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Faith News



Spirit of Faith International

June-July 2021

Pulling Down **STRONGHOLDS**

8 **MISSIONARY**
TESTIMONY FROM MANIPUR

9 **PODCAST**
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In association with
Spirit of Faith International, USA
a.k.a. John Roughton Ministries Inc.

WEDNESDAY

Pastor's Bible Study
5:00 pm

SATURDAY

Corporate prayer
6:30 am

RGenX
(Teens/Young adults)
4:00 pm

SUNDAY

Worship & the Word
10:00 am

Covenant Kids
10:00 am

Nagamese Service
2:00 pm

Prayer & Praise
5:00 pm*

*As announced

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Pulling Down STRONGHOLDS

John Roughton

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (ESV)

In this passage Paul uses military terminology to describe his ministry. Is he talking about literally going to war, with guns and armies in combat? No, he said in **v.3 we are not waging war according to the flesh. (ERV) but we don't fight our battles in the same way the world does.** He's referring to a spiritual conflict.

Some Christians think that in these verses Paul is talking about pulling down demonic powers —that through prayer we can dislodge the world-rulers of the darkness and remove evil spirits from dominating certain geographical areas. But that is not what he means.

If we could cast demons into the abyss, Jesus would have done that in his earthly ministry and rid the world of all demonic influences. Remember when Jesus delivered the man at Gadara, the evil spirits cried out, **Have you come here to torment us before the time? (Matthew 8:29).** There is coming a time, at the end of the age, when Satan and his minions will be cast into the lake of fire. But that time hasn't come yet.

No, **v.5** says, **We destroy arguments...and take every thought captive to obey Christ.** The devil and demons are not going to change their minds no matter how hard we pray. In this passage Paul is talking about overcoming opposition to the gospel. He is talking about dealing with people who resist God's Word.

Did Paul convert the lost with clever debates and the sheer forcefulness of his personality? No, his weapons were not natural, they had **divine power.** He is saying here what he said in **1 Corinthians 2:4, and my speech and my message were not in plausible (persuasive) words of wisdom (human wisdom) but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.** "I didn't convince you with my intellectual ability, I proved it by showing you the power of God."

However, Paul isn't only referring to evangelizing the lost in this passage. He's writing to Christians.

In **v.6** he said he was **ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.** He was dealing with believers who opposed the Word.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

Many Christians, like those in the church at Corinth, have **strongholds** in their life.

The Greek word, *ochuroma* means a fortress, a castle, a citadel. On the outskirts of Corinth a fortress stood atop a hill 1857 feet high. In fact, many cities in the first century had a stronghold, an enclosed area with thick walls and high towers. If an enemy invaded the land, the rulers of the city would take refuge inside the citadel where they would be secure.



**Your mindset
determines your
life's direction.**

There are strongholds in the lives of many believers. These are places where the enemy has a foothold. It is a base of operations where he can carry out his plans. Even if we make resolutions and try to reform our behavior with will-power, the enemy will retreat to the stronghold until the attack is over. Only later to emerge and continue to work out his schemes.

Where are these strongholds located? Notice **v.5 We destroy arguments**

and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

The word for **arguments** is *logismos*. It means human reasoning, your own analysis of the situation. **lofty opinion** refers to any idea that arrogantly defies God's Word. Where do we have ideas and human reasoning and thoughts? In our minds.

Romans 7:22-23

For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law *waging war against the law of my mind* and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

You can love the Lord with all your heart and still have a battle raging in your mind. The war is won or lost in the mind.

Romans 8:6

For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Some Christians assume it doesn't matter what you think about as long as you're saved. But nothing could be further from the truth. Your mindset determines your life's direction.

Even as a born again Christian (this verse was written to believers), you can have life and peace or you can have death. The word for **life** here is *zōē*, the life and nature of God. Every child of God has eternal life, but you can have it more abundantly; you can

walk in it and experience the power and presence of God.

Being carnally minded won't necessarily kill you — if that were the case there would be no Christians alive today. But the word **death** includes loss of life, defeat, blessings forfeited.

So the point is, you can't have a good life with bad thinking. You will not be Christ-like with a devilish mindset.

If the enemy can steer your thoughts, he will drive your car and take you to a place you do not want to go. **John 8:32** says, **you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.** If the truth sets people free, lies keep them a prisoner. It is safe to say that all self-destructive behavior is the result of listening to the father of lies. If you're depressed, the devil has been working on you.

