

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

Visit our website

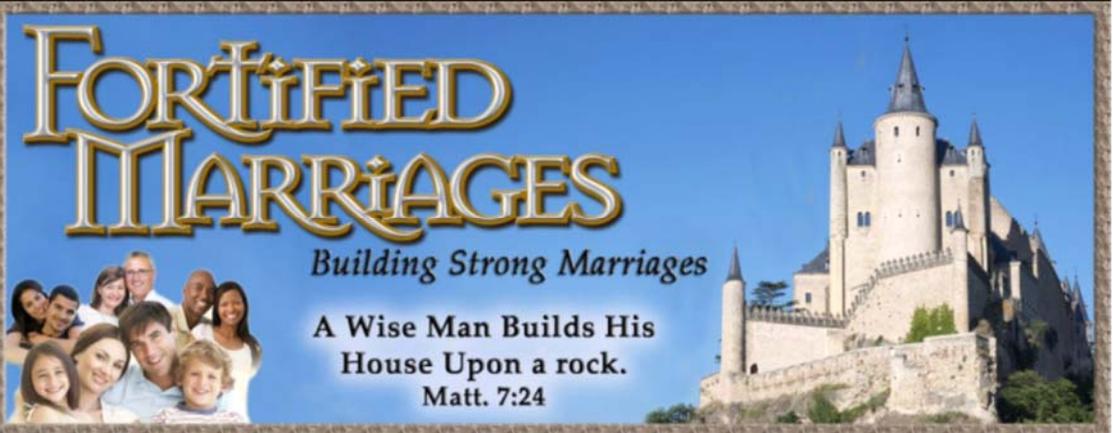
www.fortifiedmarriages.com

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



Radical Obedience for Life and for Your Marriage

God required *radical* obedience of His people in the Old Testament. There are many examples for us: Abraham leaving his home, Noah building an ark, Esther standing up for her people, and the prophets putting their lives on the line in obedience to the Lord their God, *and* Jesus' obedience of going to the cross!. Jesus didn't lessen the radical call to obedience, but in fact, required even more of His disciples. When the rich young ruler in Luke 18 asked what was required to enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus told him to sell everything and give to the poor. Peter responded to this exchange saying; "We have left all we had to follow you!" Jesus required everything - He requires *everything* from those who would be His followers. Jesus told His disciples that "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." The Christian walk requires *radical* obedience.

Nancy Sheppard, in her book, *Confessions of a Transformed Heart*, relates how she learned *radical* obedience as a wife and missionary in Liberia, Africa. She summed up her transformation, saying; "When I yielded control of my life to God, He became not only my Lord and Master, but also my friend and brother; my beloved and it was enough." She radically obeyed the Lord her God in her missionary calling, and in her marriage and He radically transformed her life and marriage. Instead of being at odds with her husband, Mark, they developed harmony and a oneness that deeply affected their family and many thousands through their ministry.



Radical obedience is not only for missionaries and Bible heroes, God also calls each and every one of us to much more than a superficial obedience that seems to show itself when it is convenient or we *feel* like it. We rationalize away obeying God's Word when it doesn't fit our view of how life *should* be, when our happiness is at stake or when we perceive our rights have been violated. Look at the trouble Jonah went through because he did not want to extend God's grace to a wicked people, or Ananias and Sapphira, who chose the appearance of obedience rather than obeying God's calling in their lives (Acts, Chapter 5).

Many people today; people who call themselves Christians, do not even have the *appearance* of obedience; they live their lives for themselves, allowing materialism or their feelings to drive them rather than obedience to God's word. They treat their spouses shamefully, fornicate and commit adultery without a second thought and often seem to only seek to please themselves. 2Timothy 3:1-5 seems to sum up the "Christian" church today; telling us how people will act in the last days. Unfortunately, in counseling, we see "Christians" who reflect the proud, abusive, unforgiving, selfish and self-seeking life-styles Paul writes about.



Friends, it is time to put on the new self in Christ and live lives for God rather than for ourselves! It is time to put sin behind us and live in radical obedience! It is time to do what God wants for us rather than what we want! It is time that we reflect God's plan for marriage rather than the pathetic, selfish shadow of what we think marriage should be.

Colossians 3:19 tells husbands to love their wives and not be harsh with them. Christ loved us by giving himself for us and God demands that husbands die to self and love their wives as Christ loved the church. It is a matter of giving up our rights and privileges to sacrificially love our wives. Is this easy? On our own strength, it is impossible! We must first be completely submitted to God and living in *radical* obedience to Him and His word. It is not as difficult as we imagine, especially when we stop holding on to our selfish wants and desires and stop saying; “what about her?” Husbands must stop waiting for their wives to do what is right and obey the Lord for what he is supposed to do.



Hosea radically obeyed God when he literally purchased his wife out of prostitution and took her home to be his wife. Do you think he *felt* like obeying the Lord? No! He had grounds not only to divorce his wife, but to have her stoned to death, but he chose to obey God and love her as God loved him. Husbands, die to self, put your wife’s needs before your own and serve her - *radically* obey God and love her sacrificially!



Colossians 3:18 tells wives to submit to their husbands as is fitting to the Lord. As Christ honored the Father and followed His lead, God demands that wives respect their husbands and help him be all God wants him to be rather than working against him to their own ends. Respecting and honoring an imperfect man is impossible in one’s own flesh, but it is possible when a wife is completely submitted to God and living in *radical* obedience to Him and His word. Wives must stop nagging their husbands to do what is right and obey the Lord for what she is supposed to do.

God taught Nancy Sheppard about submission to Him and to her husband on the mission field. She found that rather than stifling her, this perceived loss of control actually freed her. The Lord also taught her to reverence her husband, which honored God even more than it honored her husband. She learned to live in humility. It wasn’t easy for her, but her *radical* obedience improved her walk with the Lord, her marriage and her ability to serve the Lord.

Action Point: What are you going to do?

Will you quit being selfish and self-centered and in the Lord’s strength, radically obey Him - doing things God’s way rather than your own? The Lord requires that we act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). Are you willing to die to self and put God first? Even when it doesn’t make sense or you don’t want to? Do you try to live by some list of what it means to be a Christian? Or do you live totally sold out to Him?

Submit to the Lord and treat your wife or husband as God wants you to rather than reacting to his or her behavior. Love as Christ loved and “clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Colossians 3:12). Don’t accept minimal compliance to God’s word, but radically obey the Lord, seeking complete submission and holy living as a way of life, each and every day. Don’t merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. *Do what it says* (James 1:22).

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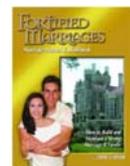
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Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- 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: The Secret of Radical Obedience by Bob Sorge
www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/articles/theology/060104.html?start=1

Book to check out: *Confessions of a Transformed Heart*
by Nancy Sheppard



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>.