

## Power To Demolish Strongholds

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### **Pulling Down Strongholds**

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5** - **3** For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup>The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

The truly relevant problem of how a Christian should react to the social ills and injustices of our day.

### ***In this passage two things are immediately evident:***

1. **Vs3** - We cannot and we must not ignore these problems. "We live in the world," says the Apostle Paul.
  - We must not try to evade them or ignore them.
  - We must not try to run away from life.
  - It is basically un-Christian to run away from the problems of life...
  - This was not the case with Jesus Christ.
  - He lived square in the middle of life.
2. **Vs4** - Second, it is apparent that we do not and must not attack these social problems in the way the world does.
  - "We live in the world but the weapons of our warfare are not worldly."
  - We do not face life the same way.
  - We fight in another dimension
  - Our fighting is not weak; it is powerful.

**Vs5** - There are two things revealed here: First, there is the source of the enemy's strength; and, second, there is the nature of the Christian's attack.

- One of the chief rules of warfare is, know your enemy.
- You can never be successful as a soldier:
- If you do not know something of the tactics of the enemy.

### **Illustration:**

A mother invited some people to dinner, then at the table asked her six-year-old daughter to say the blessing.

"I wouldn't know what to say," she replied. "Just say what you hear Mommy say," was the mother's answer.

The little girl bowed her head and after a long pause said, "Dear Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?"

- **Spiritual warfare cannot be fought by just repeating someone else's actions or phrases;**
- We must understand what we are doing and why we are doing it if we are going to be effective!

<b>Satan has <u>three main weapons</u> against the church:</b>
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#### **1. The most obvious weapon is an active one called SIN.**

- \* Satan is known as the tempter and he is an expert with this weapon.
- \* Sin seeks you out like a guided missile.
- \* You know immediately when you are hit because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

#### **2. The second weapon is a passive one called ACCUSATIONS.**

- \* It is set up like a secret trap for you to fall into.
- \* Satan is described as the accuser of the brethren
- \* If he has the courage to accuse you before God – who knows all the facts – imagine what he is capable of saying to us, mere mortals.
- \* **Even though we are forgiven, he reminds us of every sin we have ever committed.**

***Even though Jesus said He would never forsake us (Hebrews 13:5), Satan screams that we have been forsaken because we are too bad for God to love or use.***

***Hebrews 13:5 (AMP)*** - for He [God] Himself has said, I will not in any way fail you *nor* give you up *nor* leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless *nor* forsake *nor* let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!]

**1 Peter 5:6-8** - <sup>6</sup> Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. <sup>7</sup> Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

<sup>8</sup> Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

**1 Peter 5:6** - **Satan uses accusations to generate anxiety** strong enough so that we will come out from under the mighty hand of God

**1 Peter 5:7** - That's why Peter admonishes us to **cast all our care upon the Lord** .

**1 Peter 5:8** - Satan's objective is to paralyze us like an animal that has fallen into a trap

**We know when this weapon has been successful because despair and fear take over.**

**3. The third weapon is the most dangerous because it lies dormant until activated! – STRONGHOLDS**

- A. The third weapon – **STRONGHOLDS** – is like an unseen landmine waiting to detonate.
- B. We don't find out about it ***until we survey the destruction*** it has wreaked upon us.
- C. Spiritual strongholds ***allow Satan to manipulate Christians, bringing great damage to themselves and others, and impeaching their Christian witness.***
- D. This is consistent with ***Satan's character as a deceiver.***
- E. **The MIND is the access gate** Satan uses to get at your spirit!

