

## Tearing Down Personal Strongholds

There are many believers, good Spirit filled Christians that love the Lord and will live in Eternity with the Lord who are listening to this message but are controlled by a/or several strongholds in their life.

You don't let on, but you are having a personal war within yourself trying to conquer or control that which is raging inside your mind and your body.

You are in a fortress, you have been captured, you are a P.O.W. or a **P.O.S.W.** = **"A Prisoner of Spiritual War."**

Satan has got you and everything you have tried to be free has not succeeded get him to let you go.

### Some are **obviously** incarcerated by the strongholds of the evil one:

- **Drug** addiction is a stronghold – your flesh has been captured by a chemical agent.
- **Alcohol** is a stronghold, you have tried to quit & know it's wrong, but you can't.
- **Pornography** is a tremendous stronghold in lives today.
- **Codependency** – there are people in your life that have influenced and affected you and you can't get free from their influence.
  - Parents & even those who have long since died – still hold you in bondage.
- Some have entered into the Christian faith **abused**: physically, sexually, emotionally, through incest, rape leaving scars on your body and your soul.

The enemy has captured you and held you hostage and you've not been able to break away – **this is a stronghold in your life.**

### Some have **not so obvious** strongholds:

- You have them, but you've been able to cover them over.
- **Strongholds of the mind** – no one can see; but you battle with them daily.
- **Sexual addictions** – pornography. Illicit acts capture one's mind and one becomes trapped.
  - No matter how many times you say you are not going to go to that website or buy that book or watch that movie or go to that pill or the drink– you keep going back to it because you are captured by a stronghold of the mind.

### What is a stronghold?

**"A stronghold is a mindset that accepts a situation as unchangeable even though we know it's against the will of God."**

You want to escape – Christians have been deceived into believing that if you have a stronghold, you're supposed to tolerate it.

We are in a war that fights against us and the enemy is trying to kill and destroy us:

**We want to blame people for our strongholds:**

- People cannot make something a stronghold!
- They can set you up for you to make it a stronghold.
- **What makes a stronghold a stronghold is that it's got **your mind!****
- People can only make it accessible to you, and they can encourage you in the stronghold; but they can't make you do it.
  
- A stronghold is where you are captured in **your mind:**
  - People say: "Well if they didn't have all that junk on the TV and in the movies & on the internet; I wouldn't have my problem."
  - **No, you don't understand: "Your problem is **your** problem"**
  - The TV, movie, porn site, drugs sets you up so it can reveal how messed up you are!

We want to spend time blaming others rather than spending time and effort getting rid of the stronghold and dealing with the matter once and for all. **A.P. seminar is for you.**

**Its' a spiritual issue!**

- One of the reasons you haven't been able to get rid of it is because **you have not addressed it spiritually!**
- **You cannot fight a spiritual battle using weapons of the flesh.**

**How does one overcome the strongholds you have in your life or how do we help someone overcome their stronghold?**

The first thing you must focus on to get free from any stronghold is to:

**1. Remember your **Position** in Christ-**

This statement is what can set you on the road to deliverance.

- No matter what other help you get; if you don't remember your position in Christ, then you are looking to the wrong source for deliverance and freedom.
- Review your position:
  - Eph 2:5-6 "Even when we were dead in trespasses, He made us alive together with Christ, [by grace you have been saved]; and raised us up together, and **made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.**"

- You have been elevated to a position with Christ, who is now enthroned over the Heavenly realm.
- This is where you are! In light of that:
  - Col. 3:1-2 “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.  
Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.”
- **There are too many earthly minded Christians; that’s why we don’t have more supernatural deliverance.**
- **If your mind is set on an earthly solution, then you won’t be able to get a Heavenly response.**
- **Heaven has to be the source of where you get your solution:**
  - Col. 2:9- “For in Him [Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and **you are complete in Him**, who is the Head of all principality and power.”
  - He oversees the angels: **the good and the evil ones.**
  - v. 15- “[He] having disarmed the principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”
  - **Jesus has already won the complete victory over the devil and demons.**

