

## FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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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-deductable and make the ministry to couples locally and internationally possible.

### The Christ-Like Attitude in Marriage

We know what love is, because Jesus demonstrated love by giving His life for us (1 John 3:16). The Bible tells us that our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus; not thinking about what we deserve, but being humble to the point of death (Philippians 2:5-8). Christ lived the life of a servant, loving people where they were at, even those who reviled Him - to the point that on the cross, He said, "Forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) We have the example of how to live life in relationship with others, why then, are marriages such a mess? Why do I treat my wife disrespectfully at times? Why is person after person who comes for counseling so selfish and self-centered? Why do I do the things I don't want to do and don't do the things I want to do?

Why? Because we don't have a Christ-like attitude in life or in marriage. Because we aren't truly surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, Because we are *selfish!* Couples come for counseling and often the husband thinks he is fine; it's the woman, he's married to who is the problem. He serves in the church, goes to men's study, and makes an effort to live a Godly life. The wife sees his hypocrisy (because he takes off the mask at home and too often does *not* act like a Christian at home) and thinking it is *his* problem, justifies her nagging, contentious ways as 'helping' her husband get on track. Neither has a Christ-like attitude and they both stubbornly hold on to their poor behaviors. They wonder why they are in this mess and may even consider getting out of the marriage, rather than surrendering their lives and spouses to the Lord. The scenarios may change, but the underlying problem is pretty much the same for every couple we see.

Then there are the *Godly* husbands and wives who may even be helping other couples. They have the *act* down well, but what happens when there is stress or things don't go according to plan. The ugliness may not be as bad and may not last as long, but there is still disrespect or harshness because we do not have the mind of Christ. What causes fights and quarrels among you? Isn't it your own selfish desires? (James 4:1) We are entrenched in our rights and what we deserve, or are focused on the other person and what he or she is or is not doing. To quote a famous television counselor; "STOP IT!" Surrender to Christ and take on *His* attitude. Stop worrying about your spouse and live the life God called *you* to live! Be thankful for what you have - because you deserve is death and damnation!

Develop a Christ-like attitude in your marriage by humbling yourself and living a life surrendered to God. Stop living for yourself; your desires, wants and needs, and love God with all your heart, mind, and soul and love others, and your spouse, as yourself. (Mat. 27:37-40) Stop looking at the problem areas in your spouse's life and focus on the positives. Be gracious and forgiving as the Lord our God is gracious and forgiving of you.

*I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes." - Charles R. Swindoll*

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## The Grateful Spouse

In more than twenty years of counseling, I've never met Satan even though I've had a few husbands or wives tell me their spouse is Satan. It is terrible to see couples who were at one time so in love they couldn't take their eyes off of each other glare at each other in disdain. We tend to think this is only the "messed up couples," but statistically, some 80% or more of marriages are dysfunctional and much less than they could be or should be. ALL of us need attitude adjustments folks! Marriage is my life; I write and teach about and study marriage, help others in their marriages and I confess I do not always have a Christ-like attitude in my marriage. I'm not telling us to be perfect; we can't be, but we *all* can be better than we are! Your spouse is not the enemy - there is an enemy and it is time that we stand together with our spouses and fight *that* enemy - the enemy of our souls.

The grateful spouse looks at his or her spouse as a gift from God, and even in his or her imperfections, as someone God uses to make them a better person. Our struggles, strife and problems in life will make us better, if we focus on the Lord and not the problems or our spouse as the problem. Gratefulness is an attitude focusing on the blessings God has given us, not problems we experience or what we don't have. It is thinking about the admirable, excellent or praiseworthy things in the world overall and in our spouse. (Philippians 4:8)

In the challenge to humble yourself, I am not telling you to be a doormat, allow abuse, or put up with sin. Christ addressed sin and wrong, but He did in the right way. Proverbs 15:1 says that a gentle answer turns away wrath; the Christ-like attitude seeks to build others up, even as we address sin or poor behavior. Be grateful for your spouse and seek to be a blessing and not a curse to him or her.



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

Do you have a Christ-like attitude in your marriage? Do you die to self? Seek to build your spouse up? Respond in love, even when he or she doesn't do things just right? Stop thinking about what you deserve or don't deserve and seek to live a life surrendered to God. Take on the attitude of Christ and view your spouse as Christ views him or her; with an attitude of love and concern, not condemnation and derision.

The Christ-like attitude is an attitude of humility. Christ left the glory of heaven to come to earth and die for your sins. A prideful heart is a dangerous thing - God will not put up with pride. How can you present your spouse to yourself without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless as Christ has done for you? (Ephesians 5:27) Humble yourself, view your spouse as your co-worker, not your enemy.

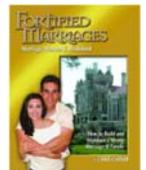


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### Resources Available at [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

- Go to the *Resources Available* page to find a lot of great resources, including resources and ideas to help spark romance.
- 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.



Book Available: *Satan, You Can't Have My Marriage* by Iris Delgado

Article to Check out: *Attitude Adjustment in Marriage* at [marriagemissions.com](http://marriagemissions.com)

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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 by letting others know about the ministry. More information is available at <http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com/page.php?22>.