

Family Builders

focus

Building Great Marriages and Families...from Generation to Generation



Launching a New Ministry in 2012

by Willie Batson—President

*In marriages plagued by chronic illness,
more than 75 percent of them end in divorce!*

The stress of a chronic illness can be challenging to a marriage, even when two people have been deeply in love for decades. Just knowing that they will live their entire lives (except for a healing miracle) having to cope with the ravages of a disease – such as multiple sclerosis, cancer, lupus, heart disease, depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, and a host of others – is an enormous burden to carry. They constantly deal with questions like these:

- How do I juggle my needs with the needs of my chronically ill spouse?
- How can I fight feelings of inadequacy and guilt?
- Am I a burden to my spouse?
- How do I keep it together for my spouse who has a chronic illness?
- What do I do when I find myself thinking, "This is more than I bargained for?"

Cindy and I are well acquainted with these thoughts and feelings. Twenty-one years ago she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, an auto-immune disease that has progressively disabled her to the point of spending most of her waking hours in a wheelchair. We wrestle with the challenges this chronic illness presents daily in our marriage.

Most marriage ministries are not focused on the unique needs of couples with chronic illnesses. God is calling us to reach out to those facing these stressors in their relationships. There are limited resources and expertise to guide them on those occasions when they hit major relational road blocks. One spouse said, "I can't tell you how many times we've been met with the 'deer in the headlights' look when the discussion turns to how my chronic illness may be playing a role."



(Continued on back page.)



A growing number of couples are struggling to integrate long-term medical challenges into their marriage.



FAMILY BUILDERS MINISTRIES

Rev. Willie Batson— Founder/President
PO Box 321—Somersworth, NH 03878-0321
Email: info@familybuilders.net
Phone: 603-692-4895

www.familybuilders.net

Family Builders Ministries

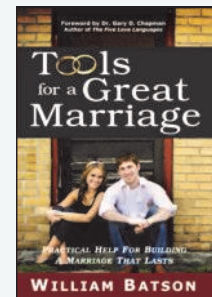
WEBINARS

Online Interactive Seminars

All you need is a computer and an Internet connection.

This is a great way to enrich your marriage at home. Maybe even make it a "Date Night" activity. Okay, it may not be the most romantic idea we've suggested, but the content in these webinars definitely can help you build a stronger marriage. Join Willie for one of the live seminars or watch a previously-recorded presentation.

Register at
www.familybuilders.net



Available in paperback and Kindle eBook versions through our website.

This urgent need was apparent last April at a large men's conference where I spoke on how to make your marriage work when your spouse has a chronic illness – physical, mental, or emotional. A small room with 35 chairs was assigned. I wondered if anyone would come. Ten minutes before the seminar, I walked into a room overflowing with guys in every chair, sitting on the floor, and standing against the walls. There were more than 60 men there! A room filled with husbands whose wives are living with life-changing and life-threatening illnesses. They longed to know how to navigate this journey with courage, understanding, and compassion. Afterwards, they stood in line to tell their stories and ask the raw, candid questions that could only be asked in that room. Cindy was moved deeply by the comments and tears of men who communicated their gratitude to her for suggesting this seminar topic.

These are couples that are in need of help and not everyone can do this type of ministry. Not everyone can speak into their hearts and marriages the way we can. God has given us a distinctive gift and opportunity and that is why we are initiating this new ministry focus in 2012. With God's help, we will achieve the following:

- Provide weekend marriage enrichment events specifically for couples with a chronic illness. Because a couple's finances are impaired by extraordinary medical and living costs, we will need to underwrite a large portion of the expenses for these events.
- Reproduce ourselves by equipping couples globally with the tools to help others living with chronic health issues in their churches and communities.
- Expand our online seminar offerings to include specific issues related to marriage and sickness.
- Partner with national organizations such as the National MS Society, Joni and Friends, and Rest Ministries to provide marriage relationship education and training to couples within their associations.

Your support now will help us reach this special group of couples before they become part of that *heartbreaking and horrific 75% divorce statistic.* Cindy and I are passionate about doing our part, with God's help, so couples on this challenging journey can be more effective servants of God, minister to others, and proclaim the transforming power of the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Approximately 96% of people who live with a chronic illness have an illness that is invisible. These people do not use a cane or any assistive device and may look perfectly healthy.

(Source: US Census Bureau)

Thank you for prayerfully considering a generous donation to this new outreach at Family Builders Ministries before the end of the year. As we celebrate 25 years of ministry in 2012, Cindy and I will continue to invest our energies in serving all couples, but with a special emphasis on those with chronic health issues.

"I wanted to thank you for your marriage tips...I am currently deployed right now and highly appreciate your advice. It has truly helped my marriage, along with bringing God into our relationship, because without him our marriage would be in danger. Once again thank you!" - Matt, USAF



Since nearly 1 in 2 Americans have a chronic condition, I'm sure you know couples in your family, church, or community who could be helped by our ministry. Their desire is not only to survive but **thrive** in their marriage despite living with a chronic illness. Through your monthly or one-time gift we can help them and others build the great marriage they desire.

"I want to thank you for the inspiration and renewal you have brought to my marriage. We have learned to recognize how easy it is to let the world come in between our marriage and relationship with the Lord. We are committed to keeping our focus on God's call for our life and each other. Thank you for your impact in our lives." - Melanie

"I have received nothing but wonderful compliments about you and Cindy from those who were at the retreat. Thank you for being God's vessels for this much needed family ministry. I am praying that this will be just the first of many opportunities we will have to serve together." - Dan

Schedule a Family Builders' Seminar or Date Night Event in Your Church
Our seminars have proven effective in helping couples build great marriages and families. Contact us to schedule for open dates in 2012.

YES! I/We want to help Willie and Cindy reach out to couples living with a chronic illness.

- A monthly gift of \$100 \$75 \$50 \$25 \$10 Other \$ _____
- Please accept this one-time gift in the amount of \$ _____.
- Please send your email updates. I/We will pray for you. Please send us prayer updates.
- Please remove me/us from your mailing list.



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Email: info@familybuilders.net
Phone: 603-692-4895

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