TAKE NO THOUGHT
“DEMOLISHING SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS”

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Thoughts and Warfare

2 Corinthians 10:3-6

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;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.
The conditions of our minds and thoughts can result from different things. The natural or reprobate mind needs to be renewed.

Our minds are broken by sin. Which means we cannot trust even what we think, ourselves. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”

The Bible talks about the unsaved or natural man’s mental status:
- a troubled mind (2 Kings 6:11)
- a depraved mind (1 Timothy 6:5)
- a sinful mind (Romans 8:7)
- a dull mind (2 Corinthians 3:14)
- a blinded mind (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- a corrupt mind (2 Timothy 3:8)
Thoughts

- Some of our thoughts are generational:
  - Poverty mindset
  - Oppressed Mindset
  - Anger
  - Victim mentality

- Some of our thoughts are generated from deception, hardness of heart, fears, and exposure to the false doctrine and cognitive awareness of the world’s philosophies and ideas from the media, from our friends, and such
  - i.e. You ever get worried just by watching a TV show and hearing a negative message

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**Strongholds** are wrong thoughts and perceptions, contradicting the true knowledge of God and the nature of God. (Contradictions also mean contrary to God’s nature and to our renewed self)

- i.e. God says that you are blessed and all needs are met, but you become overly concerned over your financial situation leading to a stronghold of a fear of poverty

- We must remind ourselves that Paul is speaking to carnal, worldly thinking among Christians. He isn't talking about the world here but the Corinthian Christians.

- Strongholds also represent attachments. An attachment or commitment to a thought in such a manner that it becomes difficult to dislodge or remove
Question:

Why is it so easy for believers to believe this about 2nd Cor 10:4,5 where the believer appears to a helpless victim fending off spiritual attacks

And not this:
The believer experiencing victory by renewing, developing the mind of Christ through meditation of the Word, prayer, praise, and faith in God

“For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against those mighty powers of darkness who rule this world, and against wicked spirits in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 6:12
Spiritual and Mental Strongholds

- Spiritual strongholds are defined as an “argument or any high thing (thought) that exalts itself against the knowledge of God”.

- A stronghold in the mind is a spiritual fortress made of wrong thoughts where a fortified dwelling place of demonic forces can hide and operate in power against us.
  - Strongholds usually go undetected until it is firmly planted – It can even be a pleasurable thought

- A stronghold is a point of operation from where Satan can keep the unbeliever captive or the believer incapacitated.
  - There is a reason why the enemy employs spiritual strongholds to render you ineffective in your spiritual life and purpose
  - Once incapacitated, he can steal, kill, and destroy you (John 10:10)
  - Keep in mind that to destroy does not mean destruction of life, but to render to a place where you no longer can fight and win
Mental Strongholds

- A mental stronghold can be a worldview, such as materialism, hedonism, secularism, or atheism. All of the different -isms are mental strongholds that people set up against the knowledge of God.

- A stronghold can also be a personal attitude.
  - Worry can be a stronghold. Seeking the approval of other people can be a stronghold.
  - Anything that you make an idol in your life can be a stronghold — feelings of fear, guilt, resentment, insecurity can be lodged in one’s mind and reinforced by satanic darkness.
The Good News

We are not helpless victims or recipients of our thoughts. We can choose to stop our thoughts and bring **every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ**. Thoughts of lust, thoughts of anger, thoughts of fear, thoughts of greed, bitter thoughts, evil thoughts - they are part of **every thought** that may be and must be brought **into captivity to the obedience of Christ**.

The success of managing our thoughts and achieving victory comes with a decisive decision towards a renewed mindset where our mind is transformed to the mind of Christ and not conformed to the anxieties, pressures, carnal mindset of the world.
Romans 12:1 - I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.

Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world (this age), [fashioned after and adapted to its external, superficial customs], but be transformed (changed) by the [entire] renewal of your mind [by its new ideals and its new attitude], so that you may prove [for yourselves] what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, even the thing which is good and acceptable and perfect [in His sight for you].

Your mind is a member of your body and should be presented to God, renewed, and transformed. When this happens the thoughts will follow.

