

PULLING DOWN STRONGHOLDS, Part II

Salvation is the first stage of God's plan for our lives, which is to conform us in character and power to the image of Jesus Christ. If we fail to see our relationship to God as such, we will allow too many areas within us to remain unchanged. Pulling down strongholds is the demolition and removal of these old ways of thinking so that the actual presence of Jesus Christ can be manifested through us.

WHAT IS A STRONGHOLD? (on Volume 4, 1001)

REPENTANCE PRECEDES DELIVERANCE

The pulling down of strongholds begins with repentance. When Jesus sent out His disciples, **"they went out and preached that men should repent. And they were casting out many demons and... healing them"** (Mark 6:12-13). Regarding the deliverance of spirits that plague the mind, *repentance precedes deliverance, and deliverance often leads to healing in other areas.*

If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you have already had many strongholds broken in your life. These were broken when you repented and came to Jesus. Deliverance is often just that simple when a soul is willing. Yet, without some measure of repentance, deliverance is almost always impossible, for although a spirit may be commanded to leave, if the structure of the individual's thoughts has not been changed, his wrong attitude toward sin will welcome that spirit back.

One aspect of Christ's ministry is that **"thoughts from many hearts may be revealed"** (Luke 2:35). If you will truly walk with Jesus, many areas of your thinking processes will be exposed. Yet, there will be a power from God to enable you to repent and receive His virtue into your life. You will see strongholds fall and victory come. But I must warn you, there will be pressure from your flesh, as well as from the demonic world itself, to minimize or ignore what God is requiring of

you. You may be tempted to surrender just a token sin or some minor fault, while allowing your main problems to remain entrenched and well-hidden. Let us realize that the energies we expend in keeping our sins secret are the actual "materials" of which a stronghold is made. The demon you are fighting is using your thoughts to protect his access to your life.

Let's pray: *Heavenly Father, there are areas in my life (audibly name the habitual sins) that I have not fully surrendered to my Lord, Jesus Christ. Lord, forgive me of compromise. I also ask You for courage to approach the pulling down of strongholds without reluctance or willful deception in my heart. By the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus, I bind the satanic influences that were reinforcing compromise and sin within me. I submit myself to the light of the Spirit of Truth to expose the strongholds of sin within me. By the mighty weapons of the Spirit and the Word, I proclaim that each stronghold in my life is coming down! I purpose, by the grace of God, to have only one stronghold within me: the stronghold of the Presence of Christ!*

I thank You, Lord, for forgiving and cleansing me from all my sins. And by the grace of God, I commit myself to follow through in this area until even the ruins of this stronghold are removed from my mind! Thank You, Father. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Archetypes and Principalities (from Chapter 16, Transformation of the Inner Man, By John and Paula Sandford)

We have not spoken of demons or deliverance anywhere else in this book (or in our previous two), because we do not want to give Satan any glory. We know that if a counselor transforms **a person's inner house of character in Jesus**, whatever demon inhabits, if any, must flee, having no longer a house to dwell in. Seldom do Paula and I have to do an exorcism directly. We know that the devil and all his hosts were once for all defeated and disarmed, *"When he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him"* (Col. 2:15). Therefore, we

seldom have to speak directly to demons to defeat them. **We have only to wash the other in the blood of forgiveness and bring unregenerate practices to death on the cross.** Thereby the blood has removed Satan's ground to accuse, and the cross has dismantled his theater of operation. So though we occasionally do exorcisms (one Christian psychiatrist used to send patients regularly to us whenever he diagnosed them as inhabited, and the Lord would set them free), we very infrequently say anything about Satan, and concentrate on teaching how to bring people to Jesus on the cross. That is the only lasting form of exorcism, for the devil's forces will return after exorcism to a house not dealt with (Matt. 12:43-45, Luke 11:14-16). **The cross gives glory to Jesus**, whereas too much direct attack upon Satan gives him the attention he craves. We accomplish the same end --- deliverance --- but we celebrate only the power of Jesus.

