



Breaking the Chains of **Spiritual Strongholds**

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9 Keys to Breaking the Chains of Spiritual Strongholds

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Spiritual Warfare: Tearing down the strongholds!

What exactly is a stronghold?

A stronghold is an incorrect thinking pattern that has molded itself into our way of thinking. These strongholds have the capability to affect our feelings, how we respond to various situations in life, and they play a large role in our spiritual freedom.

Satan erects every stronghold he can in our minds to keep us from the true knowledge of God. To the degree that he is successful, we will not enjoy an intimate relationship with the Lord. We will not come to know for ourselves the loveliness and excellence of God's personality. The result is that our emotional lives will not be released into full affection for God.

A stronghold in the mind is a spiritual fortress made of wrong thoughts, a fortified dwelling place where demonic forces can hide and operate in power against us. The ideas and thoughts that make up the stronghold are based on lies that challenge the truth of what God has revealed about Himself.

Wrong ideas about God are not automatically eliminated when we are born again. Paul instructs believers to "put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (Col. 3:10, NKJV). We are continually in the process of being renewed by the true knowledge of the personality of God.

Satan's goal is to keep us in darkness by keeping us deceived about what God is like. His strategy is to distort our knowledge of God's personality so that what we believe is erroneous and inadequate. Thus we are emotionally weakened and held in spiritual bondage.

Where do strongholds come from?

Strongholds are built upon deception and error. These errors and deceptions which form strongholds can come from a wide variety of sources, including our environment, those around us, our parents or even demon spirits. I have seen where

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people have picked up a demon, then the demon quickly builds one or more strongholds in their mind that must be later torn down.

How does the enemy construct a spiritual stronghold in our lives? He starts with a foundation of lies, usually about the personality of God or about how God views us in Christ.

On this foundation, he builds brick by brick: vain philosophies, erroneous interpretations of Scripture, inaccurate ideas about the person of God, and distorted perceptions of how God sees us and feels about us when we sin. Held together by the mortar of mistaken reasoning, the walls rise higher and higher. Soon lofty towers of stubborn pride and vain imaginations loom above the shadows.

Demonic bondage and strongholds

A person who has a demon behind their stronghold(s) may find it nearly impossible to tear them down and keep down. This is because the demon will be working hard at rebuilding and holding those strongholds in place. They will be countering that person's efforts to tear them down. It will seem as if they are hitting a brick wall, and even if they seem to make progress, it seems like their efforts are in vain because it keeps coming back. If this is the case, then the person likely has a demon which is inside them rebuilding and trying to hold that stronghold in place. The demons should be driven out in Jesus' name, then the stronghold will come down much easier and not be so quick to return.

How do you tear down strongholds?

Since strongholds are built upon error and falsehood, it is through the truth that you tear down such faulty thinking patterns. Strongholds are built when we accept and receive error and begin to meditate on them. It forms in our minds what is known as an imagination, that is, a false concept that we believe to be true, but in reality is not. The Bible speaks about these imaginations clearly, and shows us how they can be torn down:

2 Corinthians 10:4, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting 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."

The renewing of our minds and strongholds

We know that strongholds and imaginations must be cast down, but how? By being transformed through the renewing of our minds:

Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

As our minds are renewed, we may prove (discern) what is good, acceptable and perfect, and the will of God. These things are some of the very things that strongholds rise themselves against! Many people who are caught up in shame based thinking do not realize that it's God's will and it is good for them to disassociate themselves from their past. Their minds need to be renewed, and as those strongholds come down they will be able to see God's will and respond.

How are our minds renewed and cleansed? Through the washing of the Word our minds are transformed and strongholds are torn down. Spending time and meditating on the Word of God washes our minds and corrects our false thinking patterns (strongholds).

Ephesians 5:26-27, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

As we meditate and wash our minds with God's Word, we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and we will come to know the will of God, and discern what is right, perfect and good. Our strongholds, which are based upon error and deception, will not stand a chance as the light of God's Word (truth) is shed upon those areas of our minds.

I think too many people make strongholds out to be a complex subject. Strongholds are merely incorrect thinking patterns. They are patterns in our minds that are programmed to think contrary to the truth.

For example, a common scenario is where a person feels dirty, guilty and is shameful of their past. They are so used to thinking about their past, that it's driven the person to think and feel like a failure! They feel unworthy to have a close intimate relationship with God, which greatly affects their spiritual strength, faith,

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and relationship with Him. No wonder Satan tries to build such strongholds in our minds!

So how does Satan build these strongholds?

He starts by reminding us of our past failures and sins. He brings up things that we ought not to be dwelling upon, and tries to make us agree with him on how badly we failed. We then have the choice to listen and agree with him, or listen to God's Word (which is telling us that those sins have been washed away). If we take the devil's bait and begin to meditate on our failures, it will begin to pull us down spiritually and strongholds will develop. We will begin to see ourselves as failures because we've taken the bait and chose to meditate on a lie that the devil has fed us!