If you are going to beat the evil environment which is the source of your problem; you need to hook up with somebody who can whip them – **Jesus!**

### **Remember your position in Christ:**

- Your position in Christ having been raised with Him and now seated with Him in the Heavenly places gives you **legal authority** over the angelic realm.
- Jesus Christ has granted you legal authority so that you can tell the angelic realm that attacks you: **“You no longer have any legal rights over my life.”**
- Many of us have never told the enemy that!
- We’ve never tried stating while under attack that what the enemy is doing is an illegitimate attempt to place on us that which he has no right because we have been legally set free by Christ.
- A remembrance of your position that satan does not want you to know is that you have been elevated higher than him in Christ.
- If he can get you to forget who you are, then he knows that you will never call on your legal rights. You have legal rights in heavenly places!

- III: Ever watched a sporting event where a player didn't like a call from the referee? You've seen players come up and stand face to face with the ref challenging his call.
- Years ago they passed regulations that no player could **touch**, or **bump** in any way a referee without being fined or ejected from the game.
  - The player is twice as big as & ten times stronger than the ref.
  - The player has equipment on and the ref has a shirt, pants, shoes and a cap on.
  - When a player does the unacceptable and bumps or touches the ref, **the ref has legal rights.**
  - Even though he's smaller and not as equipped; all he has to do is reach in his back pocket and pull out the **yellow flag**, and he can send the player boogying to the locker room.
  - How can a guy smaller than the player, no equipment to protect himself, how can he throw a flag and make a call to eject a player – where does he get the **power, strength** and **confidence** to do this?
  - **It is all legal** – it has nothing to do with that he was stronger than the player, or more muscular than the player, more protected than the player, had more weight than the player – **HE JUST HAS MORE LEGAL AUTHORITY THAN THE PLAYER!**
  - satan is bigger than you – he's been around longer than you – he's smarter than you – **BUT IN JESUS' NAME, YOU HAVE A FLAG IN YOUR BACK POCKET BASED ON YOUR POSITION IN JESUS CHRIST – YOU HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS!**

**When the ref throws the flag, you hear no more from the player because the power of the ref **legally** is more potent than the strength of the player **physically.****

**The power you have as the believer who uses his legal right in Heavenly Places is more potent than the power of satan.**

**So we have the legal right when the enemy brings up our past and says we have to have that stronghold in our life and we can't help:**

**We can stand in his face and say: satan- you're a liar, everything about you is a lie.**

**I have papers that say I have legal rights in Colossians and Ephesians that I am in Christ and He has given me all authority over you.**

**Satan has to respond to that authority because it comes from Christ.**

**1. While you remember your **Position**, you must rely on God's **Provision-****

**James 4: 6-** “But He gives us more and more - greater grace. That is why He says, God sets Himself against the proud and haughty, but gives grace to the humble/lowly – those humble enough to receive it.” AMP.

This entire battle is about Grace!

- He gives greater Grace – greater than the mess you have gotten yourself into.
- No matter what your mess is in your life – how long you’ve been in that mess, how bad you were raised, or abuse you have gone through – [I’m not minimizing it], **there is more grace God can give to you to overcome that mess.**
- The way God has decided to fix your mess is by giving greater grace.
- Add all of your abuse, addictions, mistreatment – but the scripture still says God gives **GREATER GRACE!**
- God can take the mess you can remember and the mess you’ve forgotten and put it all together and still His Grace is Greater for you.

**We must remember our Position – but we must use His Provision of Grace!**

**Question: How do I get this grace?**

If God has given this grace that is greater than my mess, how do I receive this grace?  
He tells us in James 4:

1. V. 7 - “**Submit to God**” AMP = “**So be subject to God.**”

We think we are submitted to God, but most of us aren’t!

If we were submitted to God, we would not be having the difficulty we are having with our flesh and the demonic.

If you were submitted to God, you wouldn’t be having the issues mentioned in vv. 1-4:

- Strife and discord and quarrels among yourselves.
- Jealousy and covetousness
- Hatred and murderers.
- Burning with envy and angry.

