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How we build strongholds

Written by Bill Perkins

The enemy builds a stronghold in our life when we give him a *foothold*—a secure position from which he can and will make further progress.

The word “foothold” is only used once in the New Testament. In Ephesians 4:26-27 the Apostle Paul said, “In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.”

Topos

The Greek word for “foothold” is “topos” and it can be translated, “place,” “opportunity” or “foothold.” In the original language it had a broad meaning which included, “territory, land: in the oldest clear use in the singular it meant a defined place, then a specific territory, area, or land; district, town, or dwelling-place." It also carries the idea of a “jurisdiction,” a legal place where an enemy can operate.

When Paul commands us not to give the Devil a foothold, he’s telling us not to give him legal jurisdiction over an area of our life—a place where he can build a stronghold.

A Single Lie

How do we do that? We do it when we align ourselves with a lie and the father of lies. Every stronghold in our life began with a single lie we believed and acted on. There are no exceptions.

Gina

For instance, Gina was adopted. One day on the playground a friend approached her and asked, “Are you really adopted?” Gina acknowledged she was adopted. “Ugh,” her friends said. “That’s awful.”

Gina believed that lie and throughout much of her life she thought she was inferior because she was adopted. This stronghold prompted her to withdraw from people and interpret any negative comment about her as total rejection.

Jason

Jason, a businessman, had a partner embezzle money from their company causing it to go bankrupt. Jason believed the lie that said, “Don’t forgive, get even.” The anger he felt toward his former friend and partner bled into his marriage resulting in a nasty divorce.

The Bricks

Every stronghold begins when we give the enemy a foothold by believing and acting on a single lie. Once we accept that first lie, we'll accept other lies. These are the bricks the enemy uses to build a fortress that houses anger, lust, jealousy, laziness, gossip, hypocrisy, greed, materialism, and a host of other sins.

Once the stronghold is in place we become the person described by Paul, "Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me" (Romans 7:21-23).

Next week, we'll discover how to find freedom by dismantling spiritual strongholds.