

DEFINING AND DESTROYING STRONGHOLDS PART III

- Defining strongholds
- Professing to live under the Authority of God's Word while actually living by the dictates of human reasoning. When you believe a lie as if it were the truth, your life will be affected as if it were the truth, even though it is a lie.
- A stronghold is any thought pattern on which one relies. This includes arguments and reasonings used to defend a belief, a position, or a behavior. A mindset...your filter for truth...what you really believe. It's the house of thoughts that the enemy works from.

Strongholds are rooted in our past experiences. Our minds are warehouses for past experiences and the thoughts we have are responses we have given to those experiences.

They come from and are rooted to the environment around us.

They come from a system of error within us. Whether a stronghold comes from a past or present environment, it depends on a system of wrong thinking which lends credibility to its existence.

A stronghold may be of such a duration that you confuse it with your personality...we may have thought abnormally for so long that it seems that abnormal is normal.

There is NO shame to having a stronghold; only in keeping it!

Examples: obsessions, fears, addictions, anxieties, undiagnosable illnesses, sleep related problems, fixations, prejudices, guilt, shame, resentment, self-righteousness, lust, jealousy, etc.

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. **2 Corinthians 10:5 NASB**

- When our thought patterns and reasonings get infiltrated by the spirit of this age then our mind becomes a place where the enemy's schemes appear to us as our own reasonings. Strongholds are often the product of such deception.
- A stronghold can become an arsenal or 'weapon' depot of destructive thoughts in our lives.
- We develop a system of reason that that gets used to perpetrate the enemy's purpose upon us and frustrates God's plans for our lives.
- The stronghold becomes a 'command post' from which the enemy works to influence our beliefs and life choices.
- This may cause us to speak the 'proof' of our thinking instead of the 'truth' of His Word.
- Every thought.
 - Spontaneous thoughts
 - Temptations
 - Schemes of the enemy

HOW DO WE TEAR DOWN STRONGHOLDS IN US AND IN OTHERS? (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

For, though we are ordering our behavior in the sphere of human experience, not in accordance with mere human considerations are we waging warfare [against evil], for the weapons of our warfare are not human but mighty in God's sight, resulting in the demolition of fortresses, demolishing reasonings

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and every haughty mental elevation which lifts itself up against the experiential knowledge [which we believers have] of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience to the Christ. **Wuest NT**

For, though we are still living in the world, it is no worldly warfare that we are waging. The weapons with which we fight are not human weapons but are mighty for God in overthrowing strong fortresses. For we overthrow arrogant 'reckonings', and every stronghold that towers high in defiance of the knowledge of God, and we carry off every thought as if into slavery-into subjection to Christ. **Weymouth NT**

- Our weapons:
 - The Word of God

5Let the godly ones exult in glory; let them sing for joy on their beds. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, 7To execute vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, 8To bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron,9To execute on them the judgment written; this is an honor for all His godly ones. Praise the LORD! **Psalm 149:5-9 NASB**

And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. **Ephesians 6:17 NASB**

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. **Hebrews 4:12 NASB**

13 And you who were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh (your sensuality, your sinful carnal nature), [God] brought to life together with [Christ], having [freely] forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 Having cancelled *and* blotted out *and* wiped away the handwriting of the note (bond) with its legal decrees *and* demands which was in force *and* stood against us (hostile to us). This [note with its regulations, decrees, and demands] He set aside *and* cleared completely out of our way by nailing it to [His] cross. 15 [God] disarmed the principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display *and* public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him *and* in it [the cross]. **Colossians 2:13-15 AMPC**

33He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened." 34All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. 35This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: "I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." **Matthew 13:33-35 NASB**

- One way we use the Word of God as a weapon and one way we tear down strongholds through the renewing of our minds.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. **I John 1:9 NASB**

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1Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. **Romans 12:1-2 NASB**

Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. **2 Corinthians 4:16 NASB**

22that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, 23and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24and put on the new self, which in *the likeness of* God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. **Ephesians 4:22-24 NASB**

And have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. **Colossians 3:10 NASB**

- The name of Jesus:

Through You we will push back our adversaries; through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us. **Psalms 44:5 NASB**

Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD: **Mark 12:29 NASB**

19Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. 20Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." **Luke 10:19-20 NASB**

- The Blood of Jesus

22But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect, 24and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel. **Hebrews 12:22-24 NASB**

And through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven. **Colossians 1:20 NASB**

- The word of our testimony
- Our willingness to die to our own agenda

And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. **Revelation 12:11 NASB**

- The gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - Word of Knowledge
 - Word of Wisdom
 - Prophetic Words

- An upright life.

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Those who forsake the law praise the wicked, but those who keep the law strive with them. **Proverbs 28:4 NASB**

But to those who rebuke the *wicked* will be delight, and a good blessing will come upon them. **Proverbs 24:25**

The exercise of justice is joy for the righteous but is terror to the workers of iniquity. **Proverbs 21:15 NASB**

Breaking a stronghold.

- This is not deliverance.
- Strongholds are proof that the enemy has done his work, not that he is doing his work.
- Don't view this 'outwardly' (**2 Corinthians 10:7**)

This is not done with our devices...it takes weapons that God empowered.

5Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? 6But He gives a greater grace. Therefore, *it* says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. **James 4:5-10 NASB**

- Steps you can take
 - Assurance of your salvation
 - Know that God is a God of breakthrough.
 - Identity these strongholds
 - Confess the wrong thinking and related sins and break agreement with them.
 - Ask and receive forgiveness
 - Partner with God in proclaiming and visualizing the demolition of the stronghold.
 - Freshly surrender your life to God (**Romans 12:1-2**) and ask Him to renew your mind.