

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

Visit our website

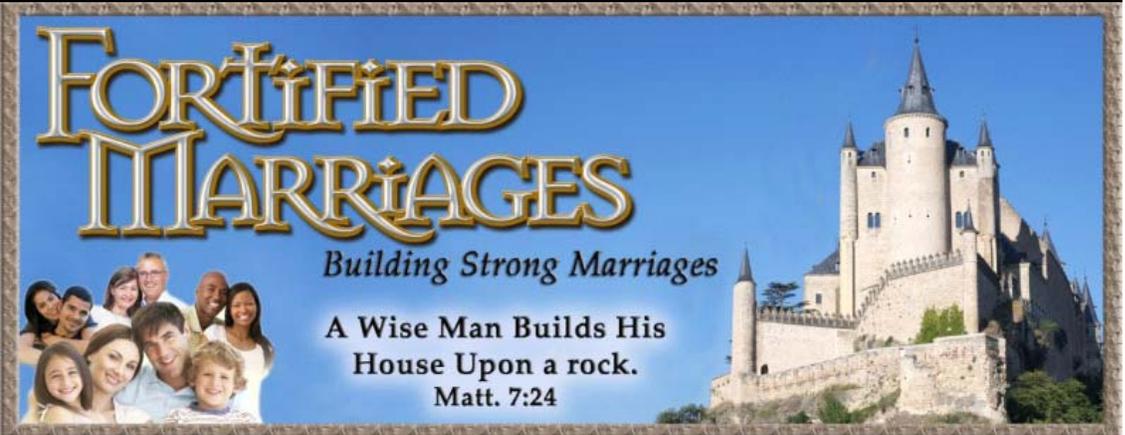
www.fortifiedmarriages.com

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.

También disponible en español



Growing in Community

God created mankind for relationship; first with Him and then with others. While culture today, especially in the United States, tends to be very individualistic, it is not Biblical. Christians are the *Body of Christ* and it means that there should be relationship, connection and unity among Christians. Paul wrote in Ephesians 4 that the Lord gives different gifts so that the body of Christ may be built up. Educational research has found that adults learn better when they are able to provide input and contribute to the discussion; essentially, people learn and grow in community and small groups are where adults learn and grow best.

Yet, culture today insists that we can learn on our own and grow our own way. Again, the Bible addresses this; Proverbs 16:25 tells us that, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." Our own way tends to or can lead us astray rather than the right way. We need community, the Body of Christ, to help us grow in our knowledge of God and challenge us to walk in the Spirit.

This holds true in marriage also. A recent, nationwide study found that 95% of people do not want a marriage like their parents have. Wow! So if we are not learning how to build healthy marriages from our parents, where do we learn about marriage? Well, usually from our parents, although, most often, we learn many wrong ways to live in relationship. Or we learn from the media - movies and television. Or we just figure it out for ourselves; doing what seems right, but this has led to a nearly 50% divorce rate, even in the church. So, how do we learn? Learning God's plan for marriage from His word. That seems easy enough and there are many who teach that we are only to use God's word for counseling and teaching, but as the Ethiopian eunuch answered Philip in Acts 8, how can I understand, "unless someone explains it to me?" Couples getting together to study God's principles for marriage learn from God's word and each other and can better implement sound practices into their marriage relationships.

Marriage *is* a difficult relationship - we need to learn God's plan for our marriages and implement the tools that can help us live out His plan for our marriages. We learn and grow in community, why not get together with a group of couples who want to develop strong, healthy marriages and grow together? There are many great resources available to help us grow in our marriage relationships.



"I figure that the degree of difficulty in combining two lives ranks somewhere between rerouting a hurricane and finding a parking place in downtown Manhattan."

~Claire Cloninger

The Power of Couples Meeting Together in Small Groups

We have been involved with couples small groups for more than twenty years. It has helped us immensely in our own marriage and we have seen God use small groups to touch many lives. Providing and receiving input helps husbands and wives grow in their relationship with God and with each other. We learn from each other in the group and over time, the group bonds and can deal with the deeper issues of life. Praying together, experiencing life together and helping each other work through problems brings a closeness that can last a lifetime. Consider joining or even starting a couples small group. You don't have to be a "teacher" to lead a group; there are many great resources available for couples small groups.



Couples Small Group Resources

The *Fortified Marriages Manual and Workbook* has 52 studies, 19 inventories and surveys, the book covers virtually every area of marriage and helps couples communicate and work together to build strong marriages.

Familylife's The Art of Marriage is a series of small group studies for couples: www.familylife.com/small-group-studies

Focus on the Family also has a marriage series for small groups. Go to the Focus on the family store and search marriage series.

Smallgroups.com has a lot of great resources for small groups and training for small group leaders.

www.adultbiblestudycurriculum.com & *www.discipleshiptools.org* also have small group training resources.

CBD.com & *Familychristian.com* both have many small group studies; search couples small groups at their sites.

Action Point: What are you going to do?

We have led small groups with newlywed couples to couples married 35 years or more. All have found the studies very helpful. Couples small groups are for everyone! Consider joining or even starting a couples small group. Don't feel qualified to start a group? Are you *available?* *Vulnerable?* *Teachable?* From the life of King David, we

see God's qualifications for leading groups. The resources referenced on this page can help you learn about group dynamics and leading a small group. Our website also has information to help you - or call us! We will be glad to provide information and guidance to help you begin a couples small group.



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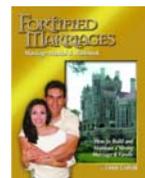
Article to check out: Why Should I Be in a Small Group? Discipleshiptools.com

- The Fortified Marriages website has many great resources.
- The Fortified Marriages manual and workbook is a great small group resource to help build strong marriages.
- The website also has information about small groups.

Books: *How People Grow* by Dr Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

All About Small Groups by Dr. Richard Joseph Krejcir

Small Groups with Purpose by Steve Gladen and Rick Warren



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>.
