



Outer Growth - strongholds 2

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

2 Corinthians 10:4

Satan - 1 Chronicles 21:1

Think - Ezekiel 38:10, Proverbs 23:7

Relatives - Matthew 10:36

Others - Luke 11:16

Negative - Ephesians 5:11

Group - Psalms 18:29

Harass - Luke 16:28

Objects - Colossians 3:2

Lies - 1 Timothy 4:2

Divided - Mark 3:25

What is a stronghold? A stronghold is a closed structure. The term is mentioned once in the New Testament and eighteen verses of the Old Testament, starting with Numbers thirteen verse nineteen, where Moses sent men to spy out the land of Canaan to see if the people there dwell in tents or structural buildings. A stronghold is a fortified castle in Greek terms. However, We know from Strongholds Part One what can happen and how it starts. The question is the way to get out of it. There are several answers and not one in particular. Still, believers know that it begins through God as the guide in helping to receive freedom from whatever the stronghold may be. However, those who physically experience strongholds, in terms of being in prison, should not be included unless wrongfully convicted. Although, if someone commits an evil action, they will receive punishment for breaking the law. On the other hand, for the people who

fortunately abide by the rules of government and need help from God, several conditions and challenges are met by the believer to experience victory against a stronghold. The theme verse for Strongholds Part Two is Second Corinthians ten, verse four. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." This theme verse in the New Testament indicates dealing with a stronghold cannot be done by the natural but by the spiritual realm. For believers, God is a spirit and must serve Him in the spiritual and truth through His Word. Even though our physical body carries the spiritual inside of us, we connect with God through the inner part and not in the flesh.

Therefore, to pull down the stronghold, believers and followers of Christ need God to do it. The only way to deal with this challenge is through His Word. God honors the Holy Book above His name. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, used the Word when facing the devil in the wilderness on several occasions. The Holy Bible has the scriptures to bind the stronghold of any kind that may be in the way of experiencing victory: we must find and use it. The strongholds come from Satan. He is the designer of this structure, which is a power base. It is a place of fortification. That is an area of weakness in our life or something we have not yielded to God. The devil listens and sees what is going on in our lives and will use anyone or anything to stop us from receiving what God has for us by any means necessary. Satan, for the first time by name, is here in the Old Testament. He appears not merely as an "adversary" who seeks to injure man from without but as a tempter able to ruin David by suggesting sinful acts and thoughts from within in First Chronicles twenty-one, verse one. In this point of view, the revelation made of him here is the most advanced in the Old Testament. God allowed Satan to tempt David after he had accomplished much and achieved miraculous victories. The enemy begins to nag him in his mind to commit wrongdoing. David was a man after God's own heart. So, if Satan attempts to provoke David, he will also do so to believers in Christ. He actively opposes the believer's endeavor to conform to the will of God and His righteous standards.

After David's great victories and accomplishments, as in chapters fourteen through twenty-one, Satan gains a foothold in the king's life. Therefore, with the sinful access, the devil and his fallen angels can hinder David's life because an immoral door is open.

How do saints of God overcome? One of the key defenses against Satan's attack is awareness of the enemy's continual effort to gain an advantage over us and lead us away from devotion to Christ. Ephesians four, verse twenty-seven, states, "Neither give place to the devil." Satan has many plans to deceive us and knows how to make terrible use of our mistakes.

Strongholds can birth from the mind. There is an old saying, "Cherish not an evil thought." The devil constantly attempts to project thoughts into people, especially believers. The question is, How do you think? The other one is, "What do you think?" These two significant questions will be the difference between being free and bound. Especially for believers where the devil consistently imposes his will to deceive, disrupt, and corrupt the hearts of those who desire to serve God and remain in relation with Him. Satan attempted to put a stronghold on Eve by questioning her in Genesis three with the encounter of the serpent, which the devil took control over in the Garden of Eden. At the end of verse one, the snake asks the question. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Eve replies to what God said to Adam in verses two through three of chapter three in Genesis. However, stanzas sixteen through seventeen in chapter two, where God directly told Adam, are slightly different.

The Bible does not say how Eve received the instruction about eating fruit in the garden. Still, she begins to respond with "We" to the serpent to start her answer to his question. Does this explain why Satan controls the snake to go after Eve instead of Adam? The unknown is Eve getting the instruction from God or Adam. Since Adam and Eve are one flesh, did she already know? The serpent could not go after Adam because God spoke directly to Adam, who witnessed the creation of the Garden of Eden and the surroundings,

so the enemy knew to go to Eve and attempt to deceive her thinking.

At the beginning of verse seven of chapter twenty-three of Proverbs, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he," is an example of David. The ears of Eve got her in trouble, but the eyes of the king put him in sin, which appears to be a stronghold later in his family life. In verse two of Second Chronicles eleven, David saw a woman from the roof bathing and seems beautiful to look upon. He must have watched Uriah's wife for a while from the rooftop to notice her beauty. The thinking of David must have made him contemplate whether to stay long enough and admire her washing herself.

