

## Episode 010

## Tearing Down Personal Strongholds.

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Part of spiritual warfare is centered within our thought life. That's why we need to guard our minds. Satan attacks us with strongholds in the form of deceptive lies, that seep in through our thoughts and take root in our lives. What lies am I believing that have affected my life? How have these lies impacted my prayer life? How do I destroy these strongholds and walk in God's truth?

Satan, our enemy, knows that if he can rule in our thoughts, then he can defeat us in our actions, including our prayer lives. These destructive thoughts are called strongholds because they can take such a paralyzing grip or "strong hold" on us. To avoid destruction, we must learn to take every thought captive to Christ and not listen to the lies of the enemy.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV) The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

The enemy's stronghold can come in a thought pattern that may even be planted in our minds during our first years. An enemy stronghold is based in a lying thought that we have embraced in the place of God's truth. These strongholds are powerful and can cause destructive habits that affect our relationship with God and with others. Such patterns of thought can bring terrible misunderstandings into our lives. These thoughts become open doors through which the enemy can defeat us again and again. We are then stuck in a rut.

Our strongholds affect one another. They trigger one another's emotions or other strongholds. They work to bring destruction. We need to bring them to the cross in repentance.

1 John 3:8 The reason the son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

We need to believe that Jesus's death on the cross has set us free.



## A. Weapon against strongholds.

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1. The word of God. The word is our life and sets us free. We must hold on to it with all our hearts. We must listen to what God says rather than the lies and fiery darts of the enemy.

2. Repentance. Repentance removes the legal basis of satan's attack, when we confess to God the false belief that we have carried most of our lives, God is able to remove the legal base and close the door of the enemy (foothold).

3. Personal testimony. We overcome the enemy by the word of our testimony. Personal testimony touches into the feeling part of our being. When given in a spirit of humility, it brings encouragement and helps us identify with another person.

Revelation 12:11 They overcome him by the blood of the lam and by the word of their testimony.

4. Forgiveness. We must forgive everyone who has hurt or offended us. Usually when strongholds are detected and acknowledged, there is someone who has been involved in starting or reinforcing that stronghold. Forgiveness will be a key to our deliverance.

5. The blood of Jesus. There is power in the blood of Jesus. This is power to set the captives free and live a new kind of life. The blood of Jesus overcomes all obstacles of sin. Pray the blood of Jesus over our cities, our neighborhoods, our families and our own lives.

6. Prayer. Prayer applies to the blood, cross and resurrection life of Jesus. It enables us to hear and receive the word of God.

Ephesians 6:18 Pray in the spirit on all occasions with a ll kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.



7. Dying to sin. We need to hate the strongholds in our lives and our sinful responses. We need to be so grieved by our sinful strongholds that we are willing to pay the price of dying to sin.

Romans 12:9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Our victory will come as we face the negative strongholds in our lives and learn to stand in God's word. They hinder our victorious stance in prayer by keeping us preoccupied with negative thinking. The enemy hates prayer and will do anything to stop us from praying, but Christ has brought the victory by the word of His power in truth and love.

Our minds are the battlefield and satan knows that by controlling our thoughts, he can influence our actions. Realize that you cannot destroy personal strongholds by yourself. The battle is in the spirit realm. God's divine power will demolish strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 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.

Ask God to deal with the strongholds in your life. He is the only one who can demolish the strongholds, fortresses, vain imaginations, arguments and erroneous ideas. Don't give in to our fleshly nature. Our flesh wants to live the old way. Invite God to show us the strongholds and motivations of our hearts.

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, o God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts, see if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Pray "Lord, I resolve to deal with the strongholds in my life. I ask You to get to the roots. I ask You to show me the motivations of my heart and my hurtful ways. I invite You into the center of my life to reveal to me the lies I have believed in."



8. Be aware of Your thoughts. Is your self-talk like this? “I am no good”. “I am a failure” “I never can do anything right” “life is hopeless” although these are simple thoughts, they indicate strongholds,. Be aware of sudden negative emotions, as they point out that your are touching a stronghold. By watching your thoughts and looking for false mindsets, you are able to see them more clearly. In both of his letters, the apostle peter desires to stimulate his readers to positive and wholesome thinking.

2 Peter 3:1 Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking.

Show me my strongholds and negative though patters in my life. Help me recognize these patterns very quickly. Open my eyes to see the lies I have been believing and the truth of Your word.

9. Be patient and persistent. It took you a lifetime to reinforce these strongholds, these negative thought patterns. They are like grooves in your life. It takes time and effort to be free of them. We often want a quick fix.

The quickest fix is if you determine to deal with them on a daily basis. Don't give up, but face them every time you start feeling down with God's help.

Galatians 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Psalms 144:1-2 Praise to the Lord the Lord My Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle. He is my loving God and my fortress. My stronghold and my deliverer. My shield. In whom I take refuge, who subdues people under me.



## B. Choose Life

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Choosing life makes a big difference in our prayer lives.

James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Mind submitted to Christ and living in God's ways result in a powerful and effective prayer life. It is choosing to go God's way with God's thoughts about us instead of going the way of death and believing the lies of the enemy. It is holding on to God's word and obeying Him moment by moment in every detail. We must cast down these negative thought patterns and take God's truth into our innermost being for the rest of our lives.

What are some of the ways we can have victory over these destructive strongholds? How can we choose life and begin to walk free?

1. Look for a very real encounter with the Lord. What are some verses God has used to speak to you deeply? Spend time in His presence. Pray for God to show you how He thinks about you. Pray "Lord, You have spoken to me so deeply with this verse (read the verse). Thank you for Your love for me and Your truth. Please speak to me."

2. Replace the lies with the truth of His word. Study God's word daily and hide it in your heart. Pray, Lord I want You as my stronghold. I never want to believe these lies about myself again. I choose to believe Your truth.

3. Ask the Lord for new emotional responses to the lies of the enemy. Pray for emotions that correspond with God's truth. Pray "Lord I want new emotions. I pray that You exchange my [name negative emotions] with Your peace, Your contentment and Your Joy."

4. Expect to walk in new godly motivation and reactions. When God becomes your stronghold, Jesus is Your source. Your motivations change. Pray "Lord I choose to walk in Your spirit. I choose to react Your way. I choose to lovingly react to others. Change me and make me like You."



5. Daily decide to choose life. The victory over our thought lives is a daily battle. Pray "Lord, today I choose life. I choose Your ways. I choose to obey You. I choose not to listen to the enemy's lies."

## Discussion

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- Write down any negative thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Put them under their respective columns. Ask yourself, what is behind the thought? What am I really thinking? What am I feeling? How am I behaving? Pray "Lord help me see my negative thoughts emotions, and behaviours. Reveal them to me today".
- Confess any false beliefs or strongholds in your life to the Lord as sin. We must confess that we have believed these lies instead of God's truth. Pray "Lord, I confess the false belief of [name of the stronghold]' as sin. I realize that I believe a lie rather than Your truth. I repent. Make me aware of this belief every time I encounter it."





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