It is also not uncommon to find a person who picks up a demonic spirit through sin (such as fornication), and that demon uses it's newly gained rights (or ability) in the person's mind to quickly build strongholds. Since the demon is able to influence the person from the inside now, it can get the job done much quicker. This is not an uncommon scenario! Not only does the demonic spirit(s) need to be driven out, but the stronghold also needs to be torn down before the person will experience a complete breakthrough.

Strongholds can and do play a big part of how we feel.

If we think we are a failure, we will feel like failures. If you think you're hopeless, you will feel hopeless. If you know you are forgiven, you'll feel clean inside. If you constantly think of your past failures, you will see yourself as associated with them. If you constantly think of how you have been separated from your past when the Blood of Jesus has washed it away, you will feel bright and clean inside. Changing the way you think can make a big difference in the way you feel!

How do we tear down strongholds?

Strongholds are build upon deception and lies that we've accepted into our minds. So how do you counter a lie? How do you counter deception? With the truth. Where do we find the truth? In the Word of God. As we can see in Ephesians, this weapon is known as the sword of the Spirit:

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Ephesians 6:17, "...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

In 2 Corinthians, we are told that our spiritual weaponry is designed to tear down strongholds:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting 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 is a great verse that gives us a good idea of how we are to go about tearing down strongholds in our minds. First, since the sword of the Spirit is the offensive piece of our weaponry, it is a great tool for tearing down strongholds. You need to go on the offensive to tear down a stronghold, and the Word of God is the weapon you cannot afford not to use.

So when the devil tries to tell us, "You really messed up, haven't you?"

You need to counter it with, "1 John 3:5 tells me that the reason Jesus went to the cross was to take away that sin! Hebrews 8:12 tells me that even God has chosen to forget my sin!"

Boy does Satan hate that! It reminds him of the days when he tried tempting Jesus:

Satan said to Jesus, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." (Matthew 4:3)

But Jesus replied with, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

What did Satan do? After Jesus did that a few times, he had no choice but to hit the road... his efforts were useless against Jesus! Jesus knew the relevant scriptures to quote, and took away Satan's ability to influence Him!

Let's go back to 2 Corinthians again and see what else it has to say:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing

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that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

As we can see, we are told to cast down imaginations. What are imaginations? They are things that we imagine... the devil usually plants them in our minds when he asks us a question that starts out with "What if..." Don't waste your time trying to reason things with the devil. Just throw it out and leave him hanging! Get your mind on God's Word and off of what the devil is trying to tell you.

What else are we told in this verse? We are to cast down every thought that comes into our minds that opposes the knowledge of God. What is the knowledge of God? Since God associates Himself with His Word (John 1:1), if anything comes into our minds that is contrary to God's Word, throw it out! Do not waste your time thinking about it or trying to reason with it. If Satan is trying to tell you that God is not wanting to forgive you, then don't listen to it. Why? Because His Word says otherwise:

Isaiah 30:18, "Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you." (NASB)

Not only does He want to forgive your sins, so that your relationship with Him can be restored, He longs (which means He deeply desires) to do so! One of the last things the enemy wants us to know is God's forgiving and loving nature towards us even after we have messed up!

As you can see, strongholds are built on lies and deception. How do you counter such things? With truth! Where do you find truth? In the Word of God! Stop thinking about what Satan has been feeding you, and begin to meditate on God's Word. Take verses in the Bible that run contrary to what the devil's been feeding you, and repeat them to yourself over and over out loud. Think about them often, and meditate on them. The devil got his stronghold built by causing you to meditate on his lies and deception, so if you want to tear down that stronghold, you need to begin meditating on the exact opposite, which is God's Word.

Listening to and reasoning with the things the devil puts in your mind is exactly what he wants you to do. It feed his strongholds when you allow your mind to meditate on Satan's word (opposite of God's Word). Cut him off at the source and say NO to the garbage he's been feeding you, and at the same time turn to God's Word. Begin to feed, meditate upon, think about often and dwell upon on the truth. It will stop Satan dead in his tracks!

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It is also possible to have strongholds in place because demonic spirits have attached themselves to you at some point or another, and need to be driven out. If you work hard at tearing down strongholds by applying the truths in God's Word and this teaching, and yet you seem to hit a wall, it may be because a demonic spirit needs to be driven out. It is very possible (and not uncommon) to experience quite a bit of freedom through applying the principals in this teaching even if there is a demonic spirit present, but you will only go so far and feel like you're hitting a wall.

That is a sign of a demon at work that needs to be driven out. It can be awfully hard to battle when they are working on you from the inside out. Resisting them from the outside is easy, but resisting them when they are on the inside can be extremely hard. If you seem to have reached an immovable mountain, you might want to consider the possibility of needing to have an unclean spirit driven out.

Many Christians today believe that they cannot have demons... nothing could be further from the truth! When you're in the ministry of deliverance, you see very sincere believers manifest demons quite often. I was one myself... a very sincere believer who dearly loved the Lord... and yet I faced awful demonic bondages and have been through deliverance! There is a teaching specifically on Christians having demons on this site that will show you how it is quite possible for a believer to have a demon and be in need of deliverance.



When an invading conquered foreign territory, their top priority was to remove the power of strongholds. A failure to remove strongholds, would nullify any victory of land. Since an invader could not occupy every square mile of land, as soon as the army moved, the enemy in the stronghold could reoccupy conquered territory.

