

## Satan's Three Main Weapons Against the Church

Paul calls *strongholds*, **places and situations where evil is entrenched**, where it cannot be dislodged easily, it is powerfully defended.

### **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.
3. **Vs5** - There are two things revealed here:
  - **First**, there is the source of the enemy's strength.
  - **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!

Satan has three main weapons against the church:

**1. The first and 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 - - -***

Romans 6:23 - <sup>23</sup> **For the wages of sin is death;** but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**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 can say to us, mere mortals.***

Even though we are forgiven, he reminds us of every sin we have ever committed.

***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!]

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

**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** - paralyze us like an animal that's caught in 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**

- **This 3<sup>rd</sup>** weapon, **STRONGHOLDS**, an unseen landmine waiting to detonate.
- **We don't find out** about it **until we survey the destruction** it has wreaked.

**Spiritual strongholds allow Satan to manipulate Christians**, bringing great damage to themselves and others, **and impeaching their Christian witness**.

- This is consistent with **Satan's character as a deceiver**.
- **The MIND is the access gate** Satan uses to get at your spirit!

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

**"A spiritual stronghold is a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept 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 can blackmail them.

## HOW DO YOU PULL DOWN A STRONGHOLD?

- **Strongholds are to be destroyed, NOT just repainted or covered up!**
- 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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