

FORTIFIED MARRIAGES

Fortifying Marriages to Strengthen Families, Churches and the Community



Chris & Carmen Garner
MA-MFT

Visit our website

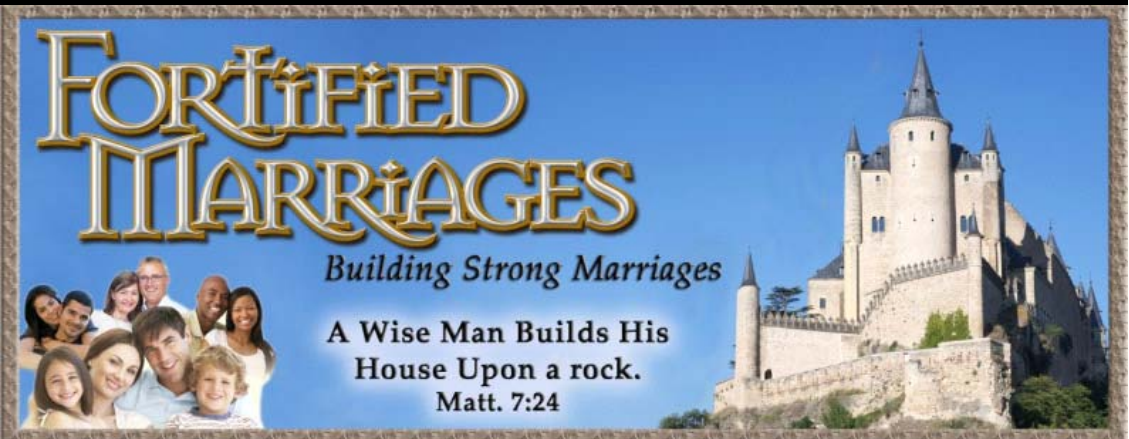
www.fortifiedmarriages.com

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

También disponible en español



Faith: Foundational to Your Walk and Your Marriage

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that without faith, it is impossible to please God and while we know that it is by our faith we are saved, people often do not understand that faith is foundational to our daily walk, our marriage and every area of our lives. Allen Ratta wrote that, "The way we treat people validates the authenticity of our Faith." It makes me think of James, chapter 3, when James wrote that faith without deeds is dead. So many today claim to have faith, but are they faithful? Does their treatment of people; their spouse and children in particular, reflect their faith in Christ? Do their actions demonstrate faith in God or do they betray a faith in self, things or the world rather than God? Journalist Elizabeth Wurtzel wrote; "We didn't learn to break promises and (marriage) vows from big bad bullies at school – we learned from watching our parents deny every word they once said to each other." Much has been written about young people leaving the church; a leading reason given is the hypocrisy seen in the church - older people are not living out their faith and demonstrating faith in their lives and marriages; we know this from the horrendous divorce rate seen today in the church..

Faith in one's spouse is having complete trust or confidence in him or her. Most couples have a great deal of faith in each other when they marry, but over time that faith tends to dwindle as couples experience hurt, dysfunction and the busyness of life. Couples are not connected and growing together to maintain faith in each other. There are two sides to this faith; first, we must be faithful - we must demonstrate that we are faithful, that we are worthy of our spouse's trust. Second, we are to seek to have faith in our spouse, not overlooking sin or poor behavior, but also not looking for wrongs in our spouse's every action. 1 Corinthians reminds us that love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Our faith in our spouse should be visible to others in how we act towards our spouse. It has been said that divorce means that one or both spouses have given up on the marriage; that their faith was not sufficient to stick it out and make it work.

Allen Ratta went on to say that we should walk in faith, that we should lay down our sword, quit arguing, walk the second mile, and trust God in our marriage. You may say; 'but you don't know my circumstances' or 'you don't know how tough it has been for me.' You are right, I don't know your circumstances, but I know what the word of God says; I know about the endurance of those who were tortured for their faith and Hebrew 12:1-3 sums up the faith of those in Hebrews 11; saying that since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. We are to fix our eyes on Jesus and not grow weary and lose heart. We are to live out our faith in the God who created us and saved us and who will work in our lives, if we allow him to work.

"Marriage is hard work and can be a bumpy road at times. But if I hang on tight to the hem of Jesus and the hand of my husband (or wife) – I'll have the best ride of my life!"

~ Courtney Joseph

Restored Faith

Many couples have experienced the pain and devastation of one or the other's sin of adultery, pornography, gambling or addictions. Malachi 2:16 tells us to guard ourselves and not break faith; the spouse who has been involved in any of these sins has broken faith with their spouse - they have broken that bond of trust and confidence. While it is difficult, to get past broken faith, it is *not* impossible with God's help and a repentant spouse. We have experienced restored faith in our own marriage and seen it in many couples where one has grievously sinned against the other. Where there might not be faith in one's spouse, the hurt spouse must put his or her faith in the Lord and focus on him as their spouse works to restore his or her trustworthiness. Forgiveness may be commanded in the Bible, but trust is not commanded; the offending spouse must work to restore their spouse's trust - they must prove themselves trustworthy. Faith is working together to deal with the problems we face in this broken world and seeking to meet the challenges we face *together*. It is looking forward and trusting God for our future together.



Faith in Action

Proverbs 20:6 says, "Many a man claims to have unfailling love, but a faithful man who can find?" None of us are perfect and all of us can grow in our faith. The Bible tells us that faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). We grow in our faith by knowing God more deeply and it is through reading, studying, memorizing his word, and prayer that we get to know God more deeply. Growing in our faith as a couple not only matures our walk with the Lord, but it also greatly enhances our marriage relationship. We need to grow together spiritually. It took my wife and I too many years to understand this, but now as we study God's word together, our relationship has grown tremendously. Prayer? *We must* pray together as a couple - the blessings are enormous and it helps us grow in our faith with the Lord and each other.



When we are growing in our faith in God and each other, we will experience the benefits in our lives and marriage. To be able to say that we completely trust the Lord for every aspect of our life and have complete confidence in our spouse? *That* is maturity in the Lord, that will be a witness to our families and the world. When the lost *see* faith in action, they are challenged to know the God in whom we put our trust and confidence.

Action Point: What are you going to do?

Is there evidence of your faith in your marriage? As James challenged, do your deeds, your actions, demonstrate your faith in the Lord? Yes, it takes two to build a healthy marriage, but only requires one to have faith that God can work in your marriage. Do you pray for and with your

spouse daily? Do you study God's word and grow spiritually together? Seek to build your faith in the Lord and in each other by studying and praying together. Stop focusing on your spouse's infractions and seek to walk in your faith, loving your spouse as God wants you to love him or her.

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PO Box 7385
Chandler, AZ 85246

Phone: 480-699-2515

E-mail: info@fortifiedmarriages.com

Website: www.fortifiedmarriages.com

- 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.

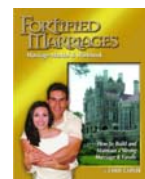
Websites to look at: www.spiritualprogress.com,
www.faithandmarriageministries.org

Books to check out:

Can My Marriage Be Saved; by Mae Chambers

Making Spiritual Progress by Allen Ratta

Women Living Well by Courtney Joseph



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>.
