

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.

Christmas is For Giving

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (Eph 5:1-2) Jesus came into the world to give His life to reconcile mankind with the God of the Universe. He left the glory of Heaven to live in poverty and be reviled by the very people He came to save. *That*, friends is giving! We are to be imitators of God, but are we? By exchanging our wealth among family and friends to celebrate Jesus leaving the glory of Heaven? 1 John 3:16 tells us that we know what love is because of Jesus’ example of giving Himself. Giving and receiving ‘Christmas’ gifts doesn’t seem to fit - especially when we tend to be so self-indulgent and self-centered throughout the year. Does giving *some* of our abundance reflect what Christ has done for us, when He gave everything?



We see this in marriages today; so often we hear spouses say they are not giving anything more - that they have given enough and they are done. In counseling, we hear and see so much selfishness, it is almost sickening, but it just seems to permeate society today. Giving isn’t a matter of doing our weekly duty by giving some money at church and perhaps giving a little extra to those in need at Christmas time. Giving is to be a way of life for us as Christians - not just money, but, being imitators of God, we are to give of ourselves. Do we do that? Not only at Christmas, but throughout the year?

I don’t want to put a damper on your Christmas celebration, but I do want to challenge you to live your life for Christ as He has asked you to live it. Jesus challenged mankind to live a life of love and then defined love as giving of oneself. Not just in December each year, but throughout the year. Live as a giving person with your spouse, children, family, friends - everyone you come in contact with. Carry each other’s burdens and fulfill the law of Christ, help others when they need help, give to the poor, take care of the widows and orphans; the Bible demonstrates many areas in which we are to give. Where can you be more giving to demonstrate God’s incredible love for mankind?

*“Success in life is not in what we get, it is in what we give.
Things we obtain, power we possess, fame we achieve will never fill that
lasting need we can only find in giving.” ~ Kenn Kington*

Giving in the Marriage Relationship



The marriage relationship is a place to learn about giving. There are so many ways we can give of ourselves to our spouse; our challenge is to be open to learning how we can give and to have an attitude of giving. I am not saying that we give in to sin, abuse or addictions or to give when it is not beneficial to give; healthy boundaries are required. But we are not to be selfish and self-centered; it is not the way of Christ. God's love is a humble, giving and *other* centered. We have to move past the attitude of 'make me happy, take care of me' to God's view of marriage that our spouse is in our life to help us become more like Christ. Giving unconditionally to our spouse demonstrates God's love to him or her.

Giving to our spouse includes showing appreciation to and for him or her. I just read an author who supposed that of the 6 billion people on the planet today, 5.9 billion go to bed every night "starving for one honest word of appreciation." We as human-kind have become so selfish that we cannot give our spouse, the one we promised to love and cherish for life, a word of appreciation? We need to be intentional finding the positive and verbally appreciating what we find.

I am convinced that giving unconditionally to our spouse for a month will do more to win him or her over than all the complaining, chastising and demanding one could do over a life time. The Bible bears this out, when Peter wrote that wives were to win their husbands over without a word. Folks, that would mean she should be *giving* to her husband! Husbands are likewise challenged in Ephesians to love their wives as Christ love the church and *give* himself for her. Perhaps, instead of exchanging your wealth this Christmas purchasing presents, you could commit to working to out give each other this coming year. Develop an attitude of putting each other first and be courteous, kind, patient, gentle, encouraging, and verbally appreciating of your spouse.

Available on our website: *Christmas is About...* An Article to challenge us to remain Christ focused during Christmas.

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

Again, where can you be more giving to demonstrate God's incredible love for mankind? Would you commit to seeking to out give your spouse in this coming year? Christmas is for giving, but only because it represents the

most incredible gift of all - Christ giving Himself for us. Be a giver throughout the year; give of yourself, be humble, and be *other* centered. Becoming more like Christ is to become more giving!



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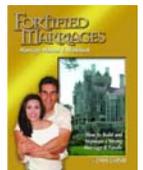
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Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Go to the *Resources Available* page to find a lot of great resources.
- Boundaries, Communication, and Conflict Resolution resources are available also.
- Click "Manual" to learn about the Fortified Marriages manual and workbook.
- 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>.
