

Rebuilding Spiritually

REBUILDING AND MATURING THE SPIRITUAL MAN

DEFENDING AGAINST STRONGHOLDS

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Best Defense – Good Offense

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2 Corinthians 10:3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) 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."

- ▶ Reminder: This is not a "Fleshly" War, but many struggle due to a "fleshly" or "carnal" mindset – many are delivered, but held captive by their mindsets
- ▶ We are not defenseless – Our Weapons are Mighty! Stop "feeling" that you are defeated and without power
- ▶ The key to our deliverance and winning the war is through submission and obedience (James 4:7)



The ARMOR *of* GOD

EPHESIANS 6:10-20

In Order to Win

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- ▶ If you are not dealing with the strongholds of your life, chances are you are not really engaged in spiritual battle and most likely, losing
- ▶ Most Battles are determined on the Opponents' Will to Fight, Morale to Win, and Condition for Battle
 - ▶ Remember in Nehemiah, the people had a "mind (or will) to work" (Nehemiah 4:6) – because of this they were able to resist every enemy attack
- ▶ To defeat and destroy the enemy (rendering him ineffective) is to tear down his strongholds and fortified positions, especially in your area of operations (your mind)

What is a Stronghold?

- ▶ Like physical strongholds - They are points of operation, where attacks are waged on outlying areas. From the stronghold you attack another position
 - ▶ They are hard to remove, unless concerted effort is made to remove them
- ▶ Just like an ancient army first had to remove strongholds, to hold the land, we need to do the same to live victorious spiritually
- ▶ Spiritual - A stronghold is a point of operation from where Satan can keep the unbeliever captive or the believer incapacitated



What is a Stronghold

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▶ **Sinful thinking and wrong desires that dominate a person's mind**

- ▶ Satan can take control over this person's mind as one become in bondage to that sin
- ▶ With a stronghold in place and Satan's dominating influence in this stronghold, Satan will be able to create great temptations and cravings within this person that will seem near impossible to resist to bait this person to sin more using guilt, fear, etc.

▶ **A false belief formed in a person's mind in opposition to God's Word;**

- ▶ Your thoughts can be traced back to the truth of Scripture or the lies of Satan
- ▶ Spiritually speaking, Paul defines strongholds as an *"argument or high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God"*.

▶ **A demonic fortification of thoughts that control and dictate your behavior, attitude and responses; oppress and discourage you**

- ▶ Comes through a habitual concentration of negative, sinful, or un-scriptural thoughts and giving heed to seducing spirits

Generational Strongholds

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► From the Sin of our ancestors:

- Exodus 20:5, 6: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments
- If you are experiencing strongholds look for patterns or habits in your family tree such as bitterness, strife, rejection, pornography, adultery, alcoholism etc.
- Prayers for cessation of generation sin are usually one-time prayers, but as you see bits and pieces of your family history revealed to you, you may have to pray and ask forgiveness in those areas
- Prayer to stop generational sin is to stop a recurring sin pattern in your family lineage

