggy Marquard, it is a term that has come to symbolize the 48 years of their marriage and their life together. Life often takes unexpected turns, but for Don and Peggy, *normal* dramatically changed throughout their lives together. It began the day Peggy met Don on June 24, 1962. Don had an underdeveloped right arm caused by nerve damage as the result of the use of forceps during delivery. *Normal* changed when Peggy couldn’t conceive and they adopted, first Jody and then Troy into their lives. And again when Peggy became very ill; fighting 7 bouts with pneumonia in 11 months and in the process being diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis, a life-threatening disease causing debilitating weakness of the skeletal muscles. *Normal* changed again when, unexpectedly, Peggy became pregnant at age 39 and then again at 42. Cancer diagnoses in 2006 and October, 2010 again changed *normal* for Don and Peggy as they looked to the twilight of their years together. Perhaps deviation from the expectations of *normal* might negatively affect many couples, but for Don and Peggy, unexpected life changes and difficulties are a part of who they are. Their commitment and their *oneness* in spite of the difficulties is an encouragement and a challenge to all of us. (the full article is available on our website)



Action Point: What are you going to do?

What are you doing to grow in oneness in *your* marriage? Are you a couple working *together* through the challenges of life? Or are you a partnership, together only to share expenses and child rearing responsibilities? Oneness does not occur when a couple simply exists together, trudging through life dealing with problems, trying to make ends meet and at the end of the day having sex to release physical tension.

You must be purposeful about growing in oneness. It requires effort to connect with each other, especially in this busy, demanding culture we live in. Add to this the individualistic, me-first mentality of the culture and it is a recipe for disaster when it comes to developing a Godly, Biblical marriage. It is worth the effort to connect with your spouse. Seek help if you simply cannot get past the hurt to begin working toward oneness.



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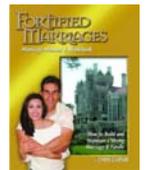
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Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Go to the *Resources Available* page to find a lot of great resources.
- An article is available on the site to help you begin praying together.
- *Sacred Marriage* by Gary Thomas and *The Christ-Centered Marriage* by Neil Anderson are great books to help in this area..
- 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 let others know about the ministry. More information is available at <http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com/page.php?22>.