Until our minds are renewed with the Word, until we bring our thoughts into agreement with God's thoughts, we will not experience the transformation that God intends for us. A renewed mind is more than a spiritually educated mind. It means you have disciplined yourself to think in line with God's Word in every situation of life.

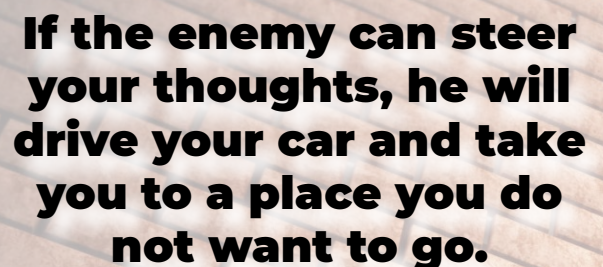
Your mindset sets your course. A mindset is not an isolated thought, it is a pattern of thinking. Thoughts will come to us from various sources, but we have the power to accept them or reject them. We choose our thoughts.

But as we dwell on certain thoughts,

they take root in our minds; they become a part of our souls. Scientists have discovered that as we think certain thoughts it creates new neuron connections in our brains. So as we repeatedly think on something it becomes second nature to us. It gets easier for us to think that way. We think that way without even thinking.

Even if we initially dismiss something as untrue, if we will allow ourselves to dwell on it long enough, we will eventually believe it.

Joseph Goebbels, the infamous head of Nazi propaganda, said: *Repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth.* The devil is a master of propaganda. He keeps hammering away with the same lie until it is accepted.



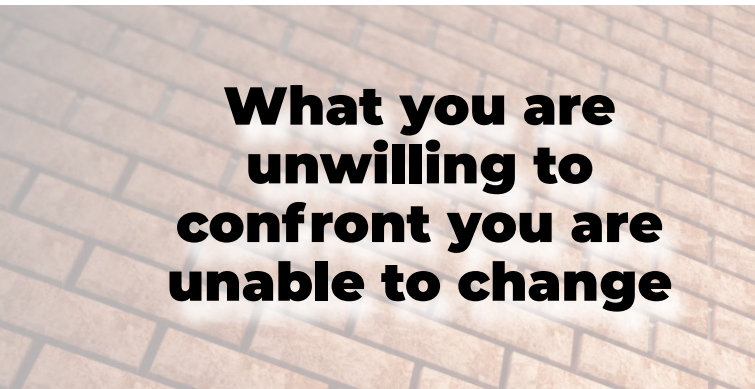
If the enemy can steer your thoughts, he will drive your car and take you to a place you do not want to go.

We could define a **stronghold** as a mindset that is based on falsehood, usually a lie suggested to us by the enemy. (If Jesus called Satan a liar, that means the enemy can speak and people can hear him.) So we need to aggressively take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ. Don't be a lazy thinker. **Matthew 22:37** says, **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**

How so you love God with your mind?

We need to think about what we think about. Examine that little voice in your head in the light of God's Word. Deep inside, what do you keep telling yourself?

No one likes me, everyone is against me. There's something wrong with me. God doesn't love me anymore. I'm a failure, nothing I do works out well. Whatever I do, it's never good enough. There's no hope for me. What's the point of going on?



**What you are
unwilling to
confront you are
unable to change**

Or,

I can take care of myself. I don't need God. Church is for losers. All those preachers want is your money. I'm right and everyone else is wrong! You really can't rely on the Bible, it's full of contradictions, no one can understand it. I've been mistreated, I'm not appreciated, so I'm never going back. It's everyone's fault but mine. I don't know why God is punishing me, it's so unfair.

A stronghold is a point of deception from which the devil has access into your life. People act strange because of guilt, hurt, insecurity, and fear.

But let's not try to camouflage our wrong mindset with a religious mask. What you are unwilling to confront you are unable to change. The first step to being free from bondage is to recognize there is a problem. You can't be delivered living in denial.

