

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

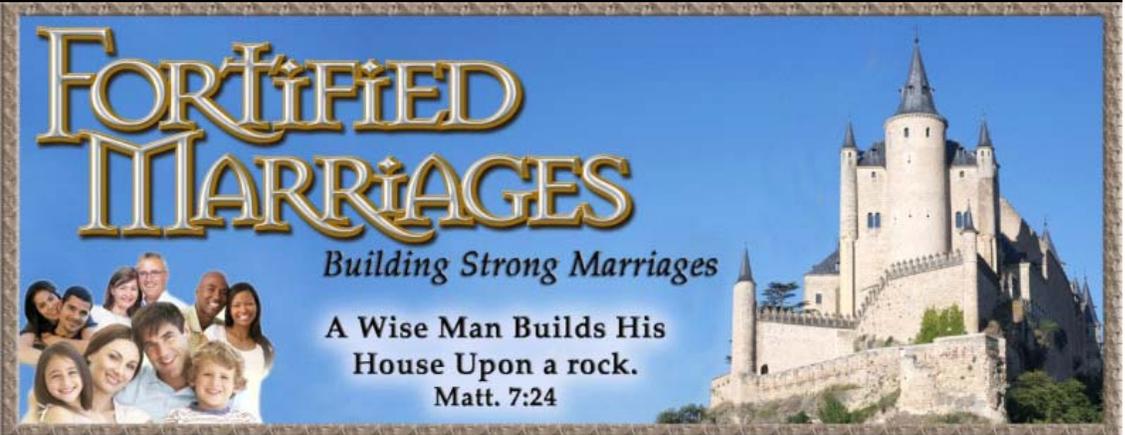
Visit our website

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.



Marriage: The Union of Two Incompatible People

Think about it; why do we marry? Because we are *in love* and this other person makes us feel alive and vibrant and whole and special. It seems that we marry because this other person is *sooo* much like us; we see things the same, we're *compatible*. The reality is that, despite the advertisements promising to match couples based on "29 Dimensions of Compatibility," we marry someone who is *very* different than ourselves. Our gender alone is an enormous difference that affects every area of our lives. Add to those differences our personality, family of origin, and birth order differences, and then communication differences and different needs; it is wonder anyone remains married! Really, if you think about it, our marriages *are* the union of two incompatible people.



But this is the incredible beauty of God's plan for marriage. How can two *incompatible* people come together in the closest, most intimate human relationship possible and not only grow, but thrive! Paul wrote that it is a profound mystery (Eph. 5:31-32). Modern researchers have verified this Biblical truth, discovering that when a person falls in love, certain areas of the brain "light up" and a combination of hormones and neurotransmitters are released producing the feelings of connection, bonding and love. My wife likes to point out that if not for God creating this "love cocktail," perhaps none of us would marry! These findings lend credence to the idea that "love is blind." Going a step further, one researcher performed a study in which men and women, who did not previously know each other, paired up, revealed intimate details of their lives to each other for 30 minutes and then stared into each other's eyes with out talking for 4 minutes. As a result of this 34 minute experiment, many of the couples felt deeply attracted to each other and one couple later married. Humans typically do not marry because of compatibility or even for the right reasons. They marry because they are *in love* and the beauty of it is that it can work!



The wonder of marriage is that despite being imperfect, selfish, prone to sin and incompatible, couples do remain married and even have great marriages. We have to choose to die to self and give sacrificially to this person we profess to love to become *compatible*. God uses our differences to shape us more into His image and help us become a better person and spouse. We need to embrace our incompatibility and differences and love our spouse as God loves us. Our compatibility is up to us.

"I have no way of knowing whether or not you married the wrong person, but I know that it is far more important to be the right kind of person than it is to marry the right person. In short, whether you married the right or wrong person is primarily up to you." - Zig Ziglar

"People think they have to find their soul-mate to have a good marriage. You're not going to "find" your soul-mate. You get married, and after 20 years of loving, bearing and raising children, meeting challenges - then you'll have "created" soul-mate status." ~ Diane Sollee, founder of Smartmarriages

Choosing to Love

We have counseled many couples over the years and can not tell you how many couples have told us they were divorcing because they were just too different or could not get along. One couple came for counseling because they could not communicate or and argued over everything. Although they had been married for many years, they felt distant and alone in their marriage and they did not have the intimacy and oneness they had felt at the beginning of their marriage. With help, they were able to understand and accept their differences and even use those differences positively in their relationship. The key was they made a choice to make their marriage work and they were willing to work on the marriage. This couple chose to love each other and give to one another.



The fact is that the feelings of love ebb and flow throughout the marriage relationship. Every couple faces problems; health, work, children, parents, friends, money; we all encounter trouble in life. Healthy couples work through the problems or seek help to get through them. Too many couples don't deal with the problems and husband and wife end up with a seemingly impassable gulf between them. Like the couple above, every one of us must make a choice to work on our marriages.

Action Point: What are you going to do?

Do you expect compatibility in every aspect of your marriage? Do you focus on the negatives in your spouse and not the positives? Or, are you and your spouse so busy meeting the daily demands of life, you rarely, if ever connect? Make the choice for your marriage, choose to work on it and connect with your spouse - get help if necessary!

Or are you in that minority of couples who are growing together and are committed for life in spite of your incompatibility? Our challenge to you is to be available to help other couples. Mentor a younger couple, spend time with them, encourage them and be there for them when the problems of life arise. Carry their burdens and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2)



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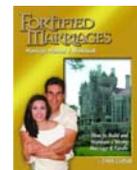
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Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Go to the *Marriage Resources* page to find many great resources.
- Boundaries, Communication, and Conflict Resolution resources are available to help in all relationships.
- 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.



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>.
