

## FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner  
MA-MFT

Visit our website

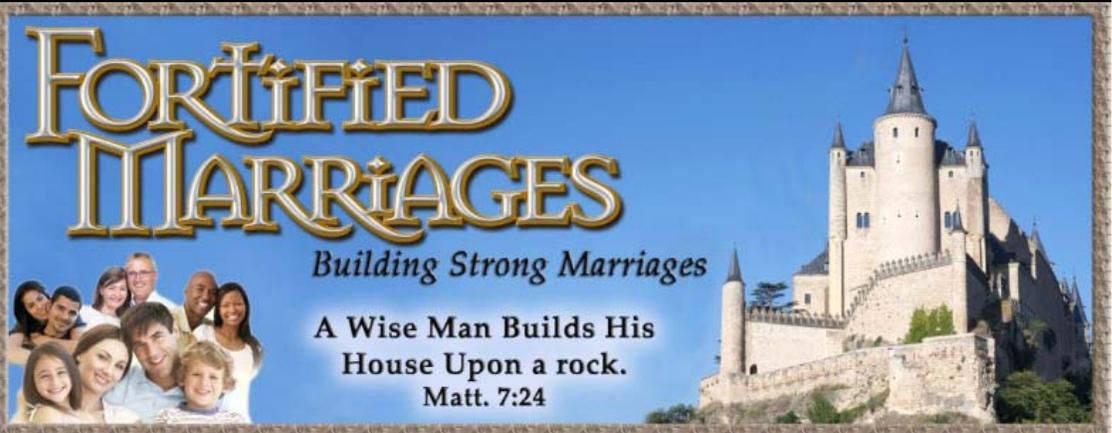
[www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

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.

También disponible en español



### Honor Your Spouse

Most couples promise to *honor* their spouse in their wedding vows. Yet, do they understand what they are saying? Do they even know what they have said? They have promised to esteem and respect their spouse, but have they given any thought to what that means? Dale Harcombe wrote that “Honoring your spouse means building them up and making others think well of them. It means praising them and accepting them for who they are and not trying to change them into someone else. It means honoring them with your actions and your words. It means honoring them with your body and being faithful to them.” Couples need to hold to their wedding vows and the commitment they made to honor each other. By doing so, they will be witnesses to their children and the world, and will fulfill what the Bible commands: “Give everyone what you own him... if honor, then honor.” (Romans 13:7)

Honoring our spouse begins with possessing the right attitude. Greg Smalley wrote that “Honor is a decision to view our spouse as a priceless treasure - a person of high worth and value.” We must make a daily decision to view our spouse as a valuable treasure and it does not matter whether they deserve it or not. Too often we use poor behavior as an excuse to dishonor our spouse. Yes, sinful or wrong behavior must be addressed, but honoring our spouse is something we promised to do; it is Biblical and necessary. The Bible tells us to; “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3) Usually, it is selfishness and self-centeredness that gets in the way of honoring our spouse. We must begin with a right attitude.



A right attitude begins with love. What is Love? 1John 3:16 tells us that we know what love is because Jesus Christ gave Himself for us. Likewise, we demonstrate love by giving; giving honor and value to our spouse. It is a decision we make and a gift we give. It may help to make a list of the positive things our spouse brings to the relationship. What attributes do we appreciate about our spouse? What are his or her abilities and strengths? Keeping a list can help us when we face the rough times we all go through. We also need to extol those positives to our spouse, our children and others. We need to treat our spouse with respect; even when they might not act so nicely toward us. No, we don't gloss over sinful or poor behavior, but we still can be respectful while addressing the behavior. Healthy communication is more likely to get through than if we yell and scream or stoop to their level.

Honoring our spouse; treating him or her with respect and value can dramatically change our marriage relationship. It is a matter of obeying God's word as Paul wrote in Philippians 4:8; dwelling on the good things, not the negative. It is not just about our spouse, it is about us; our treating our spouse as a valued child of God.

*“Live so that when your children think of fairness, caring and integrity, they think of you.” ~ H. Jackson Brown, Jr*

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## A Change in Attitude Changes Much

We were counseling a couple who were not getting along. While the husband was not physically threatening or abusive, his words were meant to hurt and control his wife. I told him that his behavior was abusive. His countenance changed dramatically and he became much more attentive; it was a change we've rarely seen in counseling and this man obviously heard what I had said and took it to heart. Later, he said that he did not want to be abusive and he loved his wife; he didn't want to be hurtful. He became very conscious of his attitude and behavior, seeking to honor his wife and not tear her down. He became less demanding and more concerned about his wife's feelings and caring for her. The change in his attitude dramatically changed their relationship. The wife took her eyes off herself and she began looking for ways to build him up and encourage him. They found a new respect for each other and began honoring one another and it transformed their relationship.



One person made the change and the other followed along to develop a more positive, fulfilling marriage. It is making a decision that I do not want to dishonor my spouse, but want to honor him or her and treat them with value. It is fulfilling the great commandment to love God and love your neighbor. It is not always easy, but with God's strength we can honor our spouse! It begins as it did with this husband by accepting the admonition and deciding that we want to be different, and then changing our attitude. A change in one person's attitude can dramatically change the relationship!

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## Honor Your Spouse By Listening



One way to honor your spouse immediately is to attentively listen to him or her. Don't multi-task or think about other things, actually give them your undivided attention and actively listen. Ask for clarification when necessary and don't interrupt or assume you know what they will say. In our busy world today, too often we don't take the time to listen to our spouse and we miscommunicate and actually dishonor our spouse. Make the effort - listen to your spouse and you will honor them.

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

Do your children and those around you see you honor your spouse? Do you demonstrate that you value your spouse on a regular basis? Daily? It is right and it is Biblical that you should honor your spouse - you promise to honor him or her on your wedding day! Does that commitment to your spouse, friends and God not mean anything to

you? Quit trying to change your spouse; accept them and value them for who they are. Never, ever put him or her down even when you are addressing inappropriate or sinful behavior. You are a child of God and your spouse is a child of God; a prince or princess - son or daughter of the King of the universe treat them like it!

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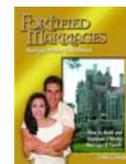
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- The Fortified Marriages website has many great resources.
- The Fortified Marriages manual and workbook is a great small group resource to help build strong marriages.



**Articles to check out:** [forthefamily.org/5-ways-to-honor-your-spouse-when-you-dont-feel-like-it](http://forthefamily.org/5-ways-to-honor-your-spouse-when-you-dont-feel-like-it)

[marriageemissions.com/100-ways-you-can-love-your-husband-his-way/](http://marriageemissions.com/100-ways-you-can-love-your-husband-his-way/)  
[marriageemissions.com/100-ways-you-can-love-your-wife-her-way/](http://marriageemissions.com/100-ways-you-can-love-your-wife-her-way/)

**Book to check out:** The Blessing, by John Trent & Gary Smalley

*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>.

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