Many Christians who find salvation in Christ, struggle in their walk, because they fail to remove strongholds. They are constantly besieged over and over again, from the

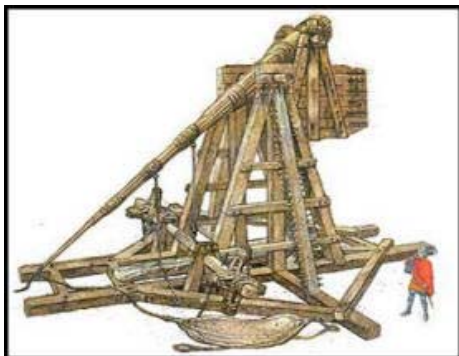
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same area. This happens because, the enemy is still occupying a part of their life, and unless these strongholds are pulled down battle will continue to rage.

When conquerors took territory, they would locate the strongholds. Secondly, they would gather intelligence on the stronghold. Before operations against the stronghold could begin, the conqueror needs to know the answers to specific questions.

- **How is the stronghold supplied?**
- **How large is the force within its walls?**
- **Where does it get its water from?**
- **How high and thick are its walls?**
- **What kind of weapons do they have?**
- **Are enemy reinforcements nearby?**

Once the commander understands the background of the Stronghold, he can begin preparations of the siege. The warfare against physical strongholds parallels in many ways the battle against spiritual strongholds. For us to have a victorious Christian life, we need to wage war on our strongholds. If we fail to subdue the strongholds, we will constantly be subjected to strong enemy attacks. Therefore, there is a process to being successful in our walk, it does not automatically happen. We need to decide to follow Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The process to pulling down strongholds is as follows.



- **Identify the strongholds in your land**
- **Develop a strategy to subdue the stronghold**
- **Lay siege to the stronghold**
- **Subdue the stronghold to the obedience of Christ**

Identify the strongholds in your land

How do we identify strongholds? When we come to Christ, an amazing event happens, The Holy Spirit comes to dwell within our tent or body. Our body becomes the Temple of God, when we become saved as God literally takes residence in our body (Ephesians 1:13-14, 2 Cor. 6:6, I Cor. 6:19). Now the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, who teaches us (the saved) all things. Therefore, the Holy Spirit will reveal to us the areas in our life, where Satan has established strongholds. In Romans, Paul tells us how the Holy Spirit intercedes with our spirit.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. **Romans 8:26-27**

In verse 26, Paul writes how the Spirit pricks our inner-man, with groaning or sighing, the Spirit testifies and intercedes where we are feeble. Now the areas where we are weak are because stronghold dominate, causing us to be weak. One person's weakness might not be another's, which is why it is important to rely on the conviction of God.

1. The Holy Spirit causes groaning

Scripture, the Sword of the Spirit, along with the Holy Spirit will shine the light on the strongholds in our life. The first step is to make our life sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God. As we read scripture, where do you feel convicted by the Spirit?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

2. Do you have fruits of the flesh?

In the book of Galatians, Paul identifies two sets of fruit, (fruit) *works of the flesh* and *fruit of the Spirit* (*Galatians 5:22-23*). In addition to these two sets of fruits, Paul also lists areas of the flesh, which separate those who walk in the Spirit as opposed to the flesh. As you read these lists of fruits, do you identify with any of them?

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:19-21

20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

21 lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced. **2 Corinthians 12:20-21**

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites,

10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **I Corinthians 6:9-10**

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5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. **Colossians**

3:5-8

Are there areas here listed here in scripture that cause you to stumble?_____

Have you tried and tried to change, but have not been able to gain victory in your life in certain areas? _____.

If so, the area is a stronghold, from which the enemy is able to wage war on the soul.

"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. "2 Cor 10:3-5**

We choose to loose our minds from strongholds that lodge in our imaginations, pretensions, arguments and intellect, renouncing the belief that we are helpless to come into agreement with God's will and way again. We can bind our minds in joyful obedience to the truth that makes us free from captivity. The passion of Christ is to set the captives free and release us from our bondages!

The enemy knows what hurt and trauma will activate our strongholds, trigger us to fortify them and to erect new strongholds to protect our deceptions. Of course, demons are drawn to strongholds, like vultures circle death. We need to get rid of the death.

Matt. 16:19 " I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." It is very interesting to actually look at the Biblical definition of binding and loosing. It is often the opposite of the way western Christians use the words.

The Biblical definition of bind is to tie, gird, join together for the effectual working of every part, knit together. I bind my soul to the will and heart of Jesus Christ.

The Biblical definition of loose is to smash, crush, destroy or lacerate.

According to the Biblical use of these words, we loose our souls from indulging in self-deception and pretending that we are free already. We repent of pretending that the problem is in someone else or ALL THE DEVIL, so that it is not in us! We bind ourselves to the truth and heart of God, recognizing the areas where we are not lined up with God's truth and or choosing God's will and way for us.