Nevertheless, we cannot teach concerning homosexuality without first presenting a basic teaching concerning not merely local demons, but principalities. For it is principalities and "world rulers of this present darkness" (Eph. 6:12 RSV) who use devices to entrap, blind and hold captive all homosexuals. We are not saying that all homosexuals are demon possessed, or even inhabited. Some may be. We are speaking of world rulers of darkness who use empty philosophies and deceits (Col. 2:8) to overcome the minds and control the wills of homosexuals. The point is that such powers can control homosexuals without ever having to come near them, though they may do that as well in some instances.

In many cases, homosexuals cannot be set free until "the strong man" (the principality who blinds his mind and controls his will) is bound. Only then can we plunder his goods and set homosexuals and lesbians free (Matt. 12:29).

The following teaching is therefore not only for counselors but for all intercessors in the Body of Christ, applicable not only to homosexuals and lesbians but to many dark forces in many areas of life which threaten to undo the free will of our friends and neighbors.

See the continuation of Archetypes
Volume 4, Number 1003

Maintaining Your Healing

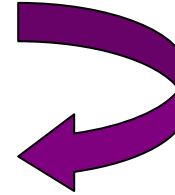
“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” --- James 4:7

“Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” --- Rom. 6:11

- **Submit to God** --- Embrace defeat in your flesh. When old behaviors arise, immediately turn your attention to God and know that you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. Know that He shows you your problems because He loves you. (*Phil. 4:13, Heb. 12:6*)
- **Resist the devil** --- Take authority over the enemy. Renounce, rebuke, or reject the offending thoughts or spirits in Jesus' name. Pronounce that these sins are covered in the blood of Christ and no longer have power over you. (*Luke 10:19, 2 Cor. 10:4-5, Heb. 9:13-14, 1 Cor. 6:2*)
- **Reckon it as dead** --- Know the structures were crucified with Christ, and rejoice that by His stripes you were healed in those areas. (*Ro. 6:11, Isa. 53:5, 2 Cor 5:17*)
- **Occupy the land** --- Claim who you are in Christ Jesus. Accept God's encouragement that He will complete the work in you. (*Gal. 3:26, Phil 1:6*)
- **Walk in His ways** --- Abide in His presence daily to strengthen your spirit; have regular quiet time with God and ask Him to show you attacks before they come. (*John 10:27, John 15:4-5*)
- **Share your testimony** of healing with others and ask them to hold you accountable if you return to your old ways. (*Rev 12:11, Prov. 13:1, Prov. 17:10, Prov. 27:6*)
- **Avoid destructive life styles** and bad influences. (*2 Tim. 2:23-26*)
- **Talk it out with your brethren.** Don't let it build up. (*James 5:16, 1 John 1:9*)
- **Accept responsibility.** Stop blaming others. (*Gen. 3:11-12*)

grow a vision

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God continues to grow our ministry through the obedience and faithfulness of those we serve. There are a number of ways you might participate in Oaks of Righteousness --- ultimately the Body of Christ. Here are a few:

- ♦ **Join our prayer ministry team** --- be an intercessor. Call or email Lisa Snowden; (678) 493-5095, elissa96@msn.com and share with her where your heart is leading you.
- ♦ **Register for one our schools or seminars** --- Break-through to Joy, Elijah House Basic 1, Theophostic, Restoration for Women - Rising above a Victim's Life, Restoration for Men - Freedom Over Ungodly Passion. visit our web site at www.oaksofrighteousness.org
- ♦ **Become part of Oak's volunteer staff** --- contact Richard or Virginia at 770-428-8157 or email RR at oaks12@bellsouth.net, VR at oaks7@bellsouth.net.
- ♦ **Serve through the ministry of helps** --- share your gifts and talents in a tangible way.
- ♦ **Become a financial partner** --- offer \$25, \$50, or \$100 a month as an offering to the Lord.



Food for Thought

volume 4, number 1002

excerpts and articles from various sources that will help you grow spiritually



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