



Strongholds

1. Introduction

We are in a spiritual war between God and Satan. We cannot see this spiritual war, but it is all around us and very real. In this war, we run the risk of losing our success as a Christians, our ability to live for the kingdom and our understanding of spiritual authority.

Remember our salvation is never in doubt. But our ability to understand the spiritual world and to be successful against Satan's is based on our knowledge of the Word of God.

Satan's kingdom includes darkness, captivity, destruction, and death. God's kingdom has light, grace, truth, and salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus paid the price to give us abundant and eternal life.

Jesus Christ is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Bible tells us that Satan is defeated but still working against us. The devil still seeks to "*steal and kill and destroy*" by capturing us in sin patterns or behaviors we cannot escape.

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.

1 Peter 5:8

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

Have you ever felt like you were trapped in sin, unable to break free? Ever sense you are a spiritual prisoner-of-war, living contrary to the will and Word of God? You may have what the Bible calls a **stronghold**.

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2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (KJV)

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴(for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of **strong holds**;) ⁵casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

This tract tries to help us understand what strongholds are, where they come from, how they manifest and how to bring them down. It ends with a prayer to pull down the strongholds in our lives.

2. What Are Strongholds?

Strongholds are an area in our lives where our fleshly desires overtake us, and we create consistent, destructive sin patterns. Our behavior is habitual and difficult or impossible to control. These patterns are the opposite of what God wants for us.

Strongholds from the enemy include addictions to alcohol, prescription medication, marijuana, and other street drugs. They can also include activities such as anger, hatred, depression, anxiety, hopelessness, sexual addiction, lust, perversion, pornography, food addiction, gambling, even social media or gaming addictions, and anything else that is dominating a person's life—making us Satan's slave.

Sin gives the devil a foothold in our lives. Even if we chose to follow Christ, the devil could still come against us. He tries to catch us in moments of weakness and entice us to give into unhealthy desires and to act out our old nature.

Strongholds include:

- Thoughts contrary to God's Word. A lie of the enemy.
- Changeless areas of thought that we cannot get rid of.
- Repeated areas of defeat that we are tired of but cannot get released from.
- Attitudes where the enemy gets the inside track to our mind, will and emotions.

Strongholds can allow the devil to come against our thoughts in these areas:

- Controlling, dictating, and influencing our attitudes and behavior
- Oppressing and discouraging us
- Filtering and coloring how we view or react to situations, circumstances or people.

Strongholds have these characteristics:

- Denial – a refusal to admit the truth
- Unmanageability – inability to control due to our dependency
- Progression – starts with experimenting, but requires more to achieve the same effect
- Consequences – estrangement from God, manifestation of habitual sin, health issues, social and interpersonal problems
- Secrecy – trying to keep it a secret.

**God wants to show us He can meet all our needs.
He wants to free us from anything that takes His rightful place in our lives.
He wants to meet ALL our needs.**

3. Where Do Strongholds Come From?

We know that Satan can never possess a Christian because our spirits have been born again in Christ. However, he can influence or oppress us with thoughts of depression, anxiety, fear, unbelief, lust, anger, unforgiveness, insecurity, and addictions. These thoughts can create strongholds in our lives.

Strongholds can come from our past experiences of hurt, pain, bitterness, rejection, neglect, verbal and physical abuse and sexual abuse. Strongholds can also come from current influences in our lives. Such as listening to the daily news of the world rather than listening to Jesus.

Once we open ourselves up to Satan's lies and give him permission to come in through our choices, the demonic influence can be very strong. Only God's love and power can break these strongholds.

Jesus has gained the ultimate victory for us. The devil has lost the war. But Satan is still a formidable foe on earth. He can use his tactics on every human being because we were born in Adam's sin. Even Christians can be tempted if we do not submit to God and resist the enemy's lies.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Do not let the spiritual warfare around us make you afraid. Fear doesn't come from the Lord. Never forget that God is stronger than Satan. And the Holy Spirit *living in you* is stronger than the ruler of this world.

4. How Do Strongholds Manifest?

Strongholds can manifest in many ways. These include bitterness, control, depression, sexual impurity, rejection and fear just to name a few. Each manifestation has a biblical solution based on the promises of God.