Key: Flesh cannot be cast out, but must be brought to Jesus and taken to the cross to be crucified. **We choose to repent and to bring every fleshly pattern to Jesus so that He can crucify it on the cross.** We choose to follow the strategy for combat that Jesus gave us in Matthew 4. We commit to you, God, to pray: "It is

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written ..., It is written ..., It is written ..., " in corporate agreement, for our freedom from strongholds!

We receive your truth about our identity in Christ from your Holy Word and your purposes and plans for our life in you. We choose to allow you to live through us with Godly responses to hurt, trauma and offense. Purify our hearts and minds, Lord, from every sinful pattern of sinful thinking and sinful behavior.

Jesus demonstrated the use of spiritual weapons by praying scripture. We choose to swing the sword of the Spirit, the truth of God's Word, in faith, receiving the riches of the gospel of peace and His gifts of righteousness, with my salvation. I pray under the leadership of the Holy Spirit and declare and decree God's Word!

Jesus said, "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you. 21 "When a **strongman**, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when **someone stronger** attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the **armor** in which the strongman trusted and divides up the spoils." Luke 11:20-22

What is the armor of a strongman that Jesus will take away? His armor is made up sinful reactions that we choose to indulge in. For instance, Christians don't start out to build a stronghold of bitterness. We put on his armor piece by piece.

1. **unforgiveness** - "until they realize how badly they hurt us and ask for forgiveness"
2. **resentment** - we savor and rehearse our resentment of that hurt or trauma
3. **judgment** - we judge them with condemning and judgmental attitudes
4. **anger with sin** - our anger involves sinful thinking and sinful behavior
5. **wrath and hatred** - we lash out in anger that is out of control
6. **self-hatred** - we hate ourselves for our reactions and behavior yet tolerate it
7. **violence** - threatening behavior: throwing, slamming, hitting, punching, fighting etc.
8. **elimination** - hoping they disappear, resign, are fired, divorce, die, commit suicide

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9. **passive aggression** - aggressive behavior that is planned to look innocent
10. **murder** - thinking about taking or actually taking their life

Now a stronghold of bitterness has been built. We have bitter root judgments and bitter expectations that have not only sprung up but are well lodged and protected in our mind. **Lord, show me how the strongman has taken my house and my goods; show me the pieces of armor that I have allowed to make up the bitterness stronghold.**

Eph 4:31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Heb 12:15 ... looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

It is important to learn to forgive 5 ways in order to dismantle the stronghold of bitterness. We need to:

1. Forgive them,
2. Forgive ourselves,
3. Release God from all blame,
4. Ask forgiveness for our sin,
5. Ask God to forgive us for acting as judge and jury over our brothers.

Now we can bring our fleshly stronghold to Jesus to bring it to death on the cross for us. He will then be free to restore all the blessings and rewards that we missed while we were protecting our stronghold.

Rom 12:18-19 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Lord, we choose to trust you to avenge every wrong. We choose to love our enemies, take our house back and to enjoy our goods in peace, submitted to the stronger Man.

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List area in scripture you are having problems getting control of in your life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

3. Do you have generational strongholds in your life?

When we examine lives of people and families, we see there are strongholds of sins, which, can be traced back for generations. Scripture refers to these strongholds of sin, which transfer from generation to generation. In the Ten Commandments, the sins of the fathers are passed to the children, until a generation breaks the cycle. Idol worship was a stronghold in ancient Israel, which eventually caused God to judge the nation (Jeremiah 5:7-19, Ezekiel 8:6-18).

8 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image-any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

9 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, Deuteronomy 5:8-9

We can see in Jeremiah how this sin was transferred from family to family, eventually corrupting nearly the entire nation. The people became hostile to God and His prophets; they were hostile to the Word, as their sin controlled their lives. Even after Jerusalem was destroyed they fled with their sin rather than obeying God's word, through Jeremiah.

18 "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and

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they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. 19 "Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the Lord. "Do they not provoke themselves, to the shame of their own faces?" Jeremiah 7:18-19

One of the greatest example of generational strongholds was conducted in [\[1\]](#) In 1900, A.E. Winship tracked down fourteen hundred of the descendants of Jonathan Edwards a pastor and university president and Max Jukes, he published his study of the Edwards children in contrast to the Jukes children.

Jonathan Edwards: Born 1703	Max Jukes: Born 1700
<p>A man of God and married to a woman of like character. He was 24 and she was 17. On their wedding night they committed their marriage to the Lord. Their descendants included:</p> <p>300 clergymen - some missionaries and theological professors. 100 professors. 100 attorneys. 30 judges, 1 dean of a law school. 60 physicians, 1 dean of a medical school. 3 mayors of large cities. 60 authors of fine classics. 14 presidents of universities. 3 State Governors. 1 Controller of the US Treasury.</p>	<div data-bbox="776 701 1081 873" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="781 898 1076 936" data-label="Caption"> <p>Jukes family member</p> </div> <p>A non-believer, who married a woman of like character. She lacked principle, among other indecencies, including the occult. Of their 1200 descendants -</p> <p>310 were professional vagrants. 440 wrecked their lives through debauchery. 130 went to jail - 7 for murder, average sentence: 13 years. More than 600 became alcoholics.</p>

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1 Vice-President of the USA.	60 were habitual thieves. 190 became public prostitutes. 20 became tradesmen, 10 of whom learned their trade in prison. That descendancy cost the state of New York \$1,250,000.
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Generational strongholds are ways of thinking and blindness transferred from generation to generation. Only the power of Gospel, has the power to break these generational strongholds, which can dominate families.

