

## Dismantling Strongholds – 2: Police your thoughts

### Introduction

**2 Corinthians 10:4-6: 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.**

The wider context of this conversation that Paul is addressing here is the culture of the day, but it is still very much applicable to our individual way of thinking. Strongholds are patterns of thinking. When they contradict the will of God, then they become strongholds that limit even the will of God in our lives. That's what Paul was addressing here, he's addressing these contrary patterns of thinking that were hindering the purpose of God in the region.

I wonder if there are contrary patterns of thinking that are keeping you out of the will of God. The fact that you are on this call, paying attention, hungry, gives me confidence that you certainly have patterns of thinking that gives God access to you. I celebrate that. I am confident that there are many other patterns of thinking that are in line with the will of God.

But this conversation is about the patterns of thinking that are contrary to the will of God. To use the same term that Jesus used, I wonder if there any ways of thinking that you need to repent from. Sometimes we don't want to think of ourselves as needing to repent of anything, because in religious thinking repentance is associated with doing bad things. And so if someone suggests that we need to repent, our heart sinks and we even become defensive because we automatically assume that they are implying that we have sinned. But that is a typical example of a pattern of thinking that we need to pull down. Because repentance is a change of mind that brings about a change in behaviour. It is not primarily about what you do as it is about how you think.

So this conversation is one I suggest we don't take lightly, because a lack of repentance, the presence of these strongholds can hinder the flow of God. Jesus put it this way He said repent because the kingdom of God is at hand. In other words, everything that the kingdom of God offers is accessible to you. But without a change of mind we could be trapped outside of our own inheritance! Without a change of mind, we could be kept out of what was kept for us in Christ.

The good news is that Jesus did not just ask us to repent. Like an excellent master and Lord, He provides us with weapons to facilitate our repentance. Let me say it again,

change is possible! You don't have to be lukewarm all your life, change is possible! You don't have to be stuck in that addiction, in that cycle, you don't have to be in unhappy relationships all your life, change is possible! Strongholds can be pulled down. Patterns of thinking that keep us in bondage can be dismantled!

So last week we looked at how we need to start with taking responsibility for your thoughts. Don't outsource the responsibility for the contents of your mind to others. Take responsibility for your mind.

### Policing your thoughts.

Today let's talk about policing your thoughts.

**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.**

### Think about what you are thinking about

Notice that we use the weapons given to us to bring every thought into captivity. The implication is that we need to be people who think about what we are thinking about. You cannot bring any thought into captivity if you are not watching out for those thoughts. This is why I'm using that phrase "police your thoughts". I'm really saying, think about what you are thinking about. Many of our thoughts are automatic, in other words we think about them without even thinking about what we are thinking about. Someone says your hair looks nice and you automatically get defensive. That's because without even thinking about what you were thinking you defaulted to thinking that they were mocking you. And even before you know it you are already responding like they were mocking you. All they said was nice hair, next thing we know, they're on your list of haters. The issue wasn't what they said or even how they said it, but it was what you were thinking about what they said.

But the scripture says that we are to take every thought captive! This is why **James 1:19-20** says this:

**James 1:19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**

When we don't think about what we are thinking about, we end up slow to hear, quick to speak and quick to wrath. And this way of doing things does not produce the righteousness of God! How many times have you acted in anger because you didn't

really hear what they said, or because of what you thought they said? That's usually because we didn't think about what we were thinking about, so we ended up producing something that isn't the righteousness of God.

So we bring every thought captive by thinking about what we are thinking about.

- **Use the Word to argue with your thoughts.**

The Word is the weapon given to dismantle strongholds. So Paul says: **casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.**

So here is what policing your thoughts look like. It looks like thinking about what you're thinking about. Then when you discover what you are thinking about, argue with that thought to determine if it should be cast down or upheld!

I'll explain what an argument is, and we will look at examples:

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.

The Greek word for arguments is Logismos. It means a reasoning, or a thought. It is the way you reconcile thoughts to reach a conclusion. It is reasoning that reflects someone's values, i.e. how they personally assign weight in determining what they find reasonable.

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

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.

Oftentimes we don't want to confront our thoughts because they might lead you to an unpleasant place. That is why we always confront our thoughts with Jesus. The Word!

### **Examples of confronting arguments in the Word**

In **Genesis 3** God asked Adam, who told you that you were naked. God asked them that question because **the source of a thought determines the legitimacy of the**



**thought. Your Lord Jesus will not agree with that thought, it is a rogue thought.**

We police our thoughts so that we can capture rogue thoughts. We capture rogue thoughts to make them obedient to Jesus.

In **Luke 5:22-24**, Jesus confronted the unbelieving thoughts these people had.