

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner
MA-MFT

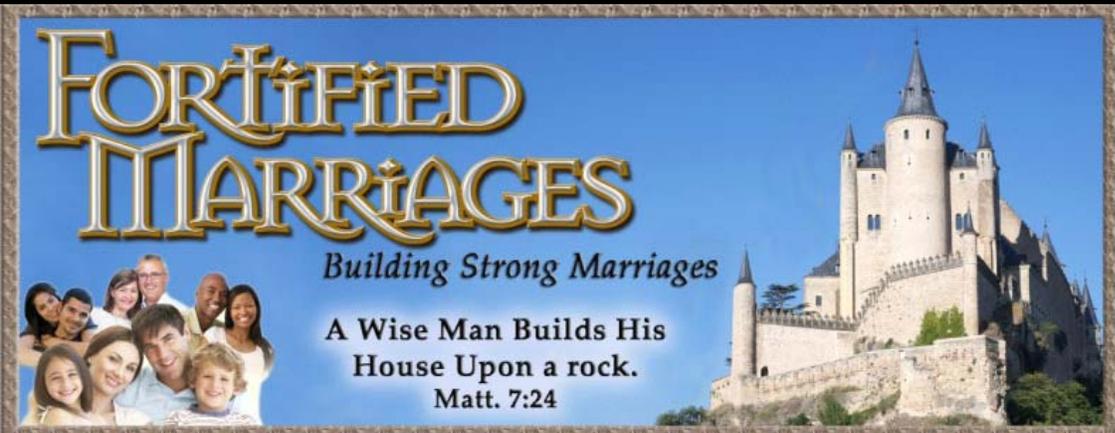
Visit our website

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.



Working Together to Meet the Challenges of Life

Ecclesiastes 4:9 states that, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work." God's plan for marriage is that couples would work *together* in every area of life. Husbands and wives may have different roles in the marriage relationship, but if they do not use their strengths, gifts and abilities *together*, they will tend to have greater difficulties in marriage and life in general. Many today point to the financial crisis as a major reason for marriages failing, but the crisis has only revealed the problems that too many couples today have and it reveals the fact that couples are not working together as a team. Working together, a couple can accomplish more than one or the other can accomplish alone.

Usually, people marry someone very different than themselves. Their differences draw them together, but then tend to drive them apart after they have been married a while. But it those very differences that give couples strength to withstand the storms that *will* come in life! Christians were never promised trouble free lives and in fact, quite the opposite, Jesus said that in this world, Christians would have trouble (John 16:33). Working together, couples can better cope with those troubles, whether they be financial, career, children, family, illness; whatever problems they encounter.

How do couples work together? First, they have to know and understand their differences. It requires time and effort. Unconditionally accepting each other for who he or she is also is very important; with that acceptance couples can begin to collaborate - to work in partnership to solve the problems they face. Couples must get past the selfishness and self-centeredness so prevalent in marriages today. To be productive, they have to sit down together and say, 'here is the problem, how are we going to solve it?' Then they can begin to realize the returns for their work mentioned in Ecclesiastes 4.



The Cord of Three Strands

Ecclesiastes 4:12 wraps up the section about two being better than one by stating that "a cord of three stands is not quickly broken." It has been shown that ropes or cables made by twisting strands together are much stronger than single strand cords. The cord of three strands may be interpreted as husband, wife and Jesus Christ. Christ intertwined through the lives of husband and wife, strengthens their marriage tremendously. The cares and problems of daily life tend to pull a husband and wife apart, but the third cord, Christ, will bind them together and help them work through the problems they face. Again, this requires some effort; a couple must surrender their lives to Christ and remain in Him to retain the strength He provides. When they stray from the Lord, they lose the strength.

Working Together Instead of Against Each Other

Henry and Veronica entered counseling as separated as couple could be while still living together. They argued about everything and, even during counseling, it appeared that every statement either made led to another argument. The hurt and pain experienced in their relationship affected how they viewed each other and led to harsh reactions to each other's attempts to communicate. They experienced financial problems, problems with their children and every decision needed to be made felt like an insurmountable ordeal. Both made decisions without the other because it was "just easier that way." The polarization between them led to intimacy and sexual problems as well and the downward spiral of their relationship appeared unstoppable.



Hopeless? Henry and Veronica thought their marriage was hopeless, but once they agreed to a truce and put their arguments aside so they could begin dealing with the problems they faced, they found that they could work together. Experiencing some success with their financial problems the couple began to tackle the problems with their children. They found that their differences really could help them work through the problems quicker and with better results. Now they are even beginning to enjoy each other's company and are working together instead of against each other. Their relationship is now growing rather than dying.

Action Point: What are you going to do?

Are you and your spouse working together as a team to meet the challenges you face? Or are you, like Henry and Veronica, at odds with your spouse over even the simple issues you face? Will you give up your pride and seek to work with your spouse, your partner, to solve the problems you face? Would you be willing to sit down with your spouse and say, "you are not my enemy, you are a gift from God and I love you?"

Perhaps you work well with your spouse; are there areas in which you can you improve? Could you come along side another couple as a friend or mentor and help them? Too many couples are like the couple described above, they don't have serious problems in their marriages, but the problems they experience have become serious. With a little guidance and help, most couples can get back on track and begin working together again.

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PO Box 7385
Chandler, AZ 85246

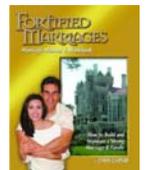
Phone: 480-699-2515

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.
- 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.



Chris & Carmen present a variety of seminars and workshops to help couples grow in their marriage and work together as a team. Contact us for more information about sponsoring seminars at your church.

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>.