

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to
Strengthen Families,
Churches and the
Community

Married for Life

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Strengthening Marriages

Our Purpose
To be used by God to fortify marriages. To make a difference in lives, marriages and families.

Our Vision
To see marriages become healthy, productive, able to withstand the storms of life and used by God to strengthen other marriages.

Our Mission
To provide direction and education with resources and training to individuals, couples and churches in order to help them define and build a solid foundation for a Christian marriage.

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There are many hurting marriages in the church today. We want to see marriages become strong because we know the heartache and pain of an unhealthy marriage.

Any marriage can become strong and healthy; we have experienced God's work in our lives and marriage as He transformed our marriage into a dynamic, growing relationship. Through the years, we have seen this transformation in many other marriages also.

We have a *passion* to be used by God to strengthen marriages. It's not something we do in our spare time or as a hobby—it is our life.

God began moving us

into marriage ministry eleven years ago when a friend challenged us to begin a couples study in our home. The Lord used this study to strengthen our marriage and teach us about ministering to couples.

The Lord led us into new

and exciting areas when we were asked to begin marriage classes at our church. This led to the formation of a marriage workbook which became the *Fortified Marriages Manual and Workbook*. We incorporated as a non-profit marriage ministry in January, 2006 and the Lord has begun to spread the Fortified Marriages Ministry throughout the US and with the publication of *Matrimonios Fortalecidos*, into Latin America as well.

It has been an incredible adventure and we are excited about what the Lord has in store for us as we continue to move forward with the passion He has given us..



Chris & Carmen at the Smart Marriages conference in Atlanta.

Marriage Manual & Workbook

Why do we need another marriage book? Hundreds of marriage books are available today, yet divorce continues to tear families apart at an appalling rate. Today, more people read marriage books than ever before and marriages still deteriorate and dissolve. Why is this? Because books can't change lives or repair marriages, only God can. When a couple begins to communicate, work together

and allow God to work, their marriage *will* change and improve. The study questions, inventories, and questionnaires in this manual will promote the communication to bring a couple together and help them understand each other. Improve your marriage whether it is struggling or strong by working through the material, discussing it and then applying the principles to your marriage. A complete

marriage manual, *Fortified Marriages* builds a strong foundation and presents God's principles for a healthy marriage. Excellent for individuals, couples or small groups, *Fortified Marriages* will help you build your marriage on a solid foundation to withstand the storms that will come against it.

The Marriage Minute—You are Different!

When dating and *falling in love*, couples tend to focus on their similarities. Usually, those similarities are few, but as it is often said, *love is blind*. Once married, couples begin to see their differences and they become points of contention in the marriage relationship. All couples face some basic differences:

Genders: Male and female; biologically, there are great differences.

Genes: Parents give their children a set of genes unique in history. Those genes will bring about physical, emotional and social differences.

Backgrounds: Social, economic,

cultural, and geographical environment causes differences.

Personality types: Usually, couples will have very different personalities.

Differences cause division between husbands and wives and can lead to conflict and at times, even death of the marriage. What can you do about your differences?

Recognize your differences: Learn your spouse.

Work to understand your differences: It is your lifetime assignment to gain understanding to know your spouse.

Learn to appreciate your differences: As Ruth Graham says, "If

you were exactly alike, one of you would be unnecessary."

Utilize your differences: God created you just as you are and the two of you are better than one alone. When you work together, your differences fill in each other's weaknesses rather than being points of contention.

It is important that couples utilize their differences to strengthen their marriage and better meet the challenges of daily life together.

Articles & Information about Marriage

Visit our website for marriage articles and information. Many of the marriage resources available today can be found at our site: www.fortifiedmarriages.com. We continually update the site with news articles, articles about marriage, new resources, conferences and seminars, and the Marriage Minute—a short message to challenge us to continue the work building strong, dynamic mar-

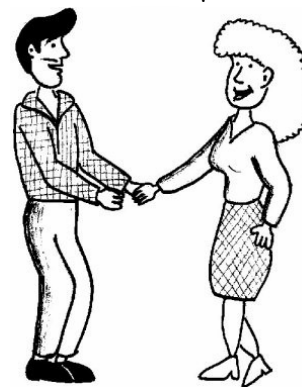
riages. Please send your suggestions and additional resource information to us—we would love to hear from you and always are open to posting information that will strengthen marriages. Please pray for God's direction for our lives, marriage and ministry as we continue to respond to God's calling..

Spanish book available!

The translation is complete and the book is now available. We don't yet have the Spanish information on the website, but hope to in the next couple of weeks. Praise the Lord!!

"Honey, why are you so different?"

"Could it be that I am the new and improved model?"



A Really Bad Marriage

See the full article on our website — www.fortifiedmarriages.com

The Bible often uses marriage as a image of mankind's relationship with God. God is the perfect husband and His people as a wayward wife tend to chase after *other* gods, placing many other objects before Him. Throughout the Bible we see God's people straying and the Lord pursuing after them. He never gives up on His people and while He allow trials and tribula-

tions in their lives in an effort to draw them to Himself, he never rejects His people.

It is a picture of the worst possible marriage between a faithful and loving husband and an unfaithful wife who often rejects her husband's love. How often does this describe our relationship with the Lord? God remains loves us even when we reject Him in our lives.

None of us have a marriage comparable to God's relationship with His people, but how often do people—even Christians bail from marriages because *it's just not working*? We need to follow God's example and love our spouse unconditionally and remain faithful not matter what.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

~1 Corinthians 13:4-8