Idolatry is a sin transferred from generation to generation, maintaining a stronghold on a family. Many forms of family idolatry pass down the family line. Most are familiar with alcohol; just about, everybody knows families affected by this stronghold.

Generational strongholds can include quite a number of variable forms, many of which might not seem so obvious.

In third commandment, idolatry is that which is worshipped above the Lord God. When something is placed above the lord it becomes idol worship. The love of money can be passed down from generations, where a family might put great pride in their business skills, not realizing it really a stronghold, trapping generations. In many ways it is no different than alcohol, its only another form of stronghold.

Drugs: A drug culture and mindsets can be passed down from generations, as children listen to the glorification of drugs and rock n roll, the stronghold is established in offspring.
lewdness: Children model what they see, if parents are model lewdness by what they watch, and say. The

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pattern can easily be accepted by children, who think lewdness is part of being adult.
Love of money: A successful family member in a family history can set the stage for generations to come. Each modeling their lives after the “Idol” maker, who taught them the power of money.
Politics: Politics has a lure all its own, because
violence: Family often transfer violence, from generation to generation.
adultery/fornication: Children model what they see, what becomes acceptable for kids, is often what kids look for in spouses. Thus the patterns become a stronghold in the generation.

Cutting off the supply routes

When an army decided to destroy a stronghold, one of the first things needed to do was to isolate the stronghold. This was done by cutting off supply routes to the stronghold, one method used by the Romans was to construct wall around the stronghold. This way they could be sure no one slipped in or out without their knowing.

The goal was twofold, one; cause the stronghold to surrender by cutting off supplies of food and weapons. Two, prevent anyone from leaving to provide intelligence to allies, who might try to come to rescue the stronghold. The Romans were masters at conquest, they understood the need to subdue enemy strongholds. They spent two years, taking the Jewish stronghold of Masada, 15,000 men working to take down a stronghold of 1000-men, women and children.

We can learn a principle from Roman siege craft if they understood the value in blockading strongholds, we should follow their example. How can we blockade our strongholds? One way is to cutoff the supply line, which feeds our stronghold. For example, if alcohol is the stronghold, if you are serious about taking the stronghold, you need to destroy your supply. You need to cut off those who would reinforce your supply, such as friends who want to take you drinking.

If pornography is a stronghold, the same principles apply, cut off the supply routes, control what gets to the stronghold to supply it. Serious action needs to be taken, to pull down strongholds. Without serious action, strongholds will remain a

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constant presence in the believer's life. Get rid of the cable television, the internet, the subscriptions and the friends who would supply the stronghold. This same principle goes for all strongholds; ask what is supplying the stronghold? You know what feeds it? The goal is to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

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, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

Ask yourself these questions, to help you direct your assault against the stronghold.

1. What is the stronghold in my life?_____

2. How is this stronghold supplied?_____

3. Do people in my life supply this stronghold?_____

4. What in my environment is feeding and supplying the stronghold?_____

5. Am I serious about pulling down the stronghold?_____

6. Am I willing to make myself accountable to Christian friends?_____

Building your base camp

After cutting off supplies to the stronghold, the Romans will build the assault camp, the place where the soldiers would camp out, so they can keep an eye on the stronghold. In the same way, we need to surround ourselves with people, who can help us assault the stronghold. Again, if we are serious we need to seek out people who can help us tear down the walls, people with experience.

Waging war on the stronghold



The weapons of our warfare, the Sword of the Spirit and Prayer, with this double-edged sword, we have the ability to tear down any stronghold. We need to learn to take God at His Word, the weapon of our warfare is more powerful than anything the world can ever offer.

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

To apply this double edged sword in combat, after we have identified the target stronghold. Learn what scripture has to say about particular

issue.

The stronghold of pride as example

Let us take *pride* for example, over 40 verses in scripture mention pride. Start out by finding the verses in God's word, which deal with pride. List them, learn what they are referring to? A Bible Concordance, *Strong's Concordance* for example, dictionary or software can help you locate verses.

Under pride, I would list several verses including the ones below. I would meditate on these verses; I would then begin to pray these verses so they apply to me.

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19 I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. **Leviticus 26:19**

9 The Lord of hosts has purposed it, To bring to dishonor the pride of all glory, To bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth. **Isaiah 23:9**

3 The pride of your heart has deceived you, You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, Whose habitation is high; You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?' **Obadiah 1:3**

16 For all that is in the world-the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-is not of the Father but is of the world. **I John 2:16**

After praying on these verses, memorizing them, I would begin to wage war on the stronghold. One way is to the exact opposite of your flesh. Volunteer in a homeless shelter, do something humble refrain from exalting yourself, this only feeds the flesh. Daniel's gave advice to Nebuchadnezzar on how he was to overcome the stronghold of pride; I would use Daniel's advice to the king.

