

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

The 100-0 Marriage

One of the biggest myths in today's society is the idea that a fifty-fifty marriage is a normal and good marriage. It may be normal in society, but it is not God's plan for marriage. Yet, this myth also flourishes within the Christian church and it is a huge problem. For many couples, it is a matter of, 'you do your part and I will do my part.' They make marriage into a contractual relationship. The focus is on the other person and what he or she is or is not doing. The behavior of their spouse drives their reactions and responses rather than Christ and the Holy Spirit controlling what they do and how they respond to each other.

The marriage relationship *should* be a 100-0 relationship. It is a matter of giving everything and expecting nothing in return. Jesus gave everything for mankind without any expectation and Christians are also to give everything for their spouse. Ephesians 5:1-2, John 15:12-14 and other Scriptures bear this truth out. Yes, if one person gives all and the other never gives anything in return, that is a problem. And no, we are not talking about allowing abuse or sin or inappropriate behavior. But what would happen if I just stopped focusing on all those things about my spouse that bother me and focus on meeting his or her needs and making them happy? What if I just dropped the expectations and sought only the best for my spouse? What if husbands and wives sought to win their spouse without a word (1Peter 3:1-2) - to serve and love their spouse unconditionally? What a concept! To love each other as Christ would want us to - yet, too often, in counseling, I have to try to *persuade* people to die to self and just love their spouse without expectations.

The Christian marriage is a covenantal relationship. A relationship in which each spouse fulfills his or her responsibilities even if the other does not. The Christian life is about giving, dying to self, and serving. Jesus admonished His disciples that anyone who would want to be great, must *serve* others. Paul followed up in his letter to Philippians that we ought to consider others better than ourselves. Yet, how often do people get stuck on the I deserve *better* or *happiness* or something more. Friends, we *deserve* death and damnation; it is only by God's grace that we don't get what we truly deserve. Deciding to die to self and live for your spouse *will* transform your marriage. Loving the Biblical way of giving of yourself *will* change your relationship - in fact, that kind of life will change *all* of your relationships! Do you want happiness, fulfillment, and contentment? Give! Seek to make your spouse happy, fulfilled, and content. It is a matter of putting off the old self and putting on Christ. It's not hard - it's *impossible*! Therefore, you must surrender your life to Christ and live by the Holy Spirit.



“Real giving is when we give to our spouses what’s important to them, whether we understand it, like it, agree with it, or not.” Michele Weiner-Davis

“Success in life is not in what we get, it is in what we give. Things we obtain, power we possess, fame we achieve will never fill that lasting need we can only find in giving.” ~ Kenn Kington

Totally Committed

Commitment is not the most popular word in today’s culture of me. The culture teaches that “I” am the most important person in the world. “I deserve a break, to have it my way, a new car, a new body, a new and better wife or husband;” it is not hard to imagine where all of this leads. Self reigns and everything else must bow to it. The problem is that God calls this idolatry. The Bible teaches people to die to self and live a life committed to God. Commitment may not be a popular concept, but seeing it lived out in life is rewarding and fulfilling.



Trusted, godly friends counseled Columbia College and seminary president Robertson McQuilkin to institutionalize his wife of forty-two years for the sake of his ministry. The time had come to make a choice between his ministry in Christian education and the ministry of caring for his wife. Alzheimer’s disease robs a person of everything; one’s mind and body, and Muriel’s once vibrant mind would eventually even forget who she was. The decision was not hard to make, he had vowed to love her “in sickness and in health ... until death do us part.” Caring for his wife was not a duty to be endured, but a ministry that blessed him and provoked people around the world to renew vows and examine their definition of commitment.

The 100-0 marriage *is* a marriage of total commitment - *no matter what*. We will face problems in the world, it is a matter of facing those problems together and seeking the best for our spouse through those challenges.

Action Point: What are you going to do?

Honestly evaluate *your* attitude in your marriage. Is it contractual? As long as your spouse does their part, you will do yours? Or is it covenantal? You will do your part no matter what? None of us is perfect, we all are going to have some expectations, but look at the way you are with your spouse; do your reactions and responses reflect a 100-0 marriage? A 50-50 marriage? Somewhere in between? Where would you fall on the scale?

You cannot have a 100-0 marriage on your own. It is not possible with out God’s help. But you *can* make a choice to die to self and allow God to use you to love your spouse unconditionally; without expectations. Make that choice today! Choose to cultivate that attitude that, ‘I want to live a totally committed selfless life for Christ and want that life to be reflected in my marriage.’ There is incredible joy in store for those who love unconditionally.



PO Box 7385
Chandler, AZ 85246

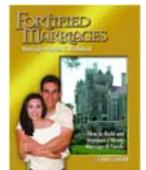
Phone: 480-699-2515

E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com

Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Resources Available at 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.



Articles to check out:

Taking the 'I' Out of Marriage; Focusonthefamily.com

6 ways to save your marriage with selflessness; Familyshare.com

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>.