

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.

También disponible en español

Marriage According to God's Plan Rather than Our Own Plan

The God of the Universe, the Creator of all things has a plan for marriage. The plan for marriage, the consistent with our God, does not change. No matter how much mankind tarnishes or culture disfigures God's plan for marriage, we must remember that God's plan is the same yesterday, today and forever. God's plan is that man and woman would, in the marriage relationship, would: 1) reflect God's nature to all they come in contact with, 2) work together in unity and singleness of purpose, 3) be a testimony of God's incredible love for mankind, and 4) raise children to love and serve God. The plan is simple; carrying out the plan, proved to be impossible.

The Lord laid out the plan in Genesis, Chapter 2, but in Chapter 3, the man and woman strayed from the plan and there has been trouble ever since. The "fall" brought sin into the world and a curse to mankind. We see the effects of this curse in relationships today. The whole of God's word is about relationship; relationship with God and relationship with others. It seeks to bring us back to God's plan; living in unity, being a testimony and leaving a Godly legacy. The curse brought pain; for the woman, pain in childbearing and pain in her relationship with her husband. The first man and woman did not stand together against their first test and in falling brought division into the marriage relationship. The man's pain would be in providing for his family; provision would no longer come easily, but it would be through painful toil. Is it any wonder that women tend to find their identities in relationship while men tend to find their identities in their work or career? Too often there is division in marriage where there should be unity. There is emotionally painful interaction, where there should be peace. There is brokenness where there should be wholeness. This should not be!

A direct effect of the fall, wives tend to be "quarrelsome." Seeking connection with their husbands, they attempt to get their husband's connection through negative means; i.e. being argumentative, difficult, irritable, or confrontational. Where is the husband? The husband is too often building a career, chasing after his dreams, pursuing hobbies and not usually building relationship with his wife or growing in oneness with her. Too many husbands pursue many things in life other than their wives and the divorce rate and number of dysfunctional marriages in the church today reflects this problem. Solomon wrote that a man should enjoy life with his wife all the days of his meaningless life (Eccl. 9:9). Life does not have to be meaningless; a strong, growing marriage is a blessing to husband, wife, their children, and will positively affect many other people. That is not meaningless!



Paul addressed this issue in his first letter to the Corinthians; writing that a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world – how he can please his wife and a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world – how she can please her husband (1Cor. 7:33-34). It brings us back to God's plan for marriage; unity and oneness. Growing in relationship requires investment in that relationship. How can you enjoy life with your spouse if you are not doing anything with him or her? How can you be a testimony for God's love if you are not living in unity with your spouse? How can you raise God loving children if you are not working together?

Husbands and wives must begin connecting and working together and stop living separate lives of quiet desperation until one or the other gives up. There are many, many excuses for not connecting; I have heard too many to count, but I don't accept any of them. The Bible tells us that God's power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own power and goodness (2Peter 1:3). We don't know God well, don't understand His plan for marriage, and attempt to make it on our own, and so we flounder and head for ruin. The relationship landscape today reflects the truth of this statement. People seek to meet needs and feel significant through far too many dysfunctional means; from pornography to playing with the affections of co-workers or "friends" to living vicariously through reality shows to giving everything to children or career. The list could go on for pages. It is time to stop and build marriage relationships based on the Word of God, based on God's plan for marriage. Couples must seek connection and unity within their marriages and not give up on their marriages and on God. (The full article is at: www.startmarriageright.com/2015/05/gods-plan-for-marriage-is-better-than-ours)



Marriage is a relationship journey that begins with the ecstasy of attraction, meanders through a rocky stretch of adjustment and discovery and culminates in the creation of an intimate, joyful, life-long union. Whether or not you realize the full potential of this vision depends not on your ability to attract the perfect mate, but on your willingness to accept yourself and your mate for who God created you to be and utilize your differences to build a healthy, strong marriage.

Action Point: What are you going to do?

If we lived life according to God's plan; if our marriages reflected God's plan, there would be no need for counseling or marriage education. But the reality is that few couples have marriages reflecting the Creator's idea of marriage and hence, we have many thousands of marriage books and an incredible need for counseling. If your marriage doesn't reflect God's design, please get help. Seek counseling, go to marriage seminars, do whatever it takes

to learn and implement the tools that will help you in your marriage. If you have a healthy, strong marriage, who can you help? Perhaps you want to get involved with ministering to marriages or maybe you can be available to help one couple by being a part of their lives. Please do something! We have got to get marriage right; families and, in reality, our society depends on it. God's plan does work!

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

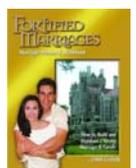
PO Box 7385
Chandler, AZ 85246

Phone: 480-699-2515
E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com
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: Marriage: God's Idea (focusonthefamily.com)
Five Biblical Purposes for Your Marriage by Rick Warren (lifeway.com)

Books to check out:
Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas
The Meaning of Marriage by Timothy Keller



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>.