

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner
MA-MFT

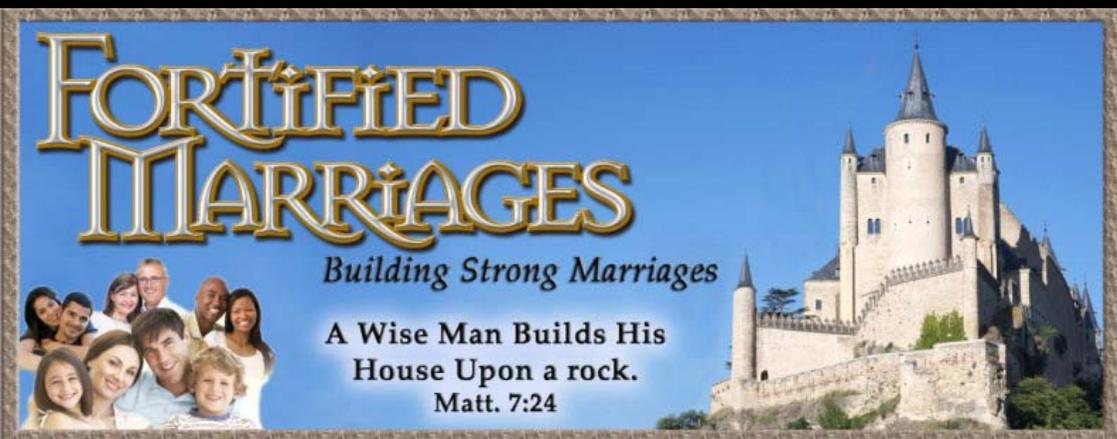
Visit our website

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.



Marital Boundaries - Guarding Your Marriage

More than ever today, marriages are under attack. While there are many internal factors causing marital problems (busyness, selfishness, lack of intimacy, etc.), today, we want to focus on external factors that can cause marital problems and even may break up marriages. We must actively seek to guard our marriage. There are too many ways in which our marriages can be damaged or destroyed. Inappropriate relationships at work, connecting with past flames on the internet or at school reunions, allowing an innocent relationship to become inappropriate, or even being the victim of a predator.



There *are* predatory men and women “on the hunt,” looking for sexual relationships - at times even looking to “take down” someone seemingly guarded in his or her marriage. We must be on guard and ready, like Joseph, to flee sexual immorality. More often though, the “innocent” relationship develops into something inappropriate. Male and female working together on a project or facing a crisis become sexual or allow the relationship to become something more than just a friendship. People too often allow feelings to drive their actions, rather than the truth of God’s word. ‘It “feels” right, so it must be right.’ It is a lie straight from the pit of hell! Feelings must be tested and submitted to God’s word and His will. It is never God’s will to have intimate relationships with the opposite sex outside of marriage.



Facebook and the internet have brought new problems into marriages. One source stated that 20 percent of divorces now include some mention of social media related complaints. We recently counseled two couples in which Facebook dramatically affected their marriages. In one case the husband connected with an old flame and the other in which a spouse’s inappropriate comments and questionable connections were the final provocations almost leading to a split. Social media seems to have quickly become an imbedded part of our culture, but if we, as Christians are going to be involved in social networking, we must be careful and not allow it to destroy our marriages.

We must proactively take steps to protect our marriages:

1. As a couple establish boundaries about what is and is not appropriate in relationships with people of the opposite sex.
2. Do not keep any secrets - either spouse should be able to be involved with *any* interactions with people of the opposite sex.
3. Leave the past in the past; do not connect with “exes.”
4. Do not air marital problems “on-line” or with people of the opposite sex.
5. Intentionally connect with your spouse on a daily basis.

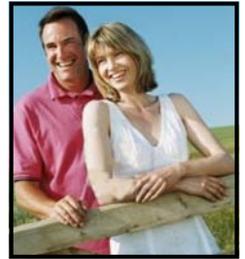
Happiness is not having what you want, but wanting what you have. - Anonymous



Proverbs 4:23 states; “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” Protecting our marriages begins with *us* personally, the individual. It means that we guard our hearts and set healthy boundaries in our lives. Infidelity doesn’t “just happen” as a great many people have said. Very often, it happens because we do not have the appropriate safe-guards built into our lives. Or we allow negativity to become the rule in our marriage; looking at what we are not receiving from our spouse rather than seeking to give to him or her. We allow ourselves to be carried away by feelings for another person or in pride think that we are not going to fall - temptation captures *other* people, not us. Malachi 2:15 reminds us to “guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife (or husband) of your youth.”

Guard Your Marriage

Every marriage must have healthy boundaries. Not rigid rules to be followed to the letter, but limits to protect a couple’s marriage. It begins with the individual’s heart, but each couple also needs to agree to establish boundaries about what husband and wife will or will not do with people of the opposite sex. Personally, I will not go out to coffee or a meal with any non-family woman alone and professionally, I will not counsel a woman alone. Both instances may bring about intimacy that is not appropriate. Likewise, my wife has the same boundaries with men. Some may think we are too strict with our boundaries, but others, like author Jerry Bridges (as related in his excellent book “Hedges”) go even further with their boundaries. Every couple must consider where they will set *their* boundaries. Some may balk at an invasion of their “rights” as an individual, but marriage means that one gives up some of his or her *rights*. Married people do not have the same freedoms as single people have. See 1 Corinthians 7 for God’s view of a married person’s “rights.”



Action Point: What are *you* going to do?

What do you do to protect your marriage? Do you have established boundaries to guard your marriage? Do you have personal boundaries that will help safe-guard you against “inadvertently” ending up in a sexual encounter or developing a relationship with a person of the opposite

sex? What would you do if a co-worker indicated he or she wanted to meet privately with you? Do your interactions in social media build up your marriage relationship? Or tear it down? Please consider these questions and proactively seek to guard your heart and your marriage.

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PO Box 7385
Chandler, AZ 85246

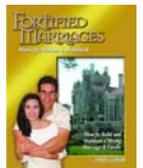
Phone: 480-699-2515

E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com

Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Go to the *Marriage Resources* page to find many great resources.
- Several articles are available about protecting your marriage.
- 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>.