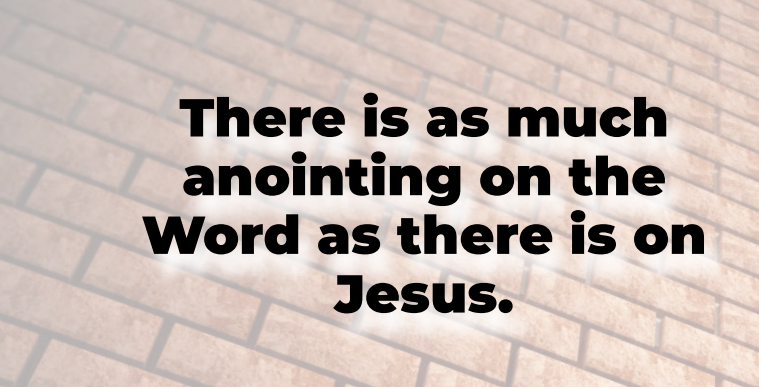
In your own strength, there's no chance of recovery. But with God on your side, the victory is assured — if you will cooperate with him. The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds!

We have the power of God's Word and the anointing of the Holy Spirit — and those are not two different things, they are one.

I had lunch back in February of this year with a wonderful couple who are serving the Lord in ministry. The wife shared with my wife and I her story. She was a Bible School graduate, working for the Lord, but she began to fall into depression, she doesn't even know why. She would spend her days in tears, heavy, listless and confused. Something was wrong and it got the better of her.

Someone invited her to a meeting where a wonderful man of God was ministering. She wasn't even sure she wanted to attend. When she arrived at the auditorium there were long lines waiting to get in, and she was late. But by the providence of God, the usher seated her right up front.

The evangelist called her forward and laid hands on her. The fire of God came on her and burned things out of her. She lay under the power for the entire evening. But when she got up, the vexing demonic oppression was gone, she was free, bright, and happy.



There is as much anointing on the Word as there is on Jesus.

A couple of days later, I attended a conference where one pastor shared his story from many years ago. He and his wife had recently been born again, filled with the Spirit, and were excited about the things of God. But over a period of time, he noticed a change in his wife. Instead of the cheerful, bubbly woman he knew, she was turning into someone else, a dark and despondent person.

They prayed and did everything they knew to do but to no avail. Eventually, they sought help from a Christian counselor. The man's wife disclosed that before she would sink into depression she would find herself thinking, "God doesn't love me anymore. I've failed too many times."

The psychologist said, "We can try a mild form of shock therapy. Put a rubber band on your wrist, and when you start having those thoughts, pop yourself with the rubber band" —which

would give a sting. And then say out loud, "That's a lie. The Bible says God loves me with an everlasting love."

He said he would never leave me nor forsake me. The blood of Jesus has washed away my sins. The Word of God says, *and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*"

She began to do that. At first it was challenging. But by replacing the wrong thoughts with the right one, removing the lies of the enemy with the truth of God, she came out of it and that troubling demon was gone, never to return.

Romans 10:17 (ESV)
So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

The best manuscripts say **Christ**, which means the anointed one. Faith, that moves mountains and casts out demons, comes to us as we receive the anointed Word. There is as much anointing on the Word as there is on Jesus. **(FN)**



My name is Elizabeth, from Mizoram which is located in the North-Eastern part of India. I would like to share with you how I have been spending my life after I have graduated from the **Bible School in 2017** for the glory of God.

There is a lot to be said on how I ended up in the bible school, it was a path I had never ventured and known before, barely able to speak the language but despite all, I reached there by solely depending on God. I learned a lot, lessons, and testimony that are immensely helpful even today at the Bible School.

As of now, **I work as a missionary in a Mission Field.** I volunteered and joined the field in October after my graduation. The Church that I am taking care of has had 107 Christian members across 22 families and we are currently in construction of our church for worship and service.



Most of our members converted from Buddhism. They are from the marginalized community and economically backward.



I am thankful with all my heart for having received all the valuable lessons and training in the Bible School. They are immensely helpful for my work here, they give me strength and I still listen to the sermons that were delivered while I was at the Bible School. I often watch the Sunday Service on YouTube and I find it valuable.

I am forever grateful to Pastors John & Zhepi and all the guest teachers. God bless you. Thank you.



GOOD NEWS!

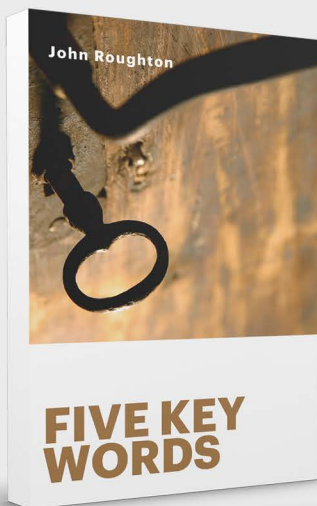
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