What is the solution when Satan attempts to design a stronghold through our ears or eyes against us? Both cases reveal the ears and eyes are the gateway to get ourselves into trouble, especially believers. Eve gets caught in rethinking the instruction of God. The comparison is when Eve replied to the serpent: she added in verse four of Genesis three about not touching the tree. However, in verses sixteen through seventeen, God does not mention that this reply indicates her thinking and allows the enemy to set her up into a stronghold with consequences to follow. Meanwhile, David lets his eyes get the worst of him, and he allows the thoughts to excel carnally. In verses three to five of the Second Chronicles, his thinking became an action where adultery, coveting, and murder later happen through him. The rest of chapter eleven illustrates how far the thoughts can go the wrong way instead of the right direction. David's thinking not only devises wrongdoing to carry out but includes others who innocently do not know what will occur. The people involved played a role yet did not understand what the king was up to.

Unfortunately, relatives may create strongholds for the family without even knowing it. Passing remarks that did not occur is evil and wrong. However, to say it will necessarily happen that way is negative because God is in control and everywhere. Still, family members who may know us well from the outside should refrain from such talk. However, at the end of Proverbs thirty, verse

thirty-two, it mentions an evil thought that comes to mind: let not the mouth confess it. Joseph, the son of Jacob in Genesis thirty-seven, experiences the antagonists within his family: his brothers. Although it did not help much that the father treated him differently from the rest of the children, and his professing things from the dreams he was having did not help his situation. Still, the attention and egotism did not stand well with Joseph's brothers, who expressed hate towards him. However, verses nineteen through twenty-three explain how they felt against Joseph.

The state of the mind will determine how people live. Many blessings will persist upon what we say. However, for Joseph, he did say some prideful things, but they were good things. Even though it may seem like a stronghold for the next couple of years for him, God did work on his behalf in that period. Joseph's brothers had not-so-good intentions that came from their thoughts and experiences of regret. Joseph was missing, as they planned evil against him and lived under the stronghold of duress while dealing with their father, not knowing what happened to Joseph. Genesis chapters forty-two through forty-four give the result and experience of how Joseph's brothers were living from the time of their negative thinking until now.

Unfortunately, people outside our family can attempt to create a fortress around us, especially toward believers. The devil may use a neighbor, co-worker, business associate, or someone you may consistently encounter during a regular commute, travel, or running errands. They are noticeable through their consistency in trying to aggravate or create some form of conflict when there is none. The enemy gets them to try a person and put them to the test. Even if they were to approach that individual, some corrupt people would not even be aware that they are doing something wrong. They would claim innocence.

David would experience some form of stronghold through his relatives with first Eliab, his eldest brother. In verse twenty-eight of First Samuel seventeen, David's older brother was angry when he saw him come to get involved with the situation regarding Goliath and the Philistines. Later, the former King Saul

became a relative because David married Michal, one of Saul's daughters. In chapter eighteen, verses twenty through twenty-one, Michal's father begins to hinder David throughout their relationship. At the beginning of verse twenty-one, he already had plans for marriage to be a stronghold against him. The following verses from twenty-nine through thirty-one narrate how relatives can attempt to create a fortress through the treatment of their own family.

The situation with Jacob and his uncle Laban was a form of a stronghold where he served his uncle for several years. Genesis twenty verses one to thirty, depicts where Jacob falls in love with Laban's daughter Rachel and agrees to work seven years for her. At the end of the seven years, Laban deceives Jacob by giving him Leah instead and continues unfairly in other agreements. Jacob ends up marrying both of Laban's daughters and eventually comes to the point where he is ready to leave to build his household. Laban persuades him to stay and come to an agreement that makes Jacob wealthy at Laban's expense. In the end, Jacob leaves secretly, but Laban catches up to him and does him any harm since God warned him in a dream.

Stronghold can also be negative comments or remarks. People saying things about you in front of others or behind your back can become one. Sure, we might not care what the public may say, but it can cause an uncomfortable environment, even though it might not be correct. The devil uses these people on others, especially believers, to ruin their reputation. To destroy their potential in whatever capabilities they may have. Look at Jesus and the people in Luke eleven, verse sixteen. Jesus performed a miracle, healing the man who was dumb and now able to speak and function freely.

However, the public reaction is they wondered. Jesus had expelled an evil spirit from a sufferer whose malady had assumed the grave form of insanity which refused to speak. The people around were wondering at this gracious act of power; then broke in voices of accusation, voices to challenge him to show them some sign from heaven, saying that His power derived from evil sources. Jesus, the

Son of God, had this reaction from negatively trained minds the enemy uses while on earth. Strongholds may come in the form of a group. The Bible does not have group, but the word troop instead refers to bands of soldiers or hosts of enemies. Speaking of group, David had an experience to some degree in First Samuel seventeen, verse thirty-three, again with Saul in a negative fashion where he questions his son-in-law regarding his chances against Goliath, the giant for the Philistines. "And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." If David had listened to Saul and not God, we might not be reading what David did to him.

