

# FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

Visit our website

[www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://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.

## Research Shows Relationship Education Improves Marriages

Why did you marry your spouse? Like the vast majority of couples today, I am sure you married your spouse because you *loved* him or her. Although the “love marriage” is relatively new on the mass scale we see today, it has existed throughout history. We see this in the story of Jacob and Rachel and his willingness to give so much because of his great love for her. But are there problems with the love marriage? Did God intend for couples to marry because they are in love or did He intend for us to learn to love the spouse chosen for us? While one could argue both sides of the question, one of the great problems in marriage today is the myth that *love* is enough for a life-long, fulfilling marriage. Western society today has bought into the lie that a couple marries and then lives happily-ever-after. 1 Corinthians 7:28 tells us that ‘those who marry will face many troubles in life.’



People today receive training to drive, invest money, teach, careers; for many things, but few are trained to enter into the most important and difficult relationship in life - the marriage relationship. Many truly believe they can succeed in this complex relationship based on the feelings of love they have for each other. Couples may spend tens of thousands of dollars on the wedding, but are not willing to invest any money or time to learn about marriage. Similar to flying an airplane without training, people marry with no education, crash the marriage in divorce and then try again, still with no training. No wonder second marriages end at a much higher rate than first marriages! It is a travesty and in today’s world marriage education is both desperately needed and readily available.

Learning God’s plan for marriage and building relationship skills is possible and it doesn’t matter how long a couple has been married, it is never too late to start, but it requires investment of time, energy and money. We have led small groups with couples married 20 to 40 years who have said that they had never been taught the information learned in the group and wished they had learned this sooner. Research in the past few years has found that premarital education/counseling reduces the chance of divorce by 30% and it has been consistently shown that marriage education/enrichment produces significant gains in relationship skills and overall relationship quality. Whether you are struggling in your marriage or have a great marriage, you *can* have a *better* marriage! Join a marriage small group study, take a class, or attend a marriage retreat, seminar, or workshop - invest in your marriage and get educated!



*All marriages are happy.  
It's the living together afterward that causes all the trouble. ~ Raymond Hull*

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## Marriage Education is Needed

Carmen and I married young with no idea of what was required for a healthy marriage relationship. Both divorced, we married each other and thought we were going to have one of those happily-ever-after stories. The troubles of life came crashing into our marriage and we almost split up at seven years. Through counseling, marriage seminars, retreats, small groups, reading marriage books and continual work, we now have a healthy, solid marriage, but we continue to invest regularly in our marriage. (more of our story in last month's newsletter).

Recently, I spoke to an engaged couple in their 60s. I asked about what they were doing to prepare for the marriage and the future husband responded that they had been married before and 'have it down.' I wanted to tell the woman to run for the hills, a fiancé unwilling to learn will be trouble. In another instance, many years ago, a couple told us they didn't have the \$169 to attend FamilyLife's Weekend to Remember, but their divorce a couple years later cost them thousands of dollars. We couldn't tell you how many couples have come for counseling after years of struggling and wondering why it kept getting worse. Yes, there may be instances when marriage education will not improve a marriage because of the need for counseling, but if they had received training earlier in the relationship, quite possibly they would have developed a healthier relationship that would not have ended in divorce.



Marriage education breaks down the myths of our wrong expectations and understanding of marriage. It helps couples develop relationship skills, learn ways of coping with life problems in positive ways, and provides a context in which couples can grow in their relationship. Connecting with other couples and discovering that we are not the only ones with marital struggles allows us to learn from one another, and provides hope, encouragement and a realization that marriage education is important and needed.

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

How do *you* invest in your marriage relationship? Are you taking time to learn God's plan for marriage and acquire the tools to help build a marriage that will withstand the problems you will face? Spend time together as a couple and build intimacy and oneness, but also seek out additional resources. Read a marriage book together, attend a

seminar or workshop or go to a marriage retreat. Consider joining a marriage small group or use the Fortified Marriages workbook to enhance your relationship. Many resources are available to help you continue to grow in your marriage relationship. Check out some of the websites below and invest now!

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## Fortified Marriages

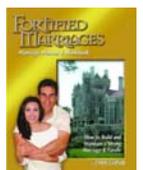
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- The Fortified Marriages website has many great resources.
- The Fortified Marriages manual and workbook is a great resource to help build strong marriages.
- AMFM: [www.amfmonline.com](http://www.amfmonline.com)
- FamilyLife: [www.familylife.org](http://www.familylife.org)
- National Assoc. Relationship & Marriage Education: [www.narme.org](http://www.narme.org)
- Smartmarriages: [www.smartmarriages.com](http://www.smartmarriages.com)
- National Healthy Marriage Resources: [www.healthymarriageinfo.org](http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org)



*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.*

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**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>.

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