

SPIRITUAL P. O. W. II Corinthians 12:3-5

It is a fact that many believers that will spend eternity with the Lord in heaven are fighting a personal war within themselves, trying to conquer or control an ongoing battle in their body and their mind.

II Cor. 12:4 Paul called these areas within many believers “strongholds”. This particular word is only used one time in the N. T.. It's meaning is that of - (a fortress, a fortification with difficult access). Those of us with “strongholds” want to blame others or experiences for the battles we face but the fact is it is a real personal spiritual problem; and it is problem that only a spiritual battle will conquer.

II Cor. 12:3-4 Paul tells us that though we are in this body of flesh we cannot ever think that we can fight spiritual strongholds with weapons of flesh and blood but need to fight with spiritual weapons.

II Cor. 12:5 Paul refers to the worldly arguments, philosophies, reasonings, and schemes that the world gives against God and His word. Also, he is referring to the pride and self-centeredness of man.

I Pt. 5:8; II Cor. 11:14-15 Every believer is at war with our greatest adversary the Devil and all of his evil spiritual forces. He causes 'strongholds' such as Oppression, Obsessions, Hindrance, Finances, Harassment, Drug Addiction, Alcohol, Pornography, Codependency of people that have negative influence, Sexual Addition, Excuses, Doubts about salvation, Unforgiveness, Gossip, Hatred, etc.

THE ROOT OF THE STRONGHOLD

Matthew 16:23 The Devil best strategy is to disguise his evil way into our minds and to get us to blame someone else or some terrible experience for the strongholds we are battling. Jesus shows us how to handle our stronghold or someone elses by addressing the root of the problem and it is Satan.

Ephesians 6:12 Paul tells us that we are not fighting a flesh and blood war but a spiritual one. We are to understand that the real enemy is Satan not our brethren, not our spouse, not our children, not our employees and certainly not the government but the Devil!

Matthew 12:29; II Cor. 6:14 Jesus tells us that in order to overturn the works of the Devil and his evil ways we must get rid of his influence in our life. The evil strongholds must be eradicated.

THE DEVILS WEAPONS OF WARFARE

Deception – **Genesis 3:4** Strongholds are built through deception. A stronghold is an incorrect thinking pattern that stems from believing something that is not true. Satan deceived Eve into believing that God's word was not true. Anything that Satan can get us to believe will always be contrary to God.

Temptation – **Genesis 3:6** Temptation often follows deception. Once we make excuses and allow ourselves to be deceived we often set ourselves up for Satan to tempt us with that “sin that so easily besets us.” Once Eve was deceived it was easy for Satan to get her to be tempted by her eyes and flesh.

Accusations – **Rev. 12:10** The Devil is known as the accuser of the brethren. But he not only is in heaven accusing you and me of sin but is constantly playing games with our mind about past sins and current negative actions we take every day. He is constantly reminding us of our terrible sin issues and beats us up with guilt and condemnation and gives us the 'stronghold' of inferiority and unworthiness.

GOD'S WEAPONS OF WARFARE

Intercession – **Matt. 16:17; Col. 1:9** Pray and intercede for yourself and others to break strongholds.

Displacement – **II Cor. 6:14; Gal. 5:16; Phil. 4:8** Fill your time God thoughts. Walk in the Lord, talk and sing His praises, read and study God's word, think and meditate on God's word.

Resistance – **James 4:7-8** The Devil runs from Christians who totally submit themselves to God.

Fortification – **Ephesians 6:13-17** Cloth yourself with the armor of God and always be battle ready.