

DO YOU HAVE  
**STRONGHOLDS** 

# STRONGHOLDS

## God Hates

II Corinthians 10:3-5;

- I. The Battle overcoming Strongholds! v. 3 The flesh is weak and we cannot win the battle by fleshly methods,
- II. Illustrations of Strongholds
  - A. "The Russell Girl" is a story that Verna and I saw on Television about a baby sitter who was taking care of three children. A baby girl was in a stroller in another room and while the boys were fighting, the teenage girl was trying to separate them. The baby pushed her stroller over to an open door to a flight of stairs and went falling down the stairs which killed her. The mother blamed the girl for letting it happen and the girl took that blame resulting in her leaving home to go to school in Chicago. The girl came down with Cancer and returned home but did not tell her parents about the Cancer probably because she may have felt she deserved it. She tried to make reconciliation with the mother but it only caused the mother to grieve more. The mother held on to everything that was the baby's, clothes, toys, etc. and would weep every time she touched any of the things. Because of the mother's grief, she neglected her two older boys and her husband burying herself in restoring old furniture.

The girl grew weaker from the Cancer and the hurting mother found her in that weakened condition and tried to help her but the girl said she was OK and finally after several such incidents the girl told her she had Cancer. The mother began to realize the girl was feeling so guilty that it was contributing to her illness. The mother began to awaken to what her grief was doing to her family and the girl and told the girl she had to tell her parents or she was going to tell them about the Cancer. The matter came to a head when the mother came across the street to where the girl's parents lived which shocked the parents because she had not been there for several years but her presence forced the girl to confess to her Cancer and the restoring the two families to reconciliation. The girl was taken to Chicago for treatment.

This was a Stronghold of Unforgiveness and Bitterness which was destroying two families!
  - B. Other Strongholds may be Lust, Anger, Unfaithfulness to a spouse, Pornography, Fear, Jealousy or Envy, Worry, Hatred, Evil Imaginations, Worldliness, Materialism, Religion, Legalism, Judging, Criticizing, Deception, Lying, Drugs, Alcohol etc.
- III. How can one have Victory over a Stronghold? II Corinthians 10:5 explains what the weapons for overcoming are!
  - A. First we must admit our inability to do this in our own strength! The born again believer must confess their sin (I John 1 :9) to the Lord in prayer and yield to the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to renounce evil thoughts and direct our minds toward the following:

B. v. 5 "Casting down imaginations." The mind has much to do with the Stronghold! This is where sin begins and where the Stronghold starts. It is yielding to an evil thought which sets a precedent to allowing another such thought and we think it over and over until it becomes a Stronghold. We yield to the temptation to dwell on that thought which leads to acting on that thought! Thus one becomes addicted to that Stronghold!

For instance, a man looks at a lewd picture of a woman and it makes an imprint in the mind. He lets his mind dwell on the picture and imagines being involved with the person. The more he dwells on the thought the more he is led to act out on the thought. Repeatedly doing this leads to wanting more lewd pictures and he becomes addicted. It begins to consume his time and eventually will lead to becoming involved with a woman in a literal act of fornication or adultery. This leads men to going to a prostitute if he cannot find someone to be involved with. Thus the stronghold becomes stronger and he becomes enslaved to the sins.

This same scenario can be applied to Anger, Fear, Jealousy, Envy, Worry, Hatred, Worldliness, Materialism, Religion, Lying, Criticizing, etc.

C. Therefore we realize how important taking the next step is. II Corinthians 10:5b; "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." That is purposing to think on what Paul mentioned in Philippians 4:8; "whatsoever things are TRUE, HONEST, JUST, PURE, LOVELY, OF GOOD REPORT, VIRTUOUS, WORTHY OF PRAISE" Does this thought measure up to one of these facts? If not, reject it!! IS IT TRUE, HONEST, JUST, PURE, LOVELY, VIRTUOUS, OF GOOD REPORT?? BRING THOUGHTS INTO OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST AND WHAT HE APPROVES! This involves an act of the will!

D. A fourth step is found in 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." How can we renew our minds? We can renew our minds by doing what we did to form the Stronghold! Start focusing our thoughts on what Paul suggested in Philippians 4:8; ALSO READING AND HIDING GOD'S WORD IN OUR MINDS! The more we focus on the truth, the more the old thoughts will begin to be pushed out and the old images replaced by thoughts that are wholesome, pure, godly and righteous. Get in the habit of reading and meditating on God's word daily!

E. Also remember that Prayer is like the breath of the spirit of a believer! Meeting in prayer with the Lord is essential to having the power of God in your life. James 5:15b states "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." The illustration is given of Elijah who was "a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit." James 5:17-18; There is great power in the prayer of believers. God spared Israel from destruction because of Moses' prayer =Numbers 14:11-20; 16:21-22.

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