The stronghold of **Bitterness** exists when we harbor feelings of resentment, hate, unforgiveness, anger, violence, and revenge toward others. This kind of stronghold can only be broken with FORGIVENESS.

Colossians 3:12-14

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and **forgive** one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. **Forgive** as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Ephesians 4:31-32

³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, **forgiving** each other, just as in Christ God **forgave** you.

The stronghold of **Control** is when we are overwhelmed with the need to manipulate situations and others. It comes from a lack of trust and manifest as worry and seeking recognition. This stronghold can only be dealt with through SURRENDER.

Matthew 11:28-30

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will **find rest for your souls**. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Luke 12:22

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, **do not worry** about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

The spirit of **Depression** can lead to feelings of hopelessness, despair, self-pity, loneliness, addiction, suicidal thoughts and attempts. There is only one solution to pulling down this stronghold, HOPE.

Psalms 42:5

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? **Put your hope in God**, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Psalms 33:20-22

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We wait **in hope for the LORD**; He is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put **our hope in you**.

A quiet and prevalent stronghold is **Sexual Impurity**. This includes lust, seductiveness, fornication, adultery, frigidity and pornography. PURITY is the solution.

Philippians 4:8-9

⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is **true**, whatever is **noble**, whatever is **right**, whatever is **pure**, whatever is **lovely**, whatever is **admirable**—if anything is **excellent** or **praiseworthy**—**think about such things**. ⁹Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Rejection can become a stronghold. Jesus said we were going to experience persecution in this world. This stronghold causes us to seek acceptance of others above the love of Jesus. We feel unworthy, withdraw from others, seek addictions, and express compulsive behaviors. We can overcome this stronghold with ACCEPTANCE.

Isaiah 54:10

Though the mountains be shaken, and the hills be removed, yet my **unfailing love for you** will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

The stronghold of **Fear** leads to phobias, compulsions, perfectionism and fear of failure. Trust in God's SOVEREIGNTY is the answer.

2 Timothy 1:7 (KJV)

For God hath not given us the spirit of **fear**; but of **power**, and of **love**, and of a **sound mind**.

Isaiah 41:10

So **do not fear**, for **I am with you**; **do not be dismayed**, for **I am your God**. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

5. How Do We Bring Down Strongholds?

We must engage in spiritual warfare to bring down strongholds in our lives. God can train us to wield the spiritual weapons He has given us the tools to overcome the devil. Our plans include weapons, prayers and a strategy.

Psalms 144:1-2

¹*Praise be to the Lord my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.*
²*He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.*

Our key to success in spiritual warfare is praise and adoration of almighty God, the Creator, the Supreme Being, the greatest power that exists in the universe. He is our heavenly Father. We should strive to be in the presence of our God and to worship Him. Praise Him for being the Sovereign God of the universe, our Creator. Glorify His name. Acknowledge that we have nothing to offer Him, but we just want to be right before Him. Without God in our lives, we would be defeated before we even got started. The first step of spiritual warfare is to know and to humbly bless our Lord God.

The next step is to yield our mind, hearts and spirit to the Holy Spirit. Asking Him to give us wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. To watch over us, guide us, to open our hearts and minds, to guard us and protect us.

Our Weapons

God hears our praise, worship and prayers and He moves to answer them. Satan can only listen to one thing—the living and powerful Word of the almighty God and he must bow to God’s Word.

God has given us a divine weapon which is a powerful offensive weapon to overcome spiritual strongholds. God’s Word is “*alive and active*” and “*sharper than any double-edged sword*”.

Hebrews 4:12

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.

This sword can “*penetrate*” and “*divide*” our “*soul and spirit*”. It can “*judge*” our actual “*thoughts and attitudes*”. We can wield this sword by speaking the Word of God over ourselves.

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Overcoming strongholds is possible because of Christ living in us. We have the authority in the name of Jesus Christ to resist Satan's accusations by using the double-edged sword of God's Word.

We need to declare the following:

**"I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.
In the name of Jesus, I rebuke you, Satan!
Get your hands off me."**

As we speak God's Word out loud over ourselves, it will release the power of the Holy Spirit over us. It will open our spiritual eyes so God can reveal His truth to us. We can then take a serious look at themselves and ask, "Why am I doing this to myself?"