**You are not submitted to God if you are still fighting for your rights!**

- If you are still trying to make it happen by yourself, you are not submitted to God.
- If you are making declarations such as: “**I am** not going to do this anymore,” you are not submitted to God.
- **You are submitted to you**, because you are telling yourself how strong you are not to do it anymore.
- If you were that strong, you wouldn’t be having the problem in the first place!
- You have the problem because you are not submitted to God.

The definition of the word “**submit**” is not fully understood:

- **There are two sides to submission.**

- **If you are going to be truly submitted to God, you must understand two components of submission.**

**1. The first component of Submit is SURRENDER:**

- Many times when people use the term submit, they use another term – COMMIT.
- But it's possible to **COMMIT** without being **SURRENDERED!**
- An invitation is given for people to commit themselves to Christ and you may respond to make a commitment.
- You may say: “Well, I’m not going to do this or that anymore, and I will start doing this now – and so you make a commitment.”
- You meant it – but most folks go out and fall flat on their face – WHY?
- **Because commitment can't work unless it is preceded by **SURRENDER!****
- **What is the definition of SURRENDER?**
  - **Surrender says to God: “I Can't”**
  - **“I am unable” - “I am too weak.” “I am not able to live up to Your expectations.”**
  - **When one surrenders in a war or a game – “He is saying – “I give up!”**

**The Bible teaches that when you surrender to God you throw up the white flag of surrender and admit that you can't do this on your own:**

- **You can't change your life on your own**
- **You can no longer put band-aids on the brokenness of your life.**
- **What a lot of us do when we commit is say: “I can, I will do this, and I will make myself accomplish this.”**
- **If you had the power, you wouldn't need the greater grace God gives.**
- **It must begin with SURRENDER that says: “I am unable to fulfill that which is necessary to get me out of the mess I've gotten myself into.**
- **It takes an admission of your weakness.**
- **YOU HAVE TO COME TO A PLACE WHERE YOU ACCEPT AND ADMIT YOUR WEAKNESS.**

**You fall flat on your face before God and cry out: “I need help because I can't do this myself – SURRENDER!”**

Once you SURRENDER – Then God can take over!

**Most people don't surrender – they commit by gearing up their minds and flesh to attempt to overcome on their own strength.**

- **They treat the flesh like a lion tamer and try to whip it into conformity!**

But, the Word says: “Having Surrendered, now you can Commit!

Having said to yourself – “I Can’t” and to God – “You Can.”

I’m going to go out and not do what I used to do; not because I have the ability to not do it; but because I have surrendered and committed myself to YOU to supply in me that which I need to fulfill Your expectations of me.

**You have now invited God to do for you what you can’t do for yourself!**

We are too self sufficient and that is why we have not been able to break out of our strongholds.

**v. 8- Submitting to God involves Drawing Near to Him-**

“Draw near/come close to God and He will come close to you.

There is no way to drawing close to God without giving Him TIME!

- When you come into God’s presence with prayer and praise – you are drawing near to God.
- If the only worship God gets from you is on Sunday morning you are only visiting God occasionally.
- The devil and demons are allergic to praise and worship of God.
- It reminds them of what they were but lost through their rebellion against God.
- Some of us don’t have to worry about shaking the devil up because we never give God the praise, worship and prayer.
- You have to fill your environment so the devil doesn’t feel at home around you.

**3. Repent of your sin-**

V. 8 – “Cleanse your hands, sinners; purify your hearts – you double-minded;

V. 9 - be afflicted, mourn and weep and let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness.”

- **You have to humble yourself enough to God to call sin a sin!**
- God can’t help some of us because we don’t sin!
  - We say we make mistakes-accidents and slip ups!

**Jesus never died for mistakes; He only died for sins!**

- Or we say it was how I was raised.
- Or we say, It’s what happened to me that my parents did.

