

Parson to Person
2 Corinthians 10
(The Warfare – Part 3)
~Repeated from Last Week~

The Spiritual War

Paul wrote, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled”* (vss. 3–6).

Within the context we note that the specific call to take captive the thoughts that were warring against “the knowledge of God” and “obedience” to Christ were the “thoughts” about Paul and his role/authority. The principle of warfare was applied specifically—but the wide application will require a great deal of insight. Therefore, today I will develop some thoughts about the following:

1) The importance of sound doctrine.

Without a solid foundation in the truth, believers will fall prey to false doctrine, misconceptions, insecurities, an unhealthy fear of God—and therefore, be victim to the enemy and his lies.

Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John all taught that soundness of doctrine was the call of every believer. Moreover, the apostles never once suggested that compromise over doctrinal issues was to be tolerated.

Sadly, in the modern churching of our day, unity has replaced the high standards of doctrinal orthodoxy. Evangelism has been compromised by soft pedaling doctrine for the sake of non-offensive

outreach. However, never has the Bible advocated for such things—but to the contrary.

Paul exhorted the Ephesian leaders saying, *“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves”* (Acts 20:26–30).

Believers who are not given the full counsel of God are vulnerable to the lies of the enemy and have strongholds through which Satan and his minions will create misery and loss. Jesus said, *“The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy”* (John 10:10a), but of Himself he said, *“I have come that [you] may have life, and that [you] may have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10b). Therefore, we must *“contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Jude 3b–4 modified).

2) What is a stronghold?

A stronghold is a place of safety from which one may find refuge (defense) and from which one may work against (offense) an enemy. Therefore, the believer has the stronghold (of light) as a refuge in the Lord, but darkness provides a stronghold for the enemy.

According to Paul, believers are to pull *“down strongholds”* (vs. 4b).

3) The strongholds of demonic spirits—spiritual darkness.

Spiritual darkness (rebellion and habitual sinful behavior) provided a stronghold for the enemy. It appears that Satan and demons are given limited permission to traffic spiritual darkness. They are called *“the rulers of the darkness of this age”* (Ephesians 6:12). Left unchecked, the enemy will increasingly work to expand authority in the “dark places.” Those who continue in rebellion and habitual sinful behavior will experience greater and greater bondage and torment. Even believers who allow for spiritual darkness will find themselves afflicted and tormented. For this reason, Paul wrote, *“nor give place to the devil”* (see Ephesians 4:27).

Evil spirit strongholds do not suggest “demon possession.” The strongholds simply allow for influence and oppression.

4) The strongholds of the mind—lies and misinformation.

The mind is an information-based system made up of non-material thought. It is built of God-designed “programming,” personalized experiential memory, and educated predictive opinion and belief. The mind is directly connected to the brain and works in process with the brain, but the two are distinct.

Paul commanded that believers, *“[cast] down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience”* (vss. 4b–5). This directive clearly indicates that thoughts can be faulty and information false. Therefore, the information needs to be corrected. Think “computer virus.” The information needs to be changed and thus the “hard-drive” reformatted.

5) How to tear down the strongholds of the enemy.

Strongholds of darkness can only be “cast down” by exposure to light. The methods are quite simple:

- a. Confess your sins to the Lord.
- b. Confess your sins, struggles, and/or weaknesses to a trusted believing friend.
- c. Adjust your thinking to align with informational truth—found in the authoritative written word of God coupled together with otherwise necessary factual data.
- d. Ask the Lord (through prayer) to give you a genuine change of mind (repentance) for the sin(s) and lies you have entertained.
- e. Resist the enemy. (Tear down the strong holds, silence the voices, correct the thinking, intentionally seek the Lord and stand against the schemes of the Devil.)

6) Church Discipline.

Church discipline is intended to assist the rebellious to “get to their knees” and keep the “House of the Lord” pure. Left unchecked, the local church will develop strongholds. The same principles apply to the local church as they do with individual believers. Therefore, Paul taught church discipline alongside spiritual warfare, writing, “[be] ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” (vs. 6).

In context Paul was suggesting that the Corinthians get their personal lives in order and then get busy with the necessary corporate disciplines.

7) Enjoying freedom in Jesus—a life free from the strongholds of the enemy.

Love you all,
Pastor Paul