The Word of God breaks the bondage. It is a discerner of our thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Only God's Word can bring us into the reality of what we are doing to destroy ourselves.

Our Prayers

Prayer is the strongest weapon in our spiritual arsenal. When we speak God's Word over our situation in faith, we activate the most powerful force in the universe. Prayer gives us the faith to see God's supernatural power at work. Prayer is surrendering our will to His will and exercising something unseen, *faith*, against and over something unseen, *spiritual darkness*.

God takes praying seriously in His Kingdom. We need to listen to Him and realize the truth that God loves us and that He has given us powerful spiritual weapons, like prayer, to overcome the enemy.

No matter how challenging the spiritual battle is right now and if we do not have an answer yet, know that God is at work. We must enter God's presence with the faith to believe that His power is greater than anything in the universe.

Because of our faith in prayer, God can release the angels of heaven, the power of heaven, and the power of His Spirit on our behalf. He is releasing that power upon us now. The heavenly answer has been set in motion.

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Ephesians 6:14-18

¹⁴**Stand firm** then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, **take up the shield of faith**, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷**Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit**, which is the **word of God**. ¹⁸And **pray in the Spirit** on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always **keep on praying** for all the Lord's people.

Our Strategy

Strongholds can be brought down, by focusing on Priorities, Overcoming, Warfare, Engagement and Recovery.

- **P**riorities
- **O**vercoming
- **W**arfare
- **E**ngagement
- **R**ecover

It takes the POWER of the Holy Spirit to bring down strongholds!

Priorities

Our lives consist of all the decisions we make every day. Those decisions are determined by our priorities. Identifying the correct and right priority in our lives is the key to a successful and fulfilled life. We need to correct our priorities and focus on bring down strongholds.

Matthew 6:33

But **seek first his kingdom** and his righteousness, **and all these things will be given to you as well**.

Overcoming

John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! **I have overcome the world.**"

James 4:7-8

⁷Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist the devil**, and **he will flee from you**. ⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Ephesians 6:12

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*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.*

1 Corinthians 10:13

*No **temptation has overtaken you** except what is common to mankind. And **God is faithful**, He will not let you be tempted **beyond what you can bear**. But when you are tempted, He will also **provide a way out** so that **you can endure it**.*

Warfare

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NKJV)

*³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the **weapons of our warfare are** not carnal but **mighty in God** for pulling down **strongholds**, ⁵ 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,*

Strongholds

Demonic powers that can manipulate us.

Arguments

Reasoning where we exalt what others say above the Word of God.

High Things

Exalting a thought or lie above the truth of the Word of God.

Thoughts

Thoughts coming to our mind, either from us, God, the devil, or the world's system.

Engagement

Honesty and Confession

Begin asking the Holy Spirit to reveal sins that are of concern. Confess them to God. Call it as it is.

1 John 1:9

*If we **confess our sins**, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Surrender and Repentance

Actively and aggressively turn away from areas of sin with God's help.

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Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Luke 15:10

In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Turning away from our old self and calling on the name and strength of God shows our dependence and trust in Him.

Stand with People and Accountability

This cannot be done alone. It is challenging to walk away from strongholds. God puts people, the body of Christ, in our lives whom we can lean on and walk with through this turning from sin.

James 5:16

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Recover

Acts 3:19

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Isaiah 40:31 (KJV)

but they that wait upon the LORD [who expect, look for, and hope in Him] shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

Matthew 12:43-44

⁴³ "When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first.

We have the promises of God, that once we break the strongholds in our lives, we will renew our strength, will mount up with wings as eagles, will run and not be weary and will walk and not faint.

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But there is also a warning from Jesus. We must occupy our house with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to keep the evil spirits from returning and reoccupying our lives.

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6. Our Prayer

Father, I come before you now in the Name of Jesus.

I thank you for the power given to me, to overcome spiritual strongholds.

I confess the sin that has allowed the devil to establish this stronghold in my life.

I renounce this stronghold in the name of Jesus.

I stand on God's Word by the authority of the Name of Jesus Christ and take back the ground I surrendered to the enemy.

I pray You will empower me to trust and obey the Holy Spirit so that this area of my life will conform to the image of Christ.

Amen.