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The Three Battlegrounds by Francis Frangipane

Chapter 3 - Pulling Down Strongholds

What men call “salvation” is simply the first stage of God’s plan for our lives, which is to conform us in character and power to the image of Jesus Christ. If we fail to see our relationship to God as such, we will allow too many areas within us to remain unchanged. Pulling down strongholds is the demolition and removal of our old ways of thinking so that the actual presence of Jesus Christ can be manifested through us.

What is a Stronghold?

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 CSB

[3] For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, [4] since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds.

All successful deliverance must begin by first removing that which defends the enemy. In speaking of spiritual warfare, the apostle Paul enlists the word “stronghold” to define the spiritual fortresses wherein Satan and his legions hide and are protected. These fortresses exist in the thought-patterns and ideas that govern individuals, families, churches, communities and even nations. Before victory can be claimed, these strongholds must be pulled down and Satan’s armor removed. Then the mighty weapons of the Word and the Spirit can effectively plunder Satan’s house.

But what is the biblical meaning of this word, stronghold. In the Old Testament, a stronghold was a fortified dwelling used as a means of protection from an enemy. We find that David hid from King Saul in wilderness strongholds at Horesh (1 Samuel 23:14, 19). These were physical structures, usually caves high on a mountainside, and were very difficult to assault.

The apostle Paul defines a stronghold as “speculations,... [a] lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.” A demonic stronghold is any type of thinking that exalts itself above the knowledge of God, thereby giving the devil a secure place of influence in an individual’s thought-life.

Christians can be oppressed by demons, which can occupy unregenerated thought-systems, especially if those thoughts are defended by self-deception or false doctrines. The thought, “I cannot have a demon because I am a Christian,” is simply untrue. A demon cannot have you in an eternal, possessive sense, but you can have a demon if you refuse to repent of your sympathetic thoughts toward evil. Your rebellion toward God provides a place for the devil in your life.

Many believers have been taught that, because they have the Holy Spirit, they cannot be deceived. This also is untrue. One reason the Spirit of Truth was sent was because we so easily fall into self-deception. **In fact, the very thought that a Christian cannot be deceived is itself a deception! Once a person is deceived, he does not recognize that he is deceived, because he has been deceived!** For all that we think we know, we must know this as well: we can be wrong. If we refuse to accept this truth, how will we ever be corrected from our errors?

Any area of our heart or mind that is not surrendered to Jesus Christ is an area vulnerable to satanic attack. And it is here, uniquely in the uncrucified thought-life of the believer’s mind, that the pulling down of strongholds is of vital importance. For this reason, we must attain what the Scriptures call “humility of mind” before real deliverance is possible. When we discover rebellion toward God within us, we must not defend or excuse ourselves. Rather, we must humble our hearts and repent, exercising our faith in God to change us.

You see, Satan feeds upon sin. Whenever there is a habit of sin in a believer’s life, expect to find demonic activity in that area. The sin-habit often becomes the dwelling place for a spirit that is robbing a believer of power and joy, and that habitation (or habit) is a stronghold.

The pulling down of strongholds begins with repentance. When Jesus sent out His disciples, “They went out and preached that men should repent. And they were casting out many demons and were anointing with oil many sick people and healing them” (Mark 6:12-13). Note the sequence of recovery: they called men to repent, then they delivered them of demons, then consecrated them with oil and healed them. **Repentance precedes deliverance, and deliverance often leads to healing in other areas.**

Ask God to show you areas in your life (habitual sins) that you have not fully surrendered to Him.

Pray and proclaim that each stronghold of your life must come down. Pray to only have one stronghold within you and that is the stronghold of the presence of Jesus Christ!