



## Winning the Mind Wars Part 5—Strongholds

### Understanding Strongholds—2 Corinthians 10:3–5

- 2 Corinthians 10:3
    - We are engaged in war. This is strong military language and Paul is taking us into battle (spiritual conflict).
      - We cannot not fear the reality of spiritual conflict.
        - Acts 10:38
        - 1 John 3:8
        - Luke 10:19–20
      - Greater is He that is in us (1 John 4:4). We are in a war Jesus has already won and He has given us the authority and power to exercise that victory in all parts of our spiritual life. We're between D-day and V-day, June 6th 1944–May 6th 1945, some of the bloodiest battles in that time. D-day is analogous to when Jesus was crucified, buried and rose again. V-day is analogous to when He returns. In between, we will be in battle.
      - We war but NOT according to the flesh. The war is not fought with fleshly resources, tactics or strategies and it is NOT against fleshly foes, or people. Our war is against devilish forces.
  - 2 Corinthians 10:4
    - Weapons is plural. We have many weapons at our disposal. The more we use them, the more victory we'll experience.
      - Ephesians 6:12–18
        - 7 weapons of mass satanic destruction: Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, God's Word, and prayer.
      - Weapons are NOT carnal or natural but they are mighty in God—not weak and haphazard.
      - Weapons are mighty to pull down strongholds
        - Pulling down: Destroying to extinction. It is violent and intentional
        - Strongholds: Literally a fortification, or a seat of authority. A Castle.
          - Stronghold: A satanic lie. A generational mindset or a human wounding that you have listened to long enough, believed strongly enough, and owned deeply enough that it has become part of your identity. It has fortified itself in you and dictates your thoughts, beliefs, actions and reactions. It is an unholy filter through which all thoughts pass. (Believers can have strongholds, they need to be pulled down!)
          - Strongholds include feelings of: Guilt, shame, unworthiness, unloveliness, undeserving, unbelief, unforgiving, bitterness, negative, rejection, depression, addiction, pride, narcissism, stubbornness, sexual brokenness, and more.
          - These strongholds and others like them can and should be pulled down. Remember, our weapons are mighty in God to do just that!
- 2 Corinthians 10:5
  - Casting down: Pulling (vs. 4) and casting down are violent, intentional and thorough acts.

- Arguments are imaginations and delusional reasoning's from carnal, corrupt, darkened, and debased places in the mind. They want to argue with your faith.
- Every high thing is every elevated place or barriers that seem impossible to overcome.
- These arguments and high things inflate themselves AGAINST the knowledge and truth of God. They exalt themselves to be bigger and more powerful than they really are. We must cast them down!
- Captive: After you have beat down those unholy thoughts, you need to take them captive — imprison them, render them powerless, useless, inoperative, and non-threatening. We need to be a Gatekeeper, a hedge-builder, and captive-taker-over of our thoughts.
- Obedience: You bring that thought before the Truth, character and purpose of Christ and make it submissively bow its knee in obedience to Him!
- If we'll start treating our thoughts and strongholds as the Scriptures instructs us, freedom and a renewed mind will be ours! We'll win the Mind Wars!

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### Picture of a Stronghold—Isaiah 36

- Isaiah 36:1-3
  - “Like the Persian Xerxes, he was weak and vainglorious, cowardly under reverse, and cruel and boastful in success.”<sup>1</sup> Sounds like the devil, the enemy).
  - Annals of Assyria. “Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms and by the might of my power I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. From these places I took and carried off 200,156 persons, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mules, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude; and Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates, so as to prevent escape.”<sup>2</sup>
- Isaiah 36:4
  - Self-exaltation, intimidation and doubt
- Isaiah 36:5
  - Weak resources, no power or will to succeed against the enemy
- Isaiah 36:6-7
  - Weak resources, brings doubt to spiritual authority. The enemy questions those in authority.
- Isaiah 36:8-9
  - The enemy is willing to compromise and even give a pledge.
- Isaiah 36:10
  - He lies seemingly supported by circumstance.
- Isaiah 36:11
  - The voice of the enemy has people in panic. Don't engage, especially in fear.
- Isaiah 36:12
  - The enemy smells fear and capitalizes on it, then further threatens.
- Isaiah 36:13

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<sup>1</sup> George Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, original copyright 1894, T. Nelson and Sons, Electronic Edition

<sup>2</sup> IBID.

- Self-exaltation and intimidation
- Isaiah 36:14
  - The enemy attacks the king's character and capabilities.
- Isaiah 36:15
  - The enemy plants doubts.
- Isaiah 36:16-17
  - Making a pledge with the enemy doesn't create peace or prosperity. It only increases and intensifies the problems.
- Isaiah 36:18
  - We must beware of godly persuasion and closely examine "devilish" proof.
- Isaiah 36:19-20
  - He creates a smoke screen. He can't compare the power of idols to the power of Almighty God.
- Isaiah 36:21-22
  - There is no conversing with the enemy. That is what got them afraid in the first place.
- If you get serious about renewing your mind, identifying and pulling down strongholds, you can expect this level of counterattack. You need to know it, and beat it down!

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### **Picture of Defeating Stronghold— Isaiah 37**

- Hezekiah went to prayer. He sent messengers to Isaiah for a Word from God. God said, "Don't be afraid, the enemy will die in his own land." The enemy responded with a last ditch effort to discourage and Hezekiah went back to prayer. God's Word came again declaring victory. The Angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers overnight. Israel won! Twenty years later King of Assyria is murdered by his two sons.
- Strongholds, arguments, and high things are pulled down to destruction through prayer, the Word and our other spiritual weapons (Ephesians 6). By taking your thoughts captive, bringing them before the truth of Christ and making them submissively bow the knee in obedience to Jesus, you'll keep defeated strongholds from resurrecting and new ones from being established. That's how you win the Mind Wars!