27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; break off your sins by being righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Perhaps there may be a lengthening of your prosperity." Daniel 4:27

Praying the Word of God

We can take the Word of God and pray what it says into our life.
Let's take Leviticus 26:19,

19 I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. **Leviticus 26:19**

We can take this verse and personalize a prayer, as the Spirit groans with our pride. We might come before the throne of God and say; Lord I know you hate Pride, your Word says you will break the pride of power, and you will make the heavens like iron and the earth like bronze, please Lord....Take my pride from me, humble my heart...let me learn to rejoice in your power and not mine own...

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When we pray, we literally enter Heaven, we enter the throne room of God. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the Temple was ripped from top to bottom, signifying the separation between man and God was eliminated because of the blood of Christ.

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Fasting and Prayer

Along with prayer, we have an additional tool called fasting. Fasting adds power to our prayer, it helps us focus and demonstrates to us, how sincere we are about getting rid of our stronghold. Jesus clearly says, some issues require both prayers along with fasting. Referring to the demon possessed boy, who the disciples could not deliver. Jesus said, “*However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting*”(Matthew 17:21).

13 But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart. Psalm 35:13

3 Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. Daniel 9:3

37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. **Luke 2:37**

In Summary the process of pulling down strongholds is:

1. Identify the stronghold
2. Gather intelligence about the stronghold
3. Sever and blockade the supply lines to the stronghold
4. Establish a base camp of friends (warriors)
5. Wage war against the stronghold
 - a. Scripture
 - b. Scripture memory
 - c. Pray God's word
 - d. Pray and fast

My Battle Plan

1. My Stronghold_____

2. Intelligence

1. What is the stronghold in my life?_____

2. How is this stronghold supplied?_____

3. Do people in my life supply this stronghold?_____

4. What in my environment is feeding and supplying the stronghold?

5. Am I serious about pulling down the stronghold?_____

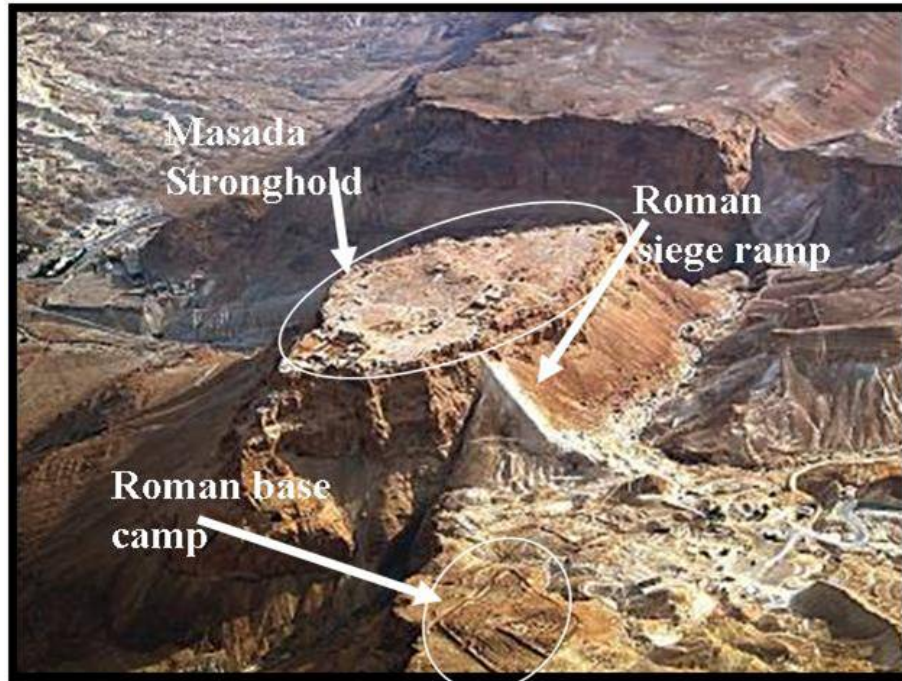
6. Am I willing to make myself accountable to Christian friends?____

3. Severe the Supply lines

1. Who do I know that can help me wage war?_____

2. What verses apply to the stronghold?_____

The Fall of Masada



Masada occupies the entire top of an isolated mesa near the southwest coast of the Dead Sea. The rhomboid-shaped mountain towers 1,424 feet (434 m) above the level of the Dead Sea. It has a summit area of about 18 acres (7 hectares). Some authorities hold that the site was settled at the time of the First Temple (c. 900 BC), but Masada is renowned for the palaces and fortifications of Herod the Great (reigned 37–4 BC), king of Judaea under the Romans, and for its resistance to the Roman siege in AD 72–73.

The site was first fortified either by Jonathan Maccabeus (d. 143/142 BC) or by Alexander Jannaeus (reigned 103–76 BC), both of the Hasmonean dynasty. Masada was chiefly developed by Herod, who made it a royal citadel. His constructions included two ornate palaces (one of them on three levels), heavy walls, defensive towers, and aqueducts that brought water to cisterns holding nearly 200,000 gallons (750,000 l). After Herod's death (4 BC), Masada was captured by the Romans, but the Zealots, a Jewish sect that staunchly opposed domination by Rome, took it by surprise in AD 66. The steep slopes of the mountain made Masada a virtually unassailable fortress.

