

Are You Shackled by Your Sins? Break Free Now!

I make a point in my ministry of ensuring that believers are aware of the very real battle we are in against the enemy of our souls, the devil, and encouraging them to take authority over him in their lives. I also stress the fact that they must be right with God in order to battle successfully. Why? Because engaging in spiritual warfare puts us in a very vulnerable position if there is anything in us that can open us up to the devil's attacks. For this reason it is crucial for us to root out any strongholds that may be keeping us in bondage.

Root Out Strongholds

Four of the most common strongholds are pride, offense, rejection and control. The difficulty we face in dealing with them is that we often don't realize we have them. People in bondage typically don't know they are in bondage.

- Pride prevents us from seeing we are in bondage.
- Offense thinks everyone else is wrong.
- Rejection is a hidden stronghold.
- No one ever wants to admit they have control issues.
- Therefore, instead of being released from these strongholds, we stay in bondage to them.

I was bound in pride and control for years. I did not see it. My husband would tell me. I knew I had a level of control and pride—everybody does—but I didn't realize how bad it was. The overseer to my ministry would tell me I had pride and control. I would continually deny it. Finally, one day I saw it. I was shocked by how blinding it was. I was even more shocked that I had never seen the bondage I carried, even though I was a deliverance minister who had helped thousands of other people get free.

There are many strongholds by which we can be afflicted. Though it is important to address each one, the four strongholds I mentioned are ones I strongly suggest you root out of your life before engaging in spiritual warfare.

Identify and Break Strongholds

Offense. The spirit of offense begins with unforgiveness. A person perceives they have been mistreated in a situation and is hurt. The person gets upset and feels they are entitled to justification, retribution or an apology. But, “‘Vengeance is Mine. I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Rom. 12:19). It is our responsibility to release forgiveness, not hold people accountable for their actions or desire penance. When an injustice occurs, the desire for reckoning begins to build a stronghold within our souls. Unforgiveness, when not released and walked through, leads to a strongman of offense. Once offense grows, the person begins to think everyone else is wrong and they are always right. Pride accompanies offense, forming a deadly duo of bondage that must be released.

Rejection. Rejection is a battle in the mind against lying and deceptive spirits. Rejection is not always uncovered at first because people who suffer rejection often try hard to be people-pleasers to gain acceptance. They don't realize their fear of rejection is driving their behavior. Rejection from family and friends can leave a person feeling defeated and victimized. Rejection follows throughout a lifetime until people have deep deliverance and can conquer mind-binding spirits that lie to them and penetrate their thoughts.

Control. Issues with control are common. A controlling spirit usually manifests as a generational curse, mostly from our moms, but it can also manifest through our dads. Those who are dominated by a spirit of control can act in a variety of ways; therefore, it isn't always easy to identify. There are many root sources and entry points, such as never being in control, always being controlled and being in an abusive relationship.

Receiving deliverance from a controlling spirit is contingent upon the person's wanting to give up control. If the Holy Spirit reveals this is an issue for you, allow God to bring you into brokenness and a place of complete surrender and dependence upon Him, and all control will be evicted.

Pride. Pride is sneaky and multifaceted. Identifying pride in others is reasonably easy. I like to say people wear pride on their sleeves. Our own pride usually goes undiscovered until we've had a battle or confrontation with another person or the Spirit of the Lord begins to convict us of it. We all need to ask the Holy Spirit to convict us and expose our hearts' intentions to see where pride manifests because everyone has some level of pride.

Conviction and Correction and Deliverance

If you suspect you are bound by any of these strongholds, allow the Holy Spirit to convict you and correct your actions, thoughts and motives. Jesus tells us what will happen when the Holy Spirit arrives. "When He comes, He will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment" (John 16:8). It isn't easy to put ourselves out there and be vulnerable and humble, but something wonderful will come forth as we do. To be victorious in spiritual warfare requires a warrior's heart. The heart of a warrior cannot be made where strongholds exist. Therefore, a willing mind and heart are needed to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal those things in us; we don't want to be exposed by someone else or to not realize there are issues.

One of my life Scriptures has been, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. 51:10). I also invite the Holy Spirit to "search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my concerns, and see if there is any rebellious way in me, and lead me in the ancient way" (Ps. 139:23-24).

Spend time in the secret place and get to know the Holy

Spirit. He will lead you through deliverance. Allow Him to convict you and then obey what He speaks to you. It will lead you to healing and freedom and make you much more effective in spiritual warfare!

Take Every Thought Captive

The saying that the battle is in the mind couldn't be truer. I have fought mental battles, and they aren't fun. One of the entry points to my mind was experiencing trauma through health ailments in my immediate family. Several medical circumstances we encountered with our children, my husband and myself left me fearing physical ailments. Whenever I sensed anything wrong in my body, I knew it was a demonic attack, especially if it occurred when I was getting ready to minister. Though I pressed through in spite of it, the attack was true torment. You've probably had a similar experience: The enemy locks your mind down. You feel emotionally and spiritually paralyzed, unable to war and counterattack the agony. A mind-binding spirit keeps you focused on the very thing you fear.

Recognizing the enemy's lies and taking every thought captive are the keys to your freedom. Paul tells us we are to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5b). Even though the devil still tries to lure me into the fