

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

Thriving versus Surviving

Most everyone marries expecting to live happily-ever-after - to have a thriving marriage; a marriage encouraging, exciting and stimulating to both spouses. Unfortunately, most marriages do not thrive; one statistic reports that 85% of marriages are not thriving, but merely surviving. Of those marriages surviving, many are not surviving well as shown in a large, nationwide study found that 95% of people do not want a marriage like their parent's marriage. No wonder divorce is so prevalent today, no one desires a life-time of just surviving - living a daily struggle attempting to find some happiness in one's marriage relationship.

God's plan for marriage is that couples not only survive the rigors of daily life, but that they thrive together. Thriving means to grow vigorously, flourish, prosper, or to progress toward a goal despite circumstances. Marriage can and should be a thriving, growing relationship fulfilling to both husband and wife. Marriage researchers have found that a loving marriage relationship is not a fairy tale, but essential for healthy relationships and children. A thriving marriage isn't some distant dream requiring a new mate, but possible, even in the busyness of life today.

The *surviving* marriage just gets by and although the couple may meet the challenges of life they face, too often, they are not growing together and the relationship is not fulfilling for either husband or wife. Many tend to lead lives of isolation and loneliness. One or both have unmet needs and there is little, if any connection. Husband and wife rush through each day attempting to keep some semblance of order, deal with kids, work and problems, only to collapse at the end of the day possessing no energy for each other or the relationship.



A marriage merely surviving *can* become a thriving marriage; a healthy marriage that will benefit husband, wife, their children and those they come in contact with and also be a testimony of God's relationship with His people. Thriving marriages are shown to be not just the hope of husbands and wives, but a social good, bringing about better families and even improving communities. Every couple marries desiring a thriving marriage, but too many settle for surviving through the rigors of life. This is not God's plan for marriage. Yes, it requires work and most-likely, a change in priorities. But the investment you make into your marriage is a thousand times worth the work it will require.

Moving from surviving to thriving requires that a couple spend the time to connect and grow in intimacy. It requires making the marriage relationship a priority; making time to connect. Understanding one another and working *together* to meet the challenges of life are essential characteristics of the thriving marriage. It begins with both husband and wife making a decision and a commitment to arranging their life to include time for their relationship. Be intentional and make plans to build a flourishing, growing marriage.



Moving from Surviving to Thriving

Fred and Lisa led very busy lives; career, active children and the problems they faced kept them racing from one activity to another, from one fire to another. Usually, by the time they got to bed at night, they felt completely drained and exhausted. Fred would read a little to relax while Lisa, hoping for some connection would attempt to engage in some conversation; at times even blowing up over their lack of connection, but usually, rolling over to go to sleep with barely a 'goodnight.' When asked, both said they wanted a healthy, connected marriage relationship, but both neither knew how to attain such a dream within *their* marriage. Perhaps elsewhere...

Neither Fred or Lisa felt that their relationship could become a *thriving* relationship. Despite Lisa's occasional demands for connection, for some change in their relationship, neither would find the time or the energy to make the changes that would improve their marriage. One day Lisa confided in a friend that she thought her marriage was over; that she couldn't handle the loneliness of living a marriage devoid of connection. Her friend suggested counseling, but Lisa didn't think Fred would go for counseling and she couldn't see any other way out, but to leave Fred. Lisa's friend persisted and asked Lisa to at least ask Fred to go for counseling. Acquiescing and accepting her friend's offer of prayer, Lisa went home and anxiously awaited Fred's coming home from work. She told Fred that she couldn't live the way they were living and if he cared at all for her, their children and their marriage, he would go with her for counseling. To her surprise, he agreed.

Fred and Lisa discovered that there was hope for their marriage. It would require work, but they could have a thriving marriage. Once they had done the work in counseling and had their marriage going in the right direction, they even found that they had more time - they were able to work through disagreements faster and could accomplish much more working together than individually.



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

Is your marriage thriving or just surviving? If it is surviving, talk to your spouse and make a commitment to make the changes necessary to have a thriving marriage. If necessary, seek Christian counseling to help you work through the problems and gain the tools to improve your marriage to a healthy, flourishing relationship.

If your marriage is thriving, what do you need to do to keep it thriving? What can you do to help other couples?

Consider starting a couples study using the Fortified Marriages Workbook or any one of the many resources available to help strengthen your marriage and others. Do not complacent and neglect your marriage. Continue to work on your marriage relationship.

Any marriage can become a strong, thriving marriage fulfilling to both husband and wife, but a couple must be intentional about strengthening their marriage.

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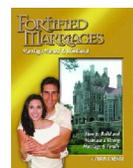
Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- 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.
- Check out the Fortify Your Marriage Blog
- Like us on Facebook to stay connected.

Article to check out: Making Time for Marriage (marriageemission.com)
Five Essentials for a Thriving Marriage (Familylife.com)

Books to check out:

Marriage Workbook: From Surviving to Thriving by Chuck Swindoll
Marriage Undercover: Thriving in a Culture... by Bob & Audrey Meisner



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>.
