

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.

Reconcilable Differences

Differences tend to draw couples together, but then also tend to drive them apart. We are drawn to someone different than ourselves and become enchanted with him or her, but after marriage, those same differences tend to bring conflict into the marriage and at times can lead to divorce for *irreconcilable differences*. Yet, it is possible to reconcile a couple's differences and even thrive in the marriage relationship.



God's plan for two very different people to marry and become *one* is a wonder and a mystery, but it takes work. It may seem like men and women come from different planets, but we must strive to learn and understand one another. Some things you can do to better understand your mate and reconcile your differences are:

- ◆ Accept your spouse for who he or she is.
- ◆ Recognize your differences.
- ◆ Work to understand your differences.
- ◆ Learn to appreciate your differences.
- ◆ Utilize your differences to handle the problems and issues of life.
- ◆ *Together*, you are more effective than you would be alone.

Reconciling your difference takes an investment of time and energy, but the effort is worth it!

Reconciliation means to bring into alignment; the process of making consistent or compatible. It does not mean that one or both spouses give up who they are, but rather means that they are willing to work with each other in the context of their differences. It requires humility; no one is perfect and a healthy marriage necessitates recognizing that each one has limitations, problems and inadequacies that can and should be improved. Rather than pointing out our spouse's problems and limitations, we need to look at our own shortcomings and be



willing admit when we are wrong, repent and seek to reconcile - to bring our marriage relationship into alignment again. It's not always easy, but it is always beneficial. Humility seeks to build up rather tear down with criticism; it seeks to change self rather change the other.

Couples can work together to reconcile their differences and build healthy, strong relationships to withstand the storms that will come in life.

“What counts in making a happy marriage is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility.” ~George Levinger

Marital Conflict

Many couples seek counseling due to communication problems; they say that they cannot work through the conflict they experience in their relationship. Yet, these same people are able to effectively work through conflict at work or in other relationships. Too often couples get stuck and will not work together to effectively work through their conflict. One must first, be *willing* to work out those differences and then utilize healthy communication principles to effectively work through their differences. Terry Hargrave wrote that “conflict is simply a way to work out individual differences.” It requires humility for a couple to work through their differences. If one or both spouses are unwilling to die to self and surrender their lives to God, they will, at the very least, find it very difficult to work through conflict and may have difficulty maintaining a healthy marriage. It is imperative that couples work through their differences!



A Couple Reconciling Their Differences!

My husband and I will celebrate our 48th anniversary shortly. We were encouraged to attend a Fortified Marriages class, but my husband wasn't very motivated to attend - it wasn't easy for him to spend an hour in a class he thought he didn't need. He is a middle child of a very large, dysfunctional family and I am the oldest child raised by a mother with several failed marriages.

It took a while for my husband to begin participating in the class, but with prayer and persistence God kept us going and now it is more of a pleasure spending hours studying together. We have learned so much about ourselves, our past, our childhoods and the examples we had growing up. We now see how God and His mighty love and plan for our lives has kept us together all these years. (This couple has found newness in their marriage even after 48 years - praise God! They want this newness in their marriage to be an example to their family and others.)

Action Point: What are you going to do?

Do you and your spouse's differences bring you together or do they tend to tear you apart? Do arguments tend to revolve around your differences, rather than discussing the real issues you face in daily life? Do you seek to work with your spouse to solve those life problems?

Utilize your differences to make better decisions and resolve issues in life. Reconcile your differences and in humility seek to work as a team to work through the conflict you and your spouse will face.



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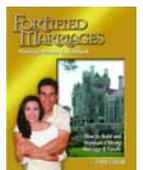
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Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- 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>.