All of that may be true – **but what you do, you must take responsibility for!**

- **You cannot pass the buck of sin – we live in a day when people are not willing to own up to their personal responsibilities.**
- We live in a blame society where everybody else is to blame.
- “We say if this didn’t happen years ago, I wouldn’t be doing this today – and if that didn’t happen I wouldn’t be affected today”
- That may have happened years ago, **but that does not exonerate you from what you are doing today!**
- Unless you are willing to come to God and cleanse your hands –unless you come to God and purify your heart- **God then considers you proud.**
- That’s why HE says in **V. 16-** “**That He opposes the proud but He gives grace to the humble.**”
- **Humble says:** “Lord I can’t, even though all this was in my background, I messed up, I am not proud – but I humble myself before You.
- **God not only can’t help you until you humble yourself; He opposes the proud!**

### Why?

**Because every time you’re too proud to confess to Him, you remind Him of someone else who had a pride problem and was ejected from the Kingdom of God – lucifer.**

Satan took the attitude he didn’t want to go God’s way, but wanted to do it his own way and rebel against God.

### **4. You must RESIST the devil-**

v. 7 - “...but RESIST the devil and he will flee from you.”

- The promise is that he will flee from you!

I Peter 5:6- “Humble yourself under the Mighty Hand of God that He may exalt you [above your trial or challenge], casting all your cares-worry on Him because He cares for you. Be sober of spirit, be on the alert because your adversary – the devil prowls about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.”

- He’s eating up your:
  - Life – your family – your finances – your marriage – your mind – your joy and happiness – your dignity – your destiny.

v. 9 – says to: “**RESIST** him firm in your faith...”

v. 10 - “For after you have suffered for a while – **The God of ALL Grace** who calls you into His eternal glory will Himself perfect, establish, strengthen you.”

RESIST him-

**But How?**

**There is only one way to resist satan!** When he comes to you and says: you know you have to click on that internet site, you have to take that drink, smoke that J, do that drug, you know you can't help but get involved in that relationship, you know you've been doing this for years, this thing is part of your mind, it comes and says you've got to have it, you've got to do it; you're not going to change!

The devil came to Jesus and said: "You're hungry, you have to eat – turn these stones to bread" – but Jesus said: **"It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."**

He took Him up to the Temple [God let satan take Jesus, and God will let satan take you, just to see what you're going to decide to do] and told Him – "You have to jump" – Jesus said, **"But it is written that you shall not tempt the Lord your God or put Him to the test."**

Satan took Jesus to the high mountain which overlooked the known world and told Him – "Bow down and worship me and I will give you all this to rule over" – but Jesus said: **"It is written that you shall worship the Lord God and Him only shall you serve."**

The Bible says: "Then satan left Him for a more opportune season."  
Satan had to leave because he can't resist the Spoken Word of God!

When satan comes to you and tells you – "you are addicted" You tell him back:  
"I have been raised with Christ" – Eph. 2:6.

"I've been seated with Him in heavenly places; I'm going to set my mind on things above and not on the things of this earth."

**But you can't quote what you don't know!**

**You can't use what you don't have!**

**When satan comes and messes with you tomorrow or for some of you in just a few minutes when you walk out of here:**

• **Don't go out of this building saying: "Pastor Russell said."**

**"My momma said."**

**"My School of ministry teacher said."**

**Because we can't help you.**

**Don't go out waving this Bible, because that won't help you either: he knows you're just waving it and you don't know any of it.**

**You have to be able to say: IT IS WRITTEN! God said he who has the Son is FREE!**

**So you have to tell satan: “I know you’re a liar, everything about you is a lie, you are the creator of lies.”**

**Because the Word of God is true. Satan will leave you. Or else God is a liar!**

Put God to the test and believe what His word says for you.

Some of you have never experienced what God can do for you; you don’t have a history with God of Him rescuing you.

So you don’t know that God can deliver you.

But if you will humble yourself, get honest with yourself and God; God will help you and deliver you from your strongholds.

So get rid of the strongholds – walk out of here today declaring: “I’m not addicted anymore, I have been seated with Christ in Heavenly places.

You say: Oh that’s just the power of positive thinking!

**NO – THAT’S THE POWER OF BIBLICAL THINKING!**

Thank you Lord – I am free!