

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.

The Mind of Christ

Christmas; a time of joy, yet a time of sadness - remembering loved ones gone. A time of peace, yet a time of disagreement. A time for family gathering, yet for many, a time of isolation and pain. Some say we shouldn't celebrate Christmas, it is a pagan holiday and yet a new movie defends Christmas and even the materialism that seems to come with the celebration. *What are we to do? Where do we find the balance?* Paul's letter to the Philippians gives us some insight when the Lord admonishes us to have the same attitude of Christ; who humbled himself; came to earth in human form to be the sacrifice to reconcile mankind with God.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ~ Phil 2:5-8 ESV

Jesus gave up the glory of Heaven to be born as an infant in this broken, sin-filled world. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation, it is a free gift; it is something that should humble us and keep us from thinking too highly of ourselves. Yet, what do we do? We put others down, criticizing and focusing on the wrongs of our spouse, children, parents, government; anyone and everyone but ourselves. We complain about the injustice around us, yet Jesus suffered the ultimate injustice. He deserved adoration and praise, but chose to come to earth to endure scorn, hatred and ultimately being put to death not for his sins, but for ours. This is how we know what love is, that Jesus gave himself for us.

So, whether you celebrate Christmas *or not* or you dislike the materialism *or love it*, there is an admonition for all of us in the life of Christ; to have his mind, to humble ourselves and be obedient to God. We are to love as Christ loved, giving up our privileges and rights, giving of ourselves to others. Life is not about what we get, but what we give. What can we give to improve someone else's life? Money to someone poor? Grace to a child who tries, but always seems to mess up? Love to a family member who seems unlovable? Love and grace to our spouse? What change could we make to better have the mind of Christ? To better represent our God and our Savior to a dark and lost world that so desperately needs grace and salvation? It is not about a another resolution to do better, but to be who we *are* in Christ. To live out the love, mercy and forgiveness that we have received.

"Life isn't worth living, unless it is lived for someone else." ~ Albert Einstein

Humility in the Marriage Relationship

Every couple we've counseled in the past twenty plus years have been quick to point out the wrongs their spouse have perpetrated against them. Carmen and I were this way for too many years and still work to maintain a healthy, realistic view when issues arise. It is human nature to look at others faults and not to look at ourselves. It requires humility - the mind of Christ to look at ourselves and what we contribute to the situation rather than blame our spouse. Yes, we must address sin when it is present, but often conflict and arguments are about different views or desires rather than the sin of one spouse. I cannot tell you how many times we receive the "yeah, but..." when we attempt to get a person to look at their contributions to the issues they experience in their marriage. It might be difficult, but it is possible to change

Humility; the freedom from arrogance that grows out of the recognition that all we have and are comes from God (Nelson's Bible Dictionary), is not a belittling of oneself, but an exalting or praising of others, especially Christ. A humble person focuses more on God and others than on self, but also accepts responsibility for his or her actions and behaviors. Humility is critical to a healthy, God honoring marriage. We are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to (Rom. 12:3), but we are to consider others better than ourselves (Phil. 2:3). In humility we can look at ourselves and our contributions to our marital difficulties rather than pointing the finger at our spouse. In humility we can seek to give to our spouse as Christ has given to us; giving grace and mercy and forgiveness. The couples who make it, who develop healthy, fulfilling marriages are the couples who humbly accept responsibility to change themselves and not try to change their 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?

What can you do to better develop the mind of Christ? To be humble and obedient to the Lord? How can you better be an ambassador of reconciliation? Helping others reconcile with the Lord or reconciling yourself, first with God, but also reconciling with others.

Seek to give; to love as Christ loves you by giving of himself. Give what is needed; dying to self, giving emotionally or financially, serving others. Christ did not live for himself, but for others. Likewise, live for others, not for yourself.

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

PO Box 7385

Chandler, AZ 85246

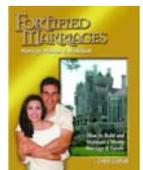
Phone: 480-699-2515

E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com

Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Resources Available at www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- Go to the *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>.
