

Bible Study - Dismantling Strongholds – 3

Introduction

2 Corinthians 10:4 - For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 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, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

We know from scripture that God is the God of the New. Even right now He is doing a new thing. In **Isaiah 43:18** God says I am doing a new thing, and then He says do you not perceive it? Because it is possible for God to be doing something that you do not perceive.

Strongholds are often the reason why we may not perceive or actively participate in the new. Strongholds are old patterns of thought that keep us trapped in the old. Negative strongholds are used by the enemy to enslave us to lies, to patterns of behaviour, expectation and experiences that contradict the will of God for our lives.

So it becomes really essential for us to identify strongholds and for us to begin to pull them down. Because God is doing a new thing, can you perceive it? Is the pattern of thinking you have allowing you to perceive what God is doing? Or is it a hindrance to the new thing that God is doing?

For those who have been part of these studies, I want to ask you how you are doing with those strongholds? Have you identified any that needs to be pulled down? Or are you just going to settle for hearing messages every Tuesday about strongholds? God is sending you these messages so that you can pull down those strongholds!

You have the necessary weapons. **Romans 10:8** says: **But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim:**

Ephesians 6:17 calls the Word, the sword of the Spirit. Jesus said in **John 6:63** that the Words I have spoken to you are Spirit and Life. Paul then says that our weapon is not a carnal weapon, which means it is a spiritual weapon and it is mighty to the extent that it can pull down strongholds.

I am trying to show you that we can pull down these lies, those lies that tell you are not worthy unless you are in a relationship, those lies that tell you that you are not one of those who can do exceptional things with their lives, those lies that you have believed

that makes you return to toxic places to find comfort. Those lies that have limited your productivity. We can pull them all down with the weapon of the Word.

But here is what I am asking you to do. Write down as many of these lies as you can identify. Go over these notes and start hacking away at those strongholds. Use the weapon of God's word. Don't stop until you are free! Stop admiring your weapon. Stop taking pictures with your weapon. Use your weapon!

So far we have identified two practical steps we can take to pull down these strongholds: 1) Take responsibility for your thought life. Take responsibility for the content of your mind.

2) Police your thoughts. By this we mean:

- a. Think about what you're thinking about
- b. Use the Word to argue with your thoughts.

This is where I'll pick it up today.

Arguments are an exchange of divergent or opposing views. Arguments are a reason or set of reasons given for or against an idea, action or theory.

And Paul says that we pull down arguments, reasonings that exalt themselves above the knowledge of God. The difference between what God says in His word and what we all experience in our lives is often the arguments we are having in our minds. If I let an argument, a reasoning that is contrary to the Word of God, thrive in my mind, it eventually becomes a stronghold and a source of future reasonings that contradict the Word of God!

So here is what we do, we think about what we are thinking about, so that when we discover what we are thinking about we can argue or reason with our thoughts! We confront our thoughts. If it is in obedience to Christ we let it run. If it isn't obedient to Christ, then we want to make it obedient to Christ.

Get comfortable with discomfort

Oftentimes we don't want to confront our thoughts because it might lead you to an unpleasant place. That is why we always confront our thoughts with Jesus. The Word! The Word is given to us, not just to comfort us, but to confront us. To confront thoughts that contradict God's will and to bring about repentance. A change. But you can't change a thought that you don't confront. The discomfort you feel when a pattern of

thinking or a behaviour is confronted by the Word is really strongholds resisting the Word! Offence is evidence that a stronghold has successfully resisted the Word.

In Matthew 13:53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. ⁵⁴ Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?” they asked. ⁵⁵ “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ Aren’t all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him.

Jesus confronted their thinking on so many different things, their strongholds about what they knew of Him, caused them to resist the word and the result was offence. Check yourself when you’re offended, it might just be that a stronghold has successfully resisted the truth.

- Jesus, who is the Word, confronted strongholds regularly. We must consciously confront our thoughts with the Word whether we feel comfortable or not. **Get comfortable with discomfort.** Comfort is the enemy of change. Your greatest areas of change will be preceded by great discomforts. You feel discomfort when you want to change what your body enjoys. We have to change what our body enjoys sometimes because what our body enjoys is not always in keeping with God's plan for you. Discomfort is what happens when your body's predictable state is disrupted.

Choose the future you want.

Meditate. Change the hardware. You can change your brain from just being a record of the past to being a map to the future.

Joshua 1:8 Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Your prosperity is in the Word. We are on a journey through life, like Joshua and the children of Israel were on a journey to the promised land, and God was saying that our success in this journey, our prosperity is in the Word. So He said, meditate on the Word day and night.

God gave us His Word to create a vision of the future. God's Word does not only pull-down strongholds. God's Word gives you a new future. In fact God's Word pulls down strongholds by giving you a new future.

As we meditate on the Word of God, we are creating a map for the future. If we don't have a vision of the future we will always seek to return to the past.



Don't wait for your success to determine how you feel.

If thoughts are the bricks that we use to build strongholds, emotions are the glue that holds them together. As you meditate, allow yourself to feel the joy of seeing your future

Psalm 20:5 May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God. May the LORD grant all your requests.

Choose your thoughts.

Write them down. Identify the lies that have grown into strongholds. Choose the thoughts you're going to think about those lies.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Make decisions and take steps in line with this new mindset.

Steward your mornings and your nights. The words & thoughts you entertain in these times will most likely form strong holds.