Stronghold Characteristics

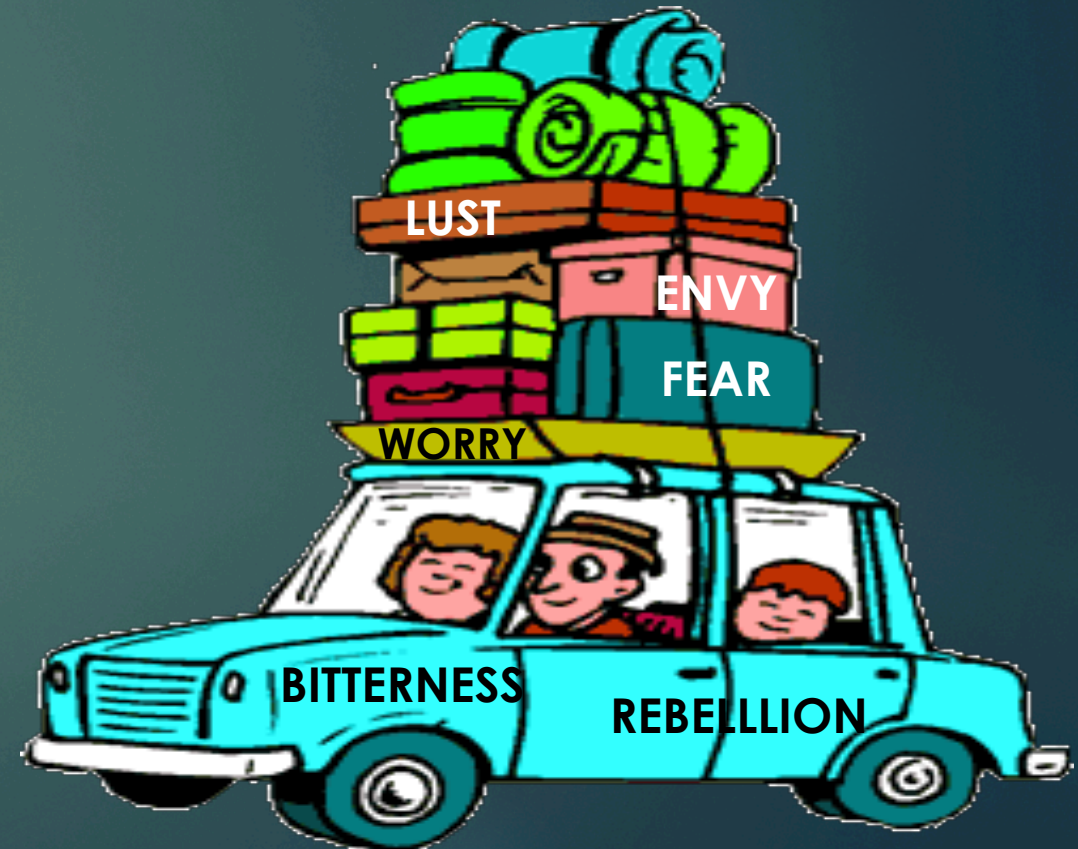
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- ▶ **Concealment** – You may not be aware that you have them
 - ▶ Most people have become so functional with strong that they may no longer see them developing in their own territory
- ▶ **Heavily guarded** – usually a spirit is associated with each negative, unproductive, harmful thought (spirit of fear, envy, or jealousy)
- ▶ **Fortified and Entrenched** - Hard to remove – the longer it is allowed to remain, the harder it is to “pull down”
- ▶ **They're in the highest hierarchy of your thoughts** – meaning Ascending above godly, scripture, and faith – That's why they have to be pulled down
- ▶ God's Word reveals the control of Satan in our lives, through strongholds.
- ▶ Satan uses strongholds to launch attacks on us. Therefore, we need to identify where these stronghold are, and remove them

Strongholds

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- ▶ Many People allow these strongholds to remain and even carry them into their relationships with others, even generations
- ▶ Strongholds come from worldly influence - Many strongholds are a result of an accumulation of ungodly thoughts and unsanctified attitudes that have ruled our lives during our formative years.
- ▶ Stronghold can sometimes become “Functional” in a person’s life – It becomes the way the respond and react to everyday issues in life



Identifying Strongholds

- ▶ When identifying your strongholds, survey or examine the attitudes in your heart and every area in your thinking
 - ▶ Any system of thinking that causes you to act contrary in faith, in spiritual fruit, depriving you of joy and health is a stronghold, which must be pulled down.
- ▶ What are these thoughts producing in your life?
- ▶ Do you have uncontrollable desires that are difficult to restrain?
 - ▶ Habitual weaknesses or sin pattern
 - ▶ Addictions or out of control areas
- ▶ Do you find yourself incapacitated by your thoughts? i.e. restlessness, depression, fearful, etc.

Process

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- ▶ **Thought comes to Mind – Satanic influence; Carnal Thinking**
- ▶ **You either Entertain that Thought or Cast It Down**
- ▶ **From these Thoughts an Emotion is Developed**
 - ▶ Praise or Joy if thoughts are God Inspired
 - ▶ Negative emotion or desire if demonically inspired
- ▶ **Giving into these Emotions lead to an ACTION/SIN**
- ▶ **Continual Participation in such Actions/Sins leads to a Habit**
- ▶ **Habitual thinking and submitting to negative or positive thoughts leads to a Stronghold**



