

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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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.

You Are NOT Alone!

What is the most dangerous place for a person or a couple? Isolation. Yet, what do people and couples tend to do when they experience trouble? Isolate. We tend to think that we are alone and that no one else in the world experiences the problems and trouble we experience. It is not true and it is a lie from the pit of Hell meant to keep you from getting help! I have to tell you that one of the benefits to counseling couples is that it keeps my wife and I grounded in that fact that we are not alone. There are times in counseling, we look at each other with that "knowing" look of that is us also. Folks, every healthy couple experiences trouble and conflict in their marriages; everyone experiences problems in life.



Perennially, we will hear some form of 1 Corinthians 13 in wedding ceremonies, but what about 1 Corinthians 7:28? Paul wrote; "those who marry will face many troubles in this life." We don't hear this fact of marriage life before or during the wedding, but certainly experience it in our married lives and then we are not prepared for it. We think that no one else has the problems we have and that myth is perpetrated by the mask people wear to church, making everyone think we have no problems. How can the Body of Christ fulfill Christ's law of carrying each other's burdens, if we are not open and honest with each other? (Galatians 6:2) NO couple has it *all* together, no one has a perfect marriage. The most godly people we know experience problems in their marriages - every healthy marriage has issues. The difference is how we work through those problems.



Jesus said that in this world, we will have trouble, but, we can take heart because He has overcome the world (John 16:33). The difference between healthy couples and unhealthy couples is the way that they work through their problems. Healthy couples work *together* to resolve their problems and will humble themselves and seek guidance when necessary. We are not meant to go through life alone, even as a couple. We were created for relationship and community. There is power in meeting together with another couple or couples in an open, honest relationship. First, is learning that we are not alone, but we also can learn better ways to handle our problems. Do not isolate, connect with other couples!

Spouse: someone who'll stand by you through all the trouble you wouldn't have had if you'd stayed single. ~Author Unknown

"More marriages might survive if the partners realized that sometimes the better comes after the worse." ~Doug Larson

Connecting with Others

Many couples arrive in counseling isolated from others; they think they are the only ones with problems and are alone. A challenge we have as counselors is to help couples understand that they are not alone and *can* make it through the problems they face. Often we are the first people a couple has ever connected with and shared the issues of their lives and marriage. Years of frustration, pain, isolation and unhappiness pour out of a couple who have attempted to make it on their own for too long. For some, divorce seems to be the only answer; they cannot see any other way out of the hurt and pain. Yet, we often have the privilege to see God perform a miracle and take an isolated, dysfunctional marriage and turn it into a flourishing, strong marriage.



I think of one couple in particular; for the wife, it was over, but to give it “one more try” she told her husband to go for counseling or she was leaving him. They both came for counseling and not only realized that they were not alone, but gained the hope that they could work through their problems. They worked through their immediate issues and then joined our couples group. Through the group they gained more understanding about what it takes to have a strong marriage and now look forward to a life together and continuing to grow in their marriage relationship.

Couples Small Groups

There is great power in participating in couples small groups - learning God’s principles of marriage together and helping each other deal with the problems we face. You are not alone - get plugged into a group or reach out to another couple - it is very rewarding! Great couples resources are available - if no groups are available, start one!



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

Are you putting on the mask of a happy marriage when you are miserable? If so, seek to connect with another couple, join a couples group, or go for counseling.

Are you doing well in your marriage? Not perfect, but you are working together through the issues you face?

Then consider starting a couples group or seek to connect with other couples to help them. Build relationships, be open about your own struggles and watch God use you to help other couples realize they are not alone and develop healthier marriages.

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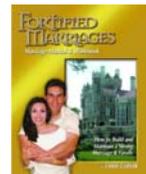
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- The Fortified Marriages website has many great resources.
- The Fortified Marriages manual and workbook is a great small group resource to help build strong marriages.
- Our website has information about how you can get involved in ministering to marriages.
- For testimonies about how a couples small group can benefit you: www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmPJ5k3X0x4
- FamilyLife Couples Studies: www.familylife.com/small-group-studies



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>.
