

What's a spiritual stronghold?

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A spiritual stronghold is a fortress of lies built in the soul. Stone by stone, lie by lie, the fortress takes shape until it seems impregnable. Behind its walls, shame, anger, lust, greed, malice and a host of evil finds refuge. The only ones allowed through its gate are more lies and lying spirits. This fortress is designed to oppose the truth and the freedom of Christ in our lives.

Paul wrote about the power of a stronghold when he said this, “For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing” (Romans 7:18-19). In contemporary vernacular we call such enslavement obsessions, compulsions, addictions or bad habits. God calls them spiritual strongholds.

Divine Power to Demolish

Writing to the Corinthians Paul describes the source of our enemy’s attack, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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” (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

What Makes Them So Strong

What makes these strongholds so strong? The answer is twofold. The word “pretension” speaks of a strong desire for advancement . . . a striving after something higher than oneself . . . the desire for recognition of accomplishment without actual possession of the necessary ability to achieve the accomplishment.

Satan was pretensions when he sought to claim the throne of God. Adam and Eve were pretentious when they sought to be like God (Isa. 14; Ezekiel 28, Gen. 3:5). We are pretentious when we lift our desires and wishes above God. Anytime God tells us one thing and we do another, we are pretentious.

Arguments Against God

Arguments against the knowledge of God make up the second strength of a stronghold. If God is real but can’t be known, then nothing matters. Once we accept that lie, a fortress of lies will be built upon it. Such lies drive us to find reasons not to believe God rather than reasons to believe him.

We’ve all had, or have spiritual strongholds. Next week I’ll examine how they’re built and then we’ll discover how they’re destroyed.