Roots and Weeds- Defining Strongholds

- ▶ Roots come from seeds (thoughts, sins, rebellion)
- ▶ You won't see roots developing yet they are burrowing underground taking anchor (just as thoughts anchor in your soul)
- ▶ There are many roots burrowing in your yard just as there are many thoughts going through your mind
- ▶ We have to root out the bad ones before they produce weeds
- ▶ A weed is usually an "unwanted plants" – What may be a weed to you may be a beautiful flower to others
 - ▶ Example: Root of Bitterness
- ▶ Weeds choke out or hinder other plants from growing – that is why many Christians experience difficulty in bearing spiritual fruit
- ▶ You kill the weed by attacking the root



Example: The Root of Bitterness

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Hebrews 12:15 - Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

- ▶ A root of bitterness signifies a poisonous plant...
- ▶ A *bitter root* is a root that bears bitter fruit
- ▶ The poison here in this scripture is related to false doctrine or wrong thinking
- ▶ For example: Many are corrupted because of bitterness towards someone they feel has wronged them, and they hold on to the bitterness with amazing stubbornness!
 - ▶ What they must do is remember the grace of God extended to them, and start extending that grace towards others - loving the undeserving.

Bitterness is a Root

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- ▶ Bitterness is so extremely dangerous is because it can take root and begin to grow and spread and spiritually contaminate and defile your heart and spirit before you even realize what's wrong with you
- ▶ When a root of bitterness is allowed to be planted and grown, it not only affects that person, but it also affects all others who are involved. It is like a cancer.
- ▶ This is why God's Word exhorts us to "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be **put away** from you, with all malice."--Eph. 4:31
- ▶ **You can't just "Yank it out!" You must "C" your way out of it**
 - ▶ Confess it
 - ▶ Correct it
 - ▶ Choose Grace instead of Bitterness



Example

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Is Dandelions a Weed?

Dandelion is a good example of a Weed Plant.

Dandelions Hinder Growth

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- ▶ **Dandelions Means Lawn Needs Attention**
- ▶ As with all weeds, a growing of dandelions means that the lawn itself needs attention. The big rooted plant makes its home on your lawn when grass roots are most likely skimpy and weak.
- ▶ Strongholds find themselves becoming firmly rooted especially in reprobate minds, carnal mindset, and immature Christians
- ▶ Dandelions are reproduce by pollination, and also because they are a useful "weed", considered by many to be a plant

Dealing with the Root

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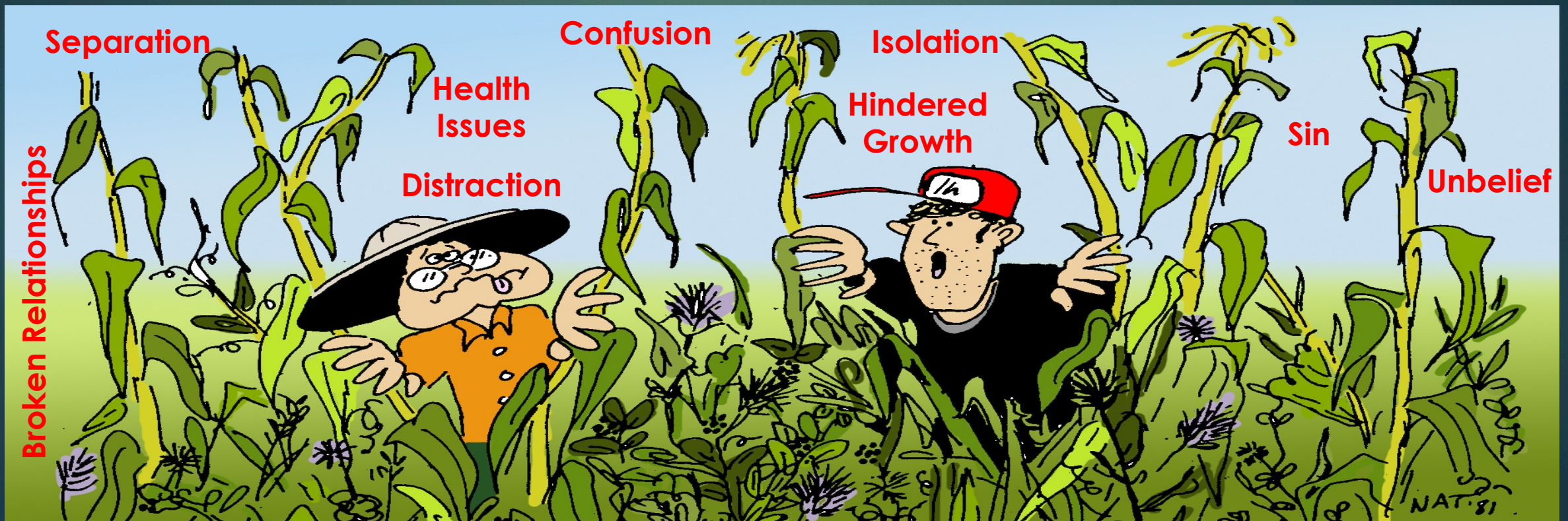
- ▶ **Many times we just “spray the weeds” or try to “yank” them from our minds**
 - ▶ Motivational services or speakers
 - ▶ Reading a good book, but not taking the principles to heart or in obedience
 - ▶ Conference after Conference, but resisting change
 - ▶ These may be effective but if not “used as directed,” it will not yield godly and positive results



