

deeper

word faith life

Season 5

Healing

Angels

The Devil and Demons

Strongholds and Spiritual Warfare

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Episode 7 – Strongholds and Spiritual Warfare

What Are Strongholds?

The word stronghold is only found once in the New Testament. It is used metaphorically by Paul to describe the Christian's spiritual battle:

The Greek word is translated as [a stronghold or a fortress]

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

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."

Ephesians 6:12 NIV

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

What are these strongholds or fortifications? They are where evil is entrenched and from where the gospel is attacked. Paul tells us what they are.

The "arguments" - are the worldly philosophies, reasonings, and arguments.

The "pretensions" - are the man-centered, self-confident assumptions of self-determination.

The enemy has erected "strongly fortified garrisons" to resist the truth and thwart God's plan of redemption. He uses human reasoning, reinforced with many subtle arguments and the pretense of logic. He uses unbridled passion, lust, pleasure, and greed. And then he also uses his age old favourite, pride, in which the human heart sits enthroned and revels in thoughts of its own excellence and sufficiency.

There are many human thoughts in our own lives that should be taken captive. There are numerous ungodly, worldly philosophies that hold people in bondage. These spiritual "fortresses" or strongholds need to be demolished. The systems of thought that war against us are "arrogant obstacles" (NET), "lofty opinions" (ESV), and "sophisticated arguments and every exalted and proud thing" (AMP); they prevent people from knowing God. In our day, these systems of human thought are vast, but include the theory of evolution, secular humanism, existentialism, the cults, the occult, and false religions. How many people are held captive by the idea that they are the products of chance in a godless universe? How many spiritual prisoners labour under the requirements of Allah and await freedom in Christ? We must take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ.

John 8:36 NIV

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

False religions and secular philosophies have created mindsets and world views that have imprisoned the minds of millions throughout human history. It truly is a spiritual battleground.

2 Corinthians 4:4 NIV

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Any idea, opinion, or worldview that claims that Christ is unnecessary, is reflective of the devil's pride. Such thoughts should be taken captive and made obedient to Christ. Those who know the truth are to confront error with the weapon we've been given, the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.(Ephesians 6:17)

Our weapons in this spiritual battle are not weak and ineffective.



2 Corinthians 10:4 NKJV

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (or of the flesh) but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.”

As we grow in Christ and are transformed by having our minds renewed by the Word of God, (Romans 12:2) we engage in this battle against “pretense” and “argument” in the world. Trusting Christ and rightly dividing the Word of God, (2 Timothy 2:15) we take every thought captive, pull down the strongholds, and, by the grace of God, set the captives free.

2 Corinthians 10:5 NKJV

“casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”

The enemy is firmly entrenched; these strongholds have been guarded for thousands of years, presenting a great wall of resistance to the truth of the gospel. None of this should deter the Christian warrior. Using the weapons of God’s choosing, we attack the strongholds, and by the miraculous power of Christ, the walls are breached, and the bastions of sin and error are battered down. The victorious Christian enters the ruins and leads captive, as it were, every false theory and every human philosophy that had once proudly asserted its independence from God.

Thoughts that are contrary to the truth of God’s Word are like a mental wall of resistance, a stronghold. Paul faced this stronghold in the Corinthian church. Pride and intellectualism had captured their thinking and blinded them to the truth of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 1:18 NIV

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Paul knew that the gospel held the power of God to save. The believer’s approach to pulling down strongholds is to simply and lovingly present the truth of God’s Word and let the Holy Spirit do the work in reshaping people’s thoughts, heart attitudes, and perceptions.

Hebrews 4:12 NIV

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

The Bible names several weapons for pulling down strongholds and waging spiritual warfare. They include the Word of God, prayer, demonstrations of love and humility, the armour of God, and the power of God’s Spirit working in our lives. But the key, as Paul demonstrated to the Corinthians, is relying on God’s divine power and not our own.

We can also face demonic strongholds in our own lives, in our families, and even in our churches. Anyone who has fought an addiction, struggled with pride, or had to “flee youthful lusts” knows that sin, a lack of faith, and a worldly outlook on life are indeed “strongholds.”

It is important to note that the arena of our spiritual warfare is firstly, our own lives, and secondly, our world. Both of these areas are where the Gospel has influence. We don’t go beyond this, we only have authority if we stay in our designated area of battle. Jesus is very clear when He commissioned us, His church:

Matthew 28:18-20 NIV

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This is our arena for spiritual warfare, this is where our authority (delegated authority) allows us to function. Anything beyond this will get us into trouble.



“It is not our assignment to destroy Satan, for God isn’t finished with him yet.” Judson Cornwall
Romans 16:20 NIV
“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”

Memory Verse

John 8:36 NIV

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

