

Pulling Down Strongholds

1 of 1 | Renewing the Mind

SLIDE 1 Introduction

Have you ever felt defeated in life. Things that should have worked out, didn't. The joy that you sought is still far off. Things you have worked hard for, dissolved away. Well, if you have felt defeated from time to time it is solid evidence that you have an enemy in your life. And the primary place of his warfare is in your mind. He wants control of the way you think, what you think about, and how you respond to the thoughts he has planted.

SLIDE 2 A Well Guarded Mindset

Few believers are much about guarding their minds. They feel they ought to be free to think about anything they want. They wander from things that disgust them to things that worry them to things that make them afraid. Daily their focus is on the activities of the world and they engage in conversations about worldly topics.

They never consider that they should protect themselves from sources of material that would pollute their minds and sway their thinking.

SLIDE 3 The Window To The Soul

The eye is the window to the soul. A home intruder does not have to attack the well-armored and alarmed front door when there is an easy window to break into. The window to the soul works both ways. You can see what's in a person's heart through their eyes, but you can also allow things into your mind through those eyes.

Scientifically, you don't see with your eyes, you see, comprehend, and understand with your mind. In other words, your mind interprets everything you look at.

Everything you see affects everything you are. King David said in Psalms:

SLIDE 4 Psalm 101:3 (KJV) ***"I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."***

To begin to break down a pattern of strongholds in our minds we must first begin to carefully choose what we set before our eyes. You will invariably think about what you gaze at. It will draw your attention. You will study it and develop ideas about it. Literally, you will fantasize in your mind. This is what begins to develop a stronghold—a thinking pattern.

SLIDE 5 Off The Chain!

Over time you will be conditioned by the enemy that whenever you see something or hear something, it will trigger that same reaction—almost an out of control reaction. The devil is developing a stronghold in you. Where? In your mind. The mind is the battlefield.

Actually every knee-jerk reaction you have is not something new. It has developed over a long period of time as you have allowed the enemy's attacks to fester in your mind, developing strongholds.

So, the whole premise of what I am sharing today is, if you win the battles here, in the mind, you won't have to fight on any other front. The attack of the enemy will be cut off in the mind and not spread to other areas of your life—your health, finances, or relationships.

SLIDE 6 What Are My Options?

So the first thing we need to do to equip ourselves is take an inventory of what we have to fight with to win every battle in the mind. What tools has God given us to counter the activity of the enemy in our minds?

We need to quit studying the enemy's weapons so much and start understanding the ones we have been given, what they are used for, and train ourselves in their use.

SLIDE 7 2nd Corinthians 10:3-5 (KJV) *"³ For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴ (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God **to the pulling down of strong holds;**)"*

Even though we live in physical bodies, and they have some demands, we are not to be controlled simply by the environment around us. Our inner life is to overcome and conform our outer lives to the purpose and plan of the Lord. It is useless and counterproductive to use carnal weapons to defeat a spiritual enemy.

We need weapons that work in our minds. We need tools to expose the enemy's lies, deceptions, and temptations.

In other words, exposing fantasies with realities, falsehood with truth, and strongholds with freedom. Paul explains this by continuing to say:

SLIDE 8 *"⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the*

*knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought** to the obedience of Christ."*

These wild and rebellious thoughts that rage in our minds must be put down by the liberating truth of the Word of God. If we are going to pull down the strongholds the devil has built in our minds, then we need to attack falsehood with facts. Not natural facts, but higher, spiritual ones based on the truth of God's Word.

SLIDE 9 An Incursion Or A Fortification?

No, you cannot stop every thought from entering your head. However if you don't deal with it, the enemy will be back with more and more imaginations until he has built a fortification. This stronghold may take the form of a fear, or an excuse, or simply a doubt about something the Lord has shown you.

If you allow the attack (incursion) to remain in your mind without confronting it, it will become stronger and it will take more and more effort to dismantle it.

SLIDE 9b Landmine Animation

Satan's attacks are like landmines in your soul. They will pop up at any moment of stress and try to get you to react without thinking it through. His motto is "Don't think, just do!" His attacks will be, "Just quit!", "Just get a divorce!", "Just kill that person!", "Buy it, you need it!"

However, if we first recognize that these thoughts are not ours, but the devil's, then we will not react. Instead we will employ the "weapons of our warfare." We will begin pulling down (dismantling) the strongholds the devil is constructing in our minds.

The NIV states 2nd Corinthians 10 this way:

SLIDE 10 2nd Corinthians 10:4, 5 (NIV) *"⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, **they have divine power to demolish strongholds.** ⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*

It does not say "we have divine power" it says "they (the weapons) have divine power."

We are fighting "*reasonable arguments,*" we are confronting "*logical conclusions.*"

This is why we are sometimes considered as foolish by the world. But, when we ought to be failures, we overcome! When we ought to be dead, we live! When we ought to go under, we prosper!

SLIDE 11 It Is Written!

When you begin to confront the strongholds in your life, the devil will put up a smoke screen to prevent you from clearly seeing what is going on. He will try to convince you that God put the stronghold there for a reason. He will try to tell you, by God's grace you won't have to deal with it, you can live with it and that you don't really have to be an overcomer in this life.

Although the Bible never uses the term "overcomers in this life," it does tell us this:

SLIDE 12a Romans 8:37 (NIV) *"Nay, in all these things **we are more than conquerors** through him that loved us."*

And this:

SLIDE 12b 1st John 5:5 (NIV) *"Who is it that overcomes the world? **Only the one who believes** that Jesus is the Son of God."*

To say we are overcomers and have won a victory we must have been engaged in a fight. This fight is continually in our minds, not only to ward off each and every attack of the enemy, but to prevent him from building strongholds in our way of thinking.

SLIDE 13 Altar Time

If you tend to say, "Well, this always happens to me," then you are dealing with strongholds in your mind. If your mind always goes back to the same old pattern of fear and dread, you have a stronghold. If you always imagine the worst, you have a stronghold. We need to pray that God will reveal to you his Word that breaks the hardest rock, as Jeremiah 23:29 says. (We are going to revisit this message later.)