Deal With the Roots

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But if we don't get to the roots, these weeds will get out of control causing damage to us spiritually, emotionally, socially, and physically



How to Deal With Strongholds

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- ▶ Need for Prayer and Deliverance
- ▶ Submission to God
- ▶ Stop warring against the flesh or look for worldly solutions
- ▶ We Bring Our Thoughts Into Captivity To Christ's.
- ▶ Cast Down Imaginations and Thoughts contrary to God's Word
- ▶ Substitute God's Word with Negative thoughts
- ▶ Obedience Brings Us Into the Stronghold Of Christ's Likeness.

Breaking Strongholds

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- ▶ **TAKE AUTHORITY** -- Every believer has the right to use the authority of Jesus' name to bind and take authority over Satan's activities.
 - ▶ "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house" (Mark 3:27).
 - ▶ Exercising authority in the name of Jesus will expel the Devil's influence over your life and your thoughts
- ▶ **SUBMIT AND RESIST** - "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7)
- ▶ **DISPLACE** -- Establish the presence of God where Satan has been commanded to leave, fill it up with God's presence and His Word
- ▶ **FORTIFY** -- Clothe yourself with God's armor by taking it up daily. Stay fully armored in God's spiritual equipment that you may maintain battle-ready status, being ready to resist any satanic assault, and will be ready to engage the strongholds in others.
- ▶ **DISCIPLINE** – Keep yourself strengthened through prayer, intercession, worship, and study of God's Word

We Need to Make the Lord Our Stronghold

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- ▶ **Psalms 18:2,3:** The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. [3](#) I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies.
- ▶ **Psalms 9:9,10:** The Lord also will be a stronghold for the oppressed, A stronghold in times of trouble; [10](#) And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.
- ▶ Centering our thoughts upon the Lord, fortifies our faith, strengthens our character, and we become unmovable battle
 - ▶ 1 Corinthians 15:58 - Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

► **Generational Curses/Strongholds**

- Praise God for redeeming us from the curse through the blood of Christ
- Repent of the sins of your forefathers and ancestors, receiving forgiveness and redemption
- Rebuke the powers of darkness associated with your family's past and command them to leave

Prayer: Father I confess and repent of the sin of my ancestors, my parents and my own sin (Name Them) and I ask you to forgive me and forgive me for participating in this/these sin(s). I receive Your forgiveness and I declare that I set free and delivered in Jesus' Name.

Prayer (Individual)

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Lord, thank you for revealing the presence of this stronghold of _____ in my life. Thank you for showing me how I have participated in this pattern of thinking /behavior. I confess I have (describe participation) and I ask Your forgiveness. You have shown me the destruction and the cost of the damage to myself and to those I love.

I repent, Lord, of my participation in these thoughts and the actions/sins as a result of it. Father, assist me in the process of identifying the bitter roots which made me vulnerable to this stream of thought and behavior.

Lord, I submit myself to you and ask you strengthen me so that I am no longer seduced by this stronghold. I renounce this thought pattern, and I renounce the behaviors accompanying it. I choose to imitate Jesus Christ, and submit my mind to the working of the Holy Spirit.