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# The Three Battlegrounds by Francis Frangipane

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## Chapter 5 - Three Sources of Strongholds (Part 2)

### The Stronghold of Our Experiences

Another means through which strongholds are structured into our souls is through our experiences and the often erroneous conclusions we draw from them. Our firsthand knowledge, for better or worse, becomes the substructure of what we define as reality. Yet, our experiences, while perfectly valid, are not necessarily conclusive. Unless they actually have become a fulfillment of God's Word, we must consider our experiences incomplete. We must not allow what we have experienced to diminish our trust in God.

Consider: Abraham lived for 25 years as an old man trusting that God would give him a son. For a quarter of a century, Abraham tried to have a child, yet he experienced only failure. Sarah could not become pregnant. If Abraham had allowed his subjective experience to guide him, he would not have become the father of our faith. Yet, in spite of his subjective experience, he continued to believe in God. We read, "With respect to the promise of God, [Abraham] did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God. and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:20-21).

Abraham's experience was valid in that he and Sarah were, indeed, incapable of producing offspring. Yet, Abraham did not allow his experience to decrease his faith. Rather, he "grew strong in faith, giving glory to God." This is the nature of faith, and faith must triumph over experiences until experiences conform to the Word of God.

You see, everyone who has a promise from God will pass through situations that seem to be the exact opposite of what they expected. At some point, we will be required to look our experience of failure or delay or impotency in the face, yet believe God anyway. As the Scripture declares: Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar" (Romans 3:4).

**We may value our experiences, but what must rule our hearts is the Word of God.**

### The Stronghold of Wrong Doctrine

A third source of strongholds comes from false church doctrines and teachings, Jesus warned, "See to it that no one misleads you" (Matthew 24:4). We can be led by another person, but we must take responsibility so that we are not misled by that individual. We must study and know the Bible ourselves. If we do not, how can we discern if there is error in the teachings we hear? As much as we love a particular pastor, as often as we have been edified by him, we must humbly ask the Lord to confirm any questionable doctrines. No teacher is so true, no ministry so pure that we can blindly let them lead us. They may lead us, but our eyes must be opened and our ears sensitive to the confirming voice of the Holy Spirit. As it is written, "Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses" (2 Corinthians 13:1). Even true teachers can innocently communicate false doctrines. It does not matter how sincere our Bible teachers are. If the preponderance of what they are teaching does not lead us into greater surrender to Christ's love, holiness and power, theology can actually become a stronghold that will limit us and oppress our spiritual growth.

The safest way to insure that no one misleads us is to see to it we do not mislead ourselves. We must stay honest with God and sensitive to His love and His Word. Satan's plan is to make us somehow accept, either through our upbringing, our experiences or through false church dogma, that certain portions of the life of Christ are untrue or not valid in our case. Every battle we face in life is over the Word and whether or not we can build our lives upon the faithfulness and integrity of God. If we hold fast to those things which we are sure of, God will be faithful to deliver us from every stronghold and lead us fully into His kingdom.