***The only hope in battling strongholds (landmines) is to discover and disarm them.***

***"A spiritual stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchangeable situations that we know are contrary to the will of God."***

**The Bible teaches us to forgive our enemies – it’s a must!**

- If you are ***incapable of forgiving*** a particular person,
- *You should suspect a spiritual stronghold in your mind.*

**The Bible tells us that he who finds a spouse “finds a good thing” and that we are to become one flesh.**

- If you are ***powerless to change your feelings*** toward your spouse and feel hopeless,
- *You should suspect a spiritual stronghold in your mind.*

**The Bible tells us that we must live holy lives.**

- If you are unable to shake the creeping influence of worldly pleasures and priorities
- *You should suspect a spiritual stronghold.*

**Any time the will of God is clearly spelled out but reality tells a different story in your life ...**

- anytime you are ***powerless to change*** the reality perceived by your mind ...
- anytime ***you have accepted defeat*** because the situation looks hopeless ...
- ***SUSPECT A STRONGHOLD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!***

**HOW DO HUMAN BEINGS ACT WHEN THERE IS A STRONGHOLD IN THEIR MIND?**

**Strongholds expose a severe inconsistency** - between what we SAY and what we BELIEVE.

We cope with them by erecting a “**partition**” which separates our mind into two compartments.

- On one side is the *knowledge of God*
- On the other side is *human speculation*

**A speculation is a conclusion based on an assumption that cannot be proven!**

This fragmentation makes us develop what **James describes as:**

**“double mind” instability.**

**James 1:8 - Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.**

- When such believers are convicted **they bail out by using rationalizations to defend themselves.**
- **How can we believe one thing in church and another in the parking lot?**
- **A DOUBLE MIND!!!**

**CAN YOU IMAGINE THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS THAT A STRONGHOLD HAS?**

- Forgiven People - trying to believe God for a breakthrough in their church  
**\*\*\*who cannot forgive a past hurt.**
- Forgiven People - trying to believe God for a miracle in their city  
**\*\*\*who cannot even enjoy their marriage.**
- Forgiven People - trying to believe God for power to witness  
**\*\*\*who do not even have the power to live holy.**
- **AND SATAN SCREAMS, "DON'T YOU DARE BELIEVE IT! LOOK AT YOUR SITUATION!"**
- When Christians know the will of God and do otherwise,  
**\*\*\*Satan is able to blackmail them.**

**HOW DO YOU PULL DOWN A STRONGHOLD?**

- **Strongholds are to be destroyed,**
- NOT just repainted or covered up with wallpaper!
- There are **four steps** to be taken to accomplish this, all given in **James 4:**

**James 4:7-10** - <sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

### 1. SUBMIT TO GOD.

- **Determine the will of God by God's Word**, then; choose to believe it and to obey it.
- **Tear down the partition** that has allowed you to store two opposing truths in your mind.
- **Call truth "TRUTH"** in spite of your feelings if necessary.
- **Re-enter** the battlefield!

### 2. RESIST THE DEVIL.

- The most effective way to resist him is to die to your old self, putting yourself out of his reach.
- **In Christ**, everything is certain and proven.
- Quote the Scripture to him: "It is written!"

### 3. DRAW NEAR TO GOD ... AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU.

- We need to draw close to Him because **our "speculations"** have allowed us to drift away.
- **Cross the threshold of fear and rejection** – Jesus promises that He will draw near to you!

### 4. CLEANSE YOUR HANDS ... AND PURIFY YOUR HEARTS.

- Our hands refer to the **"outward dimension"** while our hearts refer to the **"inward dimension."**
- The visible symptom is easier to deal with than **the inner root cause** (immoral relationship).
- A stronghold has been destroyed only when a double-minded person becomes single-minded!
- When we sin, we usually **plead guilty** but reserve the right to say something on our behalf!
- **That perpetuates a double mind!** Instead, we should turn our laughter into mourning!

**CLOSE:**

**Only as you see the ugliness of your sin will you be drawn to God's holiness and fully repent.**

For Christians, ***persistence is the opposite of instability!***

- Hammer away at your wall of arguments!

**Use God's Word** like a sledgehammer on your circumstances, and hit those situations repeatedly! ***Day in and day out!***

Sooner or later the first crack will appear! And then it's just a matter of time!

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