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Following the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple (AD 70), the Masada garrison—the last remnant of Jewish rule in Palestine—refused to surrender and was besieged by the Roman legion X Fretensis under Flavius Silva. Masada's unequalled defensive site baffled even the Romans' highly developed siegecraft for a time. It took the Roman army of almost 15,000, fighting a defending force of less than 1,000, including women and children, almost two years to subdue the fortress. The besiegers built a sloping ramp of earth and stones to bring their soldiers within reach of the stronghold, which fell only after the Romans created a breach in the defenders' walls. The Zealots, however, preferred death to enslavement, and the conquerors found that the defenders, led by Eleazar ben Jair, had taken their own lives (April 15, AD 73).

Only two women and five children—who had hidden in a water conduit—survived to tell the tale. Masada was briefly reoccupied by the Jews in the 2nd century AD and was the site of a Byzantine church in the 5th–6th century. Thereafter, it was abandoned until the 20th century, except for a brief interval during the Crusades; the Arabs called the mountain As-Sabba (“The Accursed”).

A general survey of the ruins was made by Israeli archaeologists in 1955–56, and the entire mountaintop was excavated by Yigael Yadin in 1963–65, assisted by thousands of volunteers from around the world. Descriptions by the Jewish historian Josephus, until then the only detailed source of Masada's history, were found to be highly accurate; the palaces, storehouses, defense works, and Roman camps and siege works were all revealed and cleared, as was the winding trail (the “Snake Path”) on the mesa's northeastern face. A synagogue and ritual bath discovered on Masada are the earliest yet found in Palestine. Among the most interesting discoveries is a group of potsherds inscribed with Hebrew personal names. These may be lots cast by the last defenders to determine who should die first.

In the 20th century Masada became a symbol of Jewish national heroism, and it is now one of Israel's most popular tourist attractions

"Strongholds" could be actual "demon possession," but can merely be a "strong" influence or grip, persistent oppression, obsessions, hindrances or harassment. Believers cannot be demon possessed, but many Christians are the victims of Satan's strongholds.

Getting to the Root of the Problem

The devil's primary strategy is to disguise his activities so that it appears that someone or something else is to blame. He wants us to get our attention on his surrogates, his instruments, his hindrances and "wrestle" with them, so that our battle will be directed against the "symptoms" instead of the "real source."

We all know that a decongestant will help relieve a stuffy nose, but it will not cure a cold. Likewise, you can fight with the symptoms of the Devil, but you will not end the problems until you deal with the source and bind the "strong man."

Remember when Peter resisted Jesus' decision to return to Jerusalem, knowing that He would be crucified there? Jesus did not rebuke Peter, but turned to Peter and rebuked Satan. "Get behind me Satan" (Matt. 16:23). Peter wasn't demon possessed, and probably didn't intend to be an offense. However, the Devil inspired Peter's statement, and Jesus went after the real source.

Paul said that our battle is not with "flesh and blood" but with spiritual adversaries (Eph. 6:12). How important it is that we understand what the real root of the problem is -- "who" our real enemy is. It is Satan, not flesh and blood, not our brethren, not our family, not our children, not husbands and wives, not employers, nor our government! The Devil is the enemy!

Binding the Strong Man

One time, after Jesus had cast out a devil and healed a deaf and mute boy, Jesus explained that in order to overturn the works and activity of the Devil, we must bind him first. "Or else how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house" (Matt. 12:29). In order to neutralize the Devil's works, we must go and deal directly with the source and bind up the devil so that his hands are tied. Then we'll be able to take back what he's stolen and bring a halt to his actions.

I've preached in many cities that have been strongholds for the Devil. The symptoms of this are many. Often the local churches suffer senseless conflicts or unexplained problems. The congregations experience little growth, and the preaching of the Word is not easily proclaimed or well received by the community. These are the symptoms, but behind the scene Satan is the culprit. In such cases,

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those spiritual strongholds must be dealt with and bound for the ministry to be effective.

All Believers have Authority over the Devil

All Christians must be aware that God has equipped them to overcome Satan's power. The Apostle Paul said that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (of a fleshly or earthly nature), but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds" (2 Cor. 10:4).

You may recall the time when the seventy disciples returned to the Lord rejoicing about the results of their ministry. They remarked, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name" (Luke 10:17). But then Jesus pointed out that the great marvel of this was that the devils were subject to them because their names were "written in heaven." In other words, because they were saved -- because of their relationship with Christ, they had authority over the Devil in the name of Jesus.

Jesus has given all His followers -- all those who know Jesus personally as their Lord and Savior -- the authority to use His name to expel the forces of evil. To all believers, Jesus said, "In My name they will cast out demons..." (Mark 16:17).