Without a renewed and transformed mind you cannot not begin to test or prove what thoughts are good and acceptable
Dealing With Strongholds

- What else are we to do with strongholds and these high and lofty thoughts?
  - Take them captive, that is, make them a prisoner. Don’t let them loose. Don’t ignore them and hope they will go away.
  - Once identified, we don’t allow them to run free in our minds. We must cast them down and render them ineffective.

- What is our checklist to determine if our thoughts are in obedience to Christ?
  - We can check them against Philippians 4:8.
Paul interprets the metaphor: “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” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

The “arguments” are the philosophies, reasonings, and schemes of the world. The “pretensions” have to do with anything proud, man-centered, and self-confident.

As you can see, strongholds are built on lies and deception. How do you counter such things? With truth! Where do you find truth? In the Word of God!

This is too simple for the believer to believe which is why many do not act upon this principle.
Let’s say I was told by my parents, “The only way to be successful and be accepted is to make money and lots of it. Don’t end up broke as we were, being miserable and depressed.”

When I became an adult, I became intensely focused on obtaining and maintaining wealth so I could be happy. My whole life became focused on money and power; I made it my god and idol.

When my idol was crushed I became fearful, depressed, and hopeless. Satan ruled over my life from his stronghold, from there, he was able to keep his hold on me; I was a bitter and angry person, who did not want to live anymore. Even after I got saved, I could not get over the thought of being poor.

Then one day the entrance of God’s Word brought light and life to me (Psalms 119:130). I read that God would supply my needs and that my focus should not be on this world, but eternal life with God (Mark 8 :35,36; Philippians 4:19).

I identified the stronghold of a “fear of poverty” over my life and I began casting down that thought by elevating the Word of God in my life. When the enemy began to whisper those thoughts, I fought back with the Word of God, speaking to myself what God says in His Word about my situation. Soon I was able to wage war against this stronghold in my life, and claim victory, no longer trusting in earthly riches as my hope.
In the mind, the enemy has erected strongly fortified strongholds to resist the truth of God’s word and keep the believer incapacitated and oppressed through his/her feelings, fear, desires, and pride.

Once we begin to identify the strongholds, (through spiritual revelation and by the Word of God), we need to wage war against them.

Know that you are not alone. God’s forces are arrayed to help you obtain victory.

Claim your deliverance and freedom by “erecting your flag above that stronghold” with your thoughts and speaking God’s words from a transformed mind.
How to Break Strongholds In Your Life

- **Exercise Authority** – Don’t try to ignore that thought, but exercise spiritual authority to expel the devil’s influence. Many people allow condemnation to subdue them as they receive a thought rather than believe that God has given you authority to deal with the matter (Mark 16:17; Mark 3:27)

- **Displace and Replace** – Make a deliberate, decisive, and conscious effort to cast down, and displace the thought, replacing it with God’s Word or His presence (Jude 1:20; Ephesians 5:19)

- **Resistance** - Submit yourselves and draw close to God. The Bible says this is how we resist Satan and he will flee (James 4:7). Don’t try to resist alone. God says He will fight for you. Submit to His Spirit and allow God’s peace to settle within you (Phil 4:6-9)
How to Break Strongholds In Your Life

**Fortify** — Clothed yourself with God’s armour and the mind of Christ and take upon you a renewed self (Ephesians 6:13-17; 1 Cor 2:16; Ephesians 4:22,23)

- Clothe yourself with God's armor. Take upon you daily, the full array of God's spiritual equipment that you may maintain battle-ready status.

- The purpose of God’s Armor is to resist any satanic assault with the shield of faith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked which attacks our thought life

- **Mark 5:15** - And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.
1 Corinthians 2:16 - For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Colossians 3:1-3: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:2 (Amplified): Colossians 3:2 - And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth.
If you are raised with Christ, then we should act and think as Jesus did when he was resurrected

- Jesus ministered to his disciples, serving them
- Jesus lived in supernatural power through the enabling of the Holy Spirit
- Jesus looked forward to Heaven, not being tied to this world by his desires and affiliation

This is in part in having and developing the mind of Christ

- Let this mind be in you… Philippians 2:5-8
  - Jesus showed humility, selfless service, commitment which did not leave him to focus on the things of this world – Is Christ’s mind in you?
I believe the key to managing our thoughts is renewing our thoughts through the renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2).