How do we overcome a group of people that the enemy attempts to use to create some form of stronghold? We have to have a prayer life. A believer's relationship requires fellowship with the Lord. "And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightning, and an earthquake."

Stronghold can be a place of severe mental distress. Hell is a place of torment for the wicked after death. However, believers will constantly experience battles that only God can fight for us spiritually if we allow Him. Physically, followers of Christ will encounter them because the devil attacks the people of God in the flesh even though he designs these problems to become strongholds from the spirit. The devil does not take a break or have lunch, but a roaring lion, seeking to devour at any time, as in First Peter five, verse eight. Samson is a prime example of how he was constantly fighting battles over and over again with the Philistines. Judges chapter fourteen, from the beginning to the end of chapter sixteen, depicts how Samson had to deal with this adversity. He loved Delilah, but the Philistines were using her to get him to see

where his strength lies within. The continuous fight against the Philistines in an attempt to trap Samson and defeat him was a constant challenge. Samson slips up through deception, trickery finally catches up with him, and he later dies, slaying most of those people.

Everyone who follows Christ will experience some form of harassment, which we know as a trial or a test. No one is exempt from that when a servant of God. However, the problem with most followers failing is how they respond. We must yield to God and allow the Holy Spirit to direct us. However, believers who are new to Christ and receive salvation depend upon what the Bible says to overcome.

Strongholds can come in the form of things. Satan attempts to make believers dwell on earthly things, not focusing on God. Taking off the mind and heart from all that is opposite to heavenly things. The devil deceives people. Especially attempts to undermine the believers to pursue pleasures, profits, and honors of this world, which the people of it do inordinately desire.

How do we overcome this? Set your affection on things above that the hearts of believers might be where their treasure is. Unless our affections are on the things above, we will not pursue them properly. The word signifies to mind them, think of them, favor and approve of them, to be affectionately desirous of them, and concerned for them. We must seek the blessing who is God to obtain the blessing, not the opposite.

Lies can create a stronghold. John eight, verse forty-four, explains how the enemy uses lies to bind people. For those who are living in sin, the devil uses. "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it."

Genesis three, verses one to five, again tells us why we are today. In verse one, he asks the question. "Yea, hath God said," There is a tone of surprise in these words, as if the tempter could not bring himself to believe such a command given. Can it be true, he asks, that God is subject to such a ban? The devil tried the same tactic with the Son of God in

Matthew four, verse six, or Luke four, verse three. In both cases, there is the presentation of motive to evil.

Lies lead to wrongdoing, making a situation worse than it was. Unable to go back and correct something that already happened. Lies rhyme with sly, which is devious and always has consequences and regret. Eve could not go back along with Adam to fix what they did. Today, people use lies to say things prematurely to others. Like parents to their kids, wives to their husbands, and vice versa. Examples of parents saying things like, "Look at you! You're good for nothing! Just like your daddy!

That form of talk is wrong because we do not realize the enemy is trying to create a stronghold for those we speak to like that, which is wickedness. To correct such speech is to ask God to forgive us and pray and ask Him to reverse this to free ourselves and those we may have said such wrong things to. Strongholds divide the mind. The area where fortresses begin: in the mind. The picture of the window with the bars from the inside showing the outside is how people are in their minds when they have something there constantly going over, unable to move forward or get out. How can something be stable if split in two? The foundation cannot stand and establish itself.

Saul, the former king, could not overcome the stronghold he allowed to come upon himself: Envy and Jealousy. This stronghold begins in First Samuel, chapter seventeen, verse thirty-one. The jealousy of David went to Saul's head to the point the enemy used him as a tool to try and kill David. The highlight is his mind not stable since he saw the son of Jesse slew Goliath, hearing the chant of the women, saying David kill ten thousand to his thousands. The hatred of David built until the day he died in First Samuel thirty-one, verse seven, shows how the mind can be your worst enemy. Especially the devil using deceptive ways to fool believers into thinking in such a way.

The mind is the battleground. The chief means of Satan designing a stronghold is to get you to believe his ways, not the Holy Book and the Almighty God's way. To keep you mentally locked behind those closed bars with

deception. To destroy any potential by bringing words and thoughts to the mind to make you feel that you are nothing when God made you something. To not believe or accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to cast doubt and put fear into people.

A stronghold can consist of anything the devil could use to subdue the mind and stop the soul from getting to where God would have them to be. We must ask God to show us where the strongholds lie so we can be free from them. There, we must live for God because we do not want to let him get a foot in our hearts, mind, body, and soul.