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A **stronghold** is a deeply rooted pattern of thinking, believing, or behaving that resists God's truth and keeps a person trapped in deception or disobedience.

A **stronghold** is a lie that has gained influence over how you think and live. God's truth exposes that lie and teaches you to walk in freedom.

1. How are strongholds developed in a believer's life?

- Strongholds can start in a believer's life when a thought or belief that contradicts God's truth is repeatedly accepted, defended, and acted upon.
- Over time, that thinking can become an established pattern that influences the person's choices.

(2 Corinthians 10:4–5) The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 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.

- Paul describes strongholds as arguments and claims that oppose the knowledge of God.

A stronghold may develop in this way:

1. A lie is introduced.

A stronghold can develop when a lie becomes something we accept as truth and allow to govern our lives. Through temptation, an experience, or someone's influence, a person begins thinking, "God cannot be trusted," "I must get revenge," or "This sin is harmless." Being tempted or having an unwanted thought is not itself a stronghold.

2. The lie is accepted as truth.

Instead of examining the belief in light of Scripture, the person begins agreeing with it. For example:

A. I can stop whenever I want. — The lie of control

We minimize the problem even as it begins to control our choices.

Truth: Honestly examine what has power over you (**1 Corinthians 6:12**).

B. It's not that bad—other people do worse. — The lie of comparison

We measure ourselves against others instead of acknowledging the damage to our relationships, responsibilities, and fellowship with God.

Truth: Examine your own life honestly (**Galatians 6:4–5**).

C. I need this to feel better. — The lie of necessity

Temporary relief can convince us that a harmful behavior is our only source of comfort.

Truth: Bring your burdens to God and receive support from others (**1 Peter 5:7; Galatians 6:2**).

D. Keep it secret. Nobody will understand. — The lie of isolation

Shame encourages hiding, and hiding keeps us from accountability and care.

Truth: Seek trustworthy people with whom you can be honest and pray (**James 5:16**).

E. This is just who you are. You will never change. — The lie of hopelessness

A struggle becomes an identity, and past setbacks are treated as proof that freedom is impossible.

Truth: Your struggle does not erase the new life and hope found in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

F. **You've already failed, so you might as well keep going. — The lie of condemnation**

A setback becomes an excuse to give up entirely.

Truth: Return to God, receive His forgiveness, and take the next faithful step (**1 John 1:9**).

G. **You can deal with it tomorrow. — The lie of delay**

We postpone the honest conversation, the boundary, or the request for help.

Truth: Respond to God today instead of hardening your heart (**Hebrews 3:15**).

3. **The belief becomes an excuse for wrong choices.**

"This is just how I am," or "After what happened to me, I have a right to behave this way."

Correction becomes harder to receive.

4. **Repeated choices establish a pattern.**

Bitterness, dishonesty, pride, or another harmful response becomes familiar. The person repeatedly returns to it instead of practicing obedience.

5. **The pattern is protected from correction.**

Secrecy, isolation, and rejecting wise counsel allow it to continue unchallenged.

Teaching point: "The deception says, 'Hide it, excuse it, and give up.' God calls us to bring it into the light, face the truth, and receive help."

- Satan uses deception, but our own desires and choices also matter. We should not assume that every struggle is a direct satanic attack.

(**James 1:14–15**) but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15 Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

6. **How important is honesty when tearing down strongholds?**

The response begins with honesty: Identify the belief, examine it through Scripture, confess any sin, and practice a different response with God's help and trustworthy support.

Question: **What have you accepted as true that God's Word is calling you to reconsider?**

The Dangers of Strongholds

7. The danger of spiritual strongholds is that they can make us defend the very thinking and behavior God wants to change.

- A deeply rooted lie can influence our decisions, damage relationships, and hinder our growth in Christ.

Here are some dangers:

1. They distort how we see God and ourselves.

We may believe, “God will never forgive me,” or “I will never change.” These beliefs can keep us from receiving God’s truth and grace.

2. They make disobedience easier to justify.

Instead of acknowledging wrongdoing, we say, “That’s just how I am.” What once troubled our conscience becomes something we excuse.

3. They harden us against correction.

We may reject Scripture or wise counsel whenever it challenges what we want. **Hebrews 3:13** warns about being hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

4. They damage relationships.

Bitterness, pride, suspicion, and the need for control can shape how we treat others. **Ephesians 4:31–32** calls us to replace hostility with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.

5. They hinder spiritual growth and service.

Energy that could be used to love, serve, and obey God becomes consumed by protecting an unhealthy pattern.

6. They encourage secrecy and hopelessness.

We may hide our struggles or believe that seeking help is pointless. Isolation then allows the pattern to continue unchallenged.

Having a struggle does not mean you are beyond God’s help. The response is to bring it into the light: examine the belief, receive God’s truth, repent where needed, and seek trustworthy support.

Teaching Point: A stronghold becomes especially dangerous when we stop challenging it and start defending it.

Closing

New Era, we have learned how strongholds begin, how they grow, and the damage they can cause. Now we must ask ourselves: **How will I respond to what God has shown me?**

It is time to bring that hidden struggle into the light. It is time to stop defending bitterness, making excuses for disobedience, and agreeing with the lie that we can never change.

Whatever we have allowed to become deeply rooted, we can bring before the Lord!

(2 Corinthians 10:4) reminds us that the weapons God gives us have divine power to demolish strongholds. Our confidence is in His power, His truth, and His faithfulness.

When the lie says, “You are beyond forgiveness,” remember God’s invitation to confess and receive His mercy.

When shame says, “Keep hiding,” reach out for prayer and trustworthy help.

When discouragement says, “Give up,” take the next step of obedience!

Freedom may involve a process, but you do not have to walk through that process alone. Keep praying. Keep receiving the Word. Keep accepting corrections. Keep taking faithful steps.

Jesus died for our sins and rose again. Our hope rests in a living Savior! Whatever your past, you can turn to Him today.

Say it with me:

“Lord, expose every lie I have believed. Renew my mind with Your truth. Give me courage to receive help and strength to obey. I surrender every part of my life to You!”

Say it: I will respond to God’s truth! I will respond to God’s truth!

Father, search our hearts. Forgive us for the sins we have excused and show us the beliefs we need to change. Break the power of deception, renew our minds, and lead us in obedience. Help us become a church where people can speak honestly, receive grace, and find support as they grow. In Jesus’ name, amen.