Could it be said that your mind is linked to your desires?

"The believer is to 'seek the things . . . above.' The word 'seek' marks aspiration, desire, and passion. . . . In order to seek these things the mind must be set on them." (Morgan)

If the believer’s mind is continually set on worldly things and worldliness then it will produce the negative mindset, fears, pride, selfishness, lustful, and carnal desires that is associated with the world. This clouds the believer’s mind so that he/she cannot concentrate on things above and associated with a kingdom or heavenly mindset — peace, love, righteousness, grace, praise, joy, etc.
1 Peter 1:13 - So brace up your minds; be sober (circumspect, morally alert); set your hope wholly and unchangeably on the grace (divine favor) that is coming to you when Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is revealed.

Ephesians 4:23 - and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,

In order to change our thoughts, we have to change our minds (or at least mindset)

A transformed mindset comes from a renewed mind.
To gird up one's loins means literally to tuck the loose ends of one's outer garment into one's belt.

- Loins were girded in preparation for running (1st Kings 18:46), for battle (Isaiah 5:27), or for service for a master (Luke 12:35).
- The call to “gird up the loins of your minds” (1st Peter 1:13) means to be spiritually alert and prepared in your thought life.
- There are times we have to pull out and tuck in those loose straps of thoughts that can hinder us spiritually.

- Comes from the notion of Romans or Greeks putting on armour ready to fight, which would include protecting the nether regions, the loins, by 'girding' or covering them ready for battle.

- The loins is often referred to as the reproductive area: What you take into your mind will be reproduced through your actions.
1 Peter 5:7 - Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.

When we are told to “take no” thought it relate to “forbidding or preventing” thoughts

- To take no thought is to forbid any thought or to desire no thought that produces carnal results (fear, lust, anger, pride, etc.)

- To cast means to “throw upon, or to place upon”

- So God is encouraging the believer not only to forbid thoughts that lead to anxiety, but to throw upon these thoughts upon God
Making a Decisive Dedication

- **Don’t Lose Your Mind – Change It! (Romans 12:2) – Transform Your Thoughts**
  - Renew - Overhaul
  - Transform your thinking via constant renewal and personal sanctification
  - Your new spirit and mind came with a maintenance plan (Word, fellowship, and worship)

- **Don’t Subdue Your Mind - Train it!**
  - Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5)

- **Don’t Divert Your Mind – Engage it!**
  - Don’t be distracted and your attention diverted, but engage your mind in meaningful spiritual activity
  - Lack of light and spiritual activity leads to darkness and alienation (When you are alienated from someone you lose contact, intimacy, and influence)

- **Align your thoughts vertically and not horizontally (Colossians 3:1,2)**
I. Study and Abide in God’s Word so that when a negative or sinful, thought enters the mind, you will be able to recognize the thought for what it is, examine, and determine whether or not to reject and replace that thought.

II. Quoting Scripture can help to get our minds onto a biblical track but don’t use it as a talisman.

II. Live in dependence upon the Spirit of God, seeking His strength through prayer, fasting, and worship.

I. Proverbs 28:26: Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.

II. Philippians 4:6… “Let your requests be known…” –One translations don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything. Could it be a worried life is a lack of a prayer life?
Taking Control of Your Thoughts

I. Be careful what you feed your mind and not those things that promote sinful thoughts – Avoid websites, videos, conversations and situations that will set you and generate ungodly, unproductive thoughts

II. Fellowship with other Christians (Hebrews 10:24-25) and pray with each other, keeping ourselves accountable to each other

Also Align your desires – The thoughts goes with the mind
"Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires" (Rom. 8:5).
Conclusion/Prayer

Gain the Victory in Your Thought Life

- God does not want you to worry, be anxious, or troubled in your heart and mind
- Victory in the area of our thoughts comes through a renewed mindset
- Thoughts can be strongholds and difficult to cast down
- Realize that only a renewed self with a renewed mind with assistance from the Holy Spirit can assist you in gaining victory over your thought life
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