Personal Application

1. Do you believe in a spiritual stronghold? _____
Why? _____
2. How can you defeat the spiritual stronghold? _____

3. What is the stronghold in your life that is holding you back from running to God? _____

4. How does the stronghold control your life? _____
5. How do you tear down a stronghold? _____

6. What is the hardest part in tearing down stronghold? _____

7. What is the area in your life where you think is the enemy's stronghold? _____

8. Have you re-established your boundaries? _____
Why? _____
9. How important is it to have a renewing of the mind? _____

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10. What are the results of the renewing of mind? _____

11. What are the strongholds that you are trying to breakdown in your life? _____

12. Do you rely on God's power or on your own power? _____

Why? _____

13. How do you deal with strongholds? _____

14. Do you trust God that He can change and destroy the strongholds in your life? _____

Why? _____

15. Do you have hurt and trauma in your heart that is controlling your life? _____

16. What is your decision with your trauma and hurt? _____

Are you going to surrender it to God and allow Him to heal you? _____

Why? _____

9 keys to breaking down strongholds in your mind.

How to Break Strongholds and keep them Broken! Any past sin or hurt against you can prevent you from being useful to God by making you feel the pain of the situation again. This keeps you in a position where God cannot use you. A stronghold in your mind gives Satan easy access to your thinking by using past situations where you sinned or someone sinned against you. Change your thinking to God's way of thinking and you change your life.

1. Know your position in Christ!

-- Matthew 16:19

19 "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

John 14:13-14

13 "You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father. 14 Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!"

Under our own authority we have no power and remember we are not dealing with flesh but with fallen angels who have more power than we do, but we have been given power under the name of Jesus Christ. When Christ went to the cross as a man, He defeated the authority of Satan in this world. The authority that he stole from us in the garden. Christ has all authority and as believers we also have it under His name. In Jesus name we can rebuke Satan from trying to deceive us.

2. Use the Word of God.

-- Matthew 4:1-4

Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted there by the Devil. 2 For forty days and forty nights he ate nothing and became very hungry. 3 Then the Devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, change these stones into loaves of bread." 4 But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every word of God.'

We are to follow Jesus' example when we struggle with a stronghold in our minds. When Satan reminds of us of past sin or past hurt we are to remember the Word and speak it. Jesus was not using His power as God, but was acting as man and in a

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weaken condition, when Satan came to Him, but Christ used the Word as a sword and quickly rebuked the Devil. We are to do the same. Remember, even a good thought that goes against the Word of God can come from Satan and should be rebuked. We use the Word as a sword to fight the battle. Ask God for discernment to recognize the lies of the enemy that come into your mind.

3. Authority

– Every believer has the right to use the authority of Jesus' name to bind and take authority over Satan's activities. "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house" (Mark 3:27). Issue a spoken command to the devil that he is bound and he must leave the stronghold! Exercising authority in the name of Jesus will expel the Devil's influence. "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues..." (Mark 16:17).

4. Intercession

-- Come together with other believers to pray and intercede against strongholds until you get results. There is intensified power in the gathering of more believers. Prayer with fasting intensifies faith, and faith will break strongholds. "Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast him out? However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:19,21).

5. Displacement

-- Establish the presence of God. Where Satan has been commanded to leave, fill it up with God's presence. Where the presence of the Lord is, the Devil isn't! Satan doesn't want to hang around where people are lifting up Jesus in worship, in singing and prayer. The presence of the Lord displaces the Devil. "For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14).

6. Resistance

-- Submit yourselves and draw close to God. The Bible says this is how we resist Satan and he will flee. The Devil runs from submitted, yielded Christians. He runs from your life, and will run away from where you go. "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

7. Occupation

-- Give no place or vacancy to the Devil. With Satan departed, fill the void with God. Let righteousness be the standard rule and behavior. Provide no pocket of rebellion, corruption or immorality in which Satan can find refuge to rebuild his influence or strength. The scripture says to not "give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27).

8. Fortification!

-- Clothe yourself with God's armor. Take upon you daily, the full array of God's spiritual equipment that you may maintain battle-ready status. With the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit (God's Word) and the other links of armor (Eph. 6:13-17), you will be ready to resist any satanic assault, and will be ready to engage the strongholds in others. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

9. Keep fighting and do not give up!

-- Matthew 7:7-8 "Keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. 8 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks.

Do not give up! Whatever it is that you are trying to overcome, will be defeated. The victory is yours; Christ has given it to you. Each time you come up against it, walls break down and keep breaking down until the barrier in your mind is gone and Satan does not have easy access to make you feel unworthy or unloved. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean to your own understanding!

**A PRAYER:
BREAKING THE STRONGHOLDS**

Lord Jesus, I come to You, just as I am.

Please forgive my sins as I am sorrowful and repentant.

In Your Name and grace, I forgive all others of their sins against me.

I have invited You to be Master of my life, to live in me, and I in You.

Thank You for responding with the Gift of the Holy Spirit Who proceeds from You and the Father. I empty myself daily so Your Spirit can possess

me all the more, transforming me, healing me, and strengthening me

in body, soul and spirit. I love You, Lord Jesus! I praise You!

As sheep follow their shepherd, I will follow You every day of my life.

I am gratefully Your servant_____.

YOUR NAME HERE

Your Divine Connection,



Bishop Charlie E.B. Berrian II

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