

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner
MA-MFT

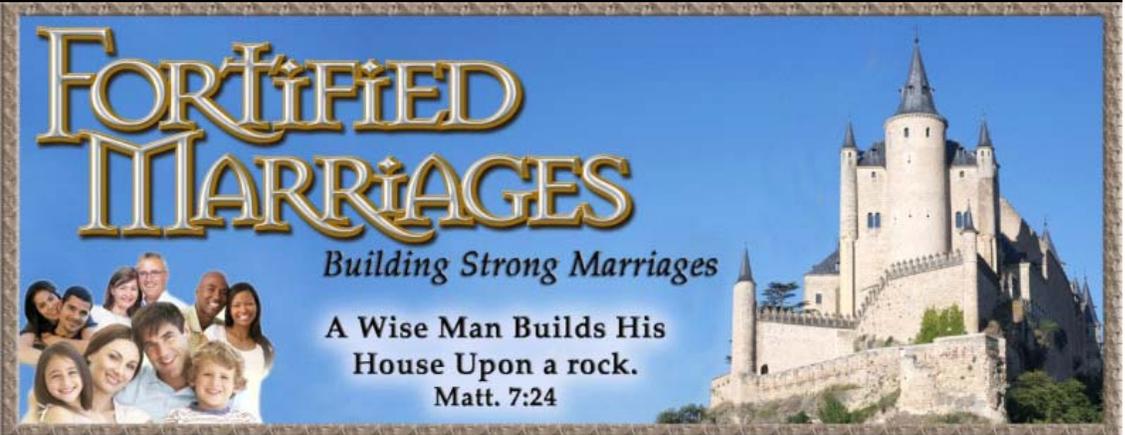
Visit our website

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.



Growing a Strong, Healthy Marriage

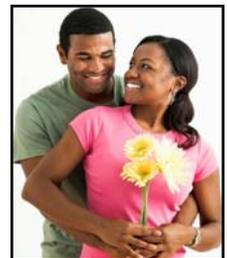
People often enter into marriage believing that since they are “in love,” they will “live happily ever after.” The problem is that this view is not Biblical and not in line with the realities of life. When trouble comes, trials hit or the “feelings” of love wear off, many think that there is something wrong with their marriage and too often a spouse may think that it must be time to move on - to find his or her “true soul-mate.” To paraphrase J.R.R. Tolkien, ‘Perhaps in a more perfect world or even under better circumstances, a more perfect mate might be found, but in reality, one’s true soul-mate is the one he or she is actually married to.’ Marriage requires work and a strong healthy marriage doesn’t just happen, it is grown.

Galatians 6:7-9 states, “*Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*” If you sow discontent, bitterness, anger, rudeness or selfishness into your marriage relationship, guess what you will get back? The same! It is a spiritual principle. If you want a strong, healthy, fulfilling marriage, you must sow healthy seeds into your marriage.

The *healthy* seeds to sow into the marriage are simple; Colossians 3:12 says that we are to cloth ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. If we sow these things into our marriage, we *will* reap the same back; again, it is a spiritual law! Notice that the Lord challenges us in the passage above to not become weary in doing good, we will reap a harvest *if we do not give up*. It is not a matter of being kind to our spouse for a day and when he or she doesn’t respond, giving up and say, ‘well *that* didn’t work.’ We have to continue to do good - it may take a while to see the changes.



Do you want separation, disunity, or distance in your marriage? Sow those seeds! Perhaps you haven’t necessarily sown bad seeds, but you have given everything to career, children or other things and through neglect have reaped a distant, cold marriage. If you put little into your marriage, you will get little out of it. If you sow resentment, anger or pain into your marriage, you will reap those things also. By the same principle, if you sow the positive things into your marriage, you also will reap those things. If you want a positive, fulfilling marriage, sow the seeds of grace, mercy, gentleness, and patience into your marriage. It begins with humility; ‘doing nothing out of selfish ambition, but in humility consider others or (our spouse) better than ourselves’ (Phil 2:3). The storms and trials *will* come, sowing healthy seeds into our marriages will help us stand strong together through it all.



Sowing Different Seed

Tony and Sally came for counseling ready to throw in the towel and give up on their marriage. For more than twenty years, they had argued and fought. Tony was downright mean to his wife, demanded his way and did include her in decisions he made about their children and every area of their lives, even down to the details of their vacations. Sally also contributed to the problems in their marriage. She manipulated and coerced her husband to achieve her own ends and often undermined his relationship with their children. During counseling they wanted to focus on their poor communication, but that focus only kept them from addressing the real problems in their marriage; self-centeredness and a lack of healthy boundaries. As they learned to deal with their differences and to set healthy boundaries, they were able to begin planting seeds to strengthen their relationship and achieve better communication. Both began taking responsibility for their own behavior and they stopped blaming each other for the problems they had.

It is a joy to see how far this couple has come. They are not perfect and continue to work to stomp out the “weeds” that crop up from time to time, but overall they are sowing kindness and teamwork into their marriage. They find that they are not only working together better to meet the challenges of life, but also meeting those challenges better. Their children are healthier and they are discovering joy and fulfillment in their marriage. They are even beginning to help with marriage ministry at church! The change has been dramatic and began with sowing *different* seed into their marriage...



Action Point: What are you going to do?

What kind of seed are you sowing into your marriage? Are you sowing seeds of compassion, kindness, and patience into your marriage or are you sowing discontent, anger, bitterness and selfishness? What are *you* doing to build a strong marriage that will withstand the storms and challenges that *will* come?

Perhaps there have been past problems in your marriage that have hindered growth and unity. Are you continuing to do good, not giving up so that you will eventually reap the harvest of a fulfilling marriage? Sow the good seed into your marriage and don't give up!



PO Box 7385
Chandler, AZ 85246

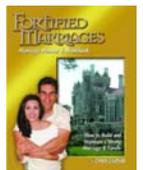
Phone: 480-699-2515

E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com

Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Go to the *Marriage Resources* page to find a lot of great resources.
- Boundaries, Communication, and Conflict Resolution resources are available also.
- Learn about the Fortified Marriages manual and workbook - a great resource to help build strong marriages.
- Articles and information are also available to learn more about God's design for marriage.
- Go to the *Help for Troubled Marriages* page for helpful information for those struggling their marriages. Check out our article, *A Loving Marriage - a Choice, not a Feeling*.



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>.
