

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



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MA-MFT

Visit our website

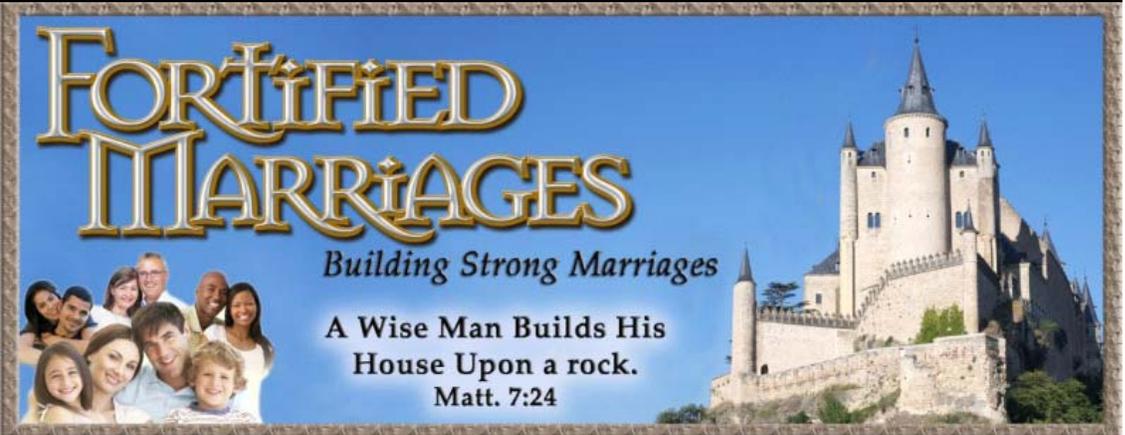
www.fortifiedmarriages.com

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



Materialism is Bad for Your Marriage

The Bible tells us that it is *not* money, but the *love of money* that is the root of all kinds of evil. Paul's first letter to Timothy goes on to say that some people, eager for money have pierced themselves with many griefs (1 Timothy 6:10). Study after study have found that finances tend to be a factor in marital conflicts, although, it seems, again, that it is not finances, but materialism (or the love of money) that is the real problem in marital relationships. In fact, a few years ago, the New York Times reported; "using statistics and psychological tests, researchers are nailing down what clerics and philosophers have preached for millennia: Materialism is bad for the soul. Only, in the new formulation, materialism is bad for your emotional well-being." Materialism is not only bad for your marriage, it is bad for *you!*



Most all of us will adamantly deny a charge of materialism, but when we truly examine our hearts, do we make the accumulation of material goods central in our lives? Do we consider money and material goods essential to our happiness and well-being? Do we judge success by material assets? It is not a matter of being rich or poor, having money or not; is the pursuit of material goods or wealth placed above relationship? Are we more concerned with money than investing in relationships - our marriage relationship?

Many today point to the materialism of western culture as a terrible sin, but in reality, every person on the planet has a tendency of making idols out of material objects. Doesn't even the terrorist, intent on bringing down the decadent materialist western civilization focus on material goods to bring about his purpose? Likewise, we westerners who say we are not materialistic, don't we too often succumb to our desires for cars, homes, electronic gadgets and stuff, even going so far as to claim the *need* for new things, or worse, saying that God *wants* us to have wealth and the accumulation of *stuff*?

A greedy man brings trouble to his family... Prov. 15:27

Again, money and material goods are not the problem here. It is the greed and pursuit of those things that can ruin our marriage relationship and bring much grief to our lives. Things may bring brief happiness, but true happiness in marriage arises out of the commitment to the relationship, growing in oneness and *giving*. 1 John 3:16 tells us that we can know what love is from Jesus' example, that He gave Himself for us. We need to demonstrate that our spouse, our children, our family and friends are important and it does not require money to demonstrate that importance. Speak your spouse's love language, call during the day to say you love him or her, give the gift of love by doing things for your spouse or loved ones. Value life and relationship more than money and things.

"We all like nice things, but when they are valued more than our loved ones, it becomes a downhill ride, and you usually end up at the bottom alone." ~ Mary Jo Rapini

When Material Things Keep Others from Growing

We have often seen parents, who in their desire to help their children, actually retard their children's growth by keeping their children from gaining the responsibility to deal with life as an adult. Many parents rush to bail their children out of their financial problems, but the children don't learn responsibility and continue in their financial problems. Parents who shower their children with material things; buying their children everything they want; even cars and homes create materialistic, self-focused children who do not depend on God for provision and very often do not respect their parents or appreciate their help.



The Lord has much to say about money and possessions; in fact, there are more verses about money and possessions than any other subject in the Bible. Parents need to teach their children God's principles about money and help their children learn to be responsible in their stewardship of what the Lord has blessed them with. It is best to start with young children, but it is never too late. It may be more difficult to wean your adult children off their dependence on you, but it is possible and needs to happen! Establishing healthy financial boundaries with your children may also lessen conflict in your marriage - one spouse usually has more of a problem in this area than the other.

It is important that husbands and wives work together in the area of finances and together bring balance to this important aspect of their relationship. Whether it is dealing with the children or working together to get rid of debt and strive for financial balance, a couple will do better when they work together as a team. Our differences help us achieve balance and better submit to the Lord as we seek to live according to Biblical principles.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have. ~ Hebrews 13:5

Action Point: What are you going to do?

Do you focus on material things to the detriment of your relationships? Do money and financial issues cause conflict and problems in your marriage? Honestly consider the importance you put on money and material goods. Work *with* your spouse to meet the financial responsibilities you have. If you cannot resolve the issues, seek help! Get Godly wisdom from your pastor or a Christian counselor.

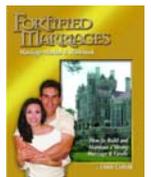
Demonstrate that your spouse and children are more important to you than material objects. Regularly, spend a day without the distraction of phones, pads, computers and electronic games to build relationship and do things together as husband and wife and as a family. Make money and possessions your servant, not your master.

Fortified Marriages

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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.
- Download our Financial Resources document for some great resources to help you with your finances.



Articles to check out: *Materialism in Marriage* by Michael Richardson, *How Materialism Harms a Marriage*, *5 Ways to Make Your Marriage More Important Than Money* by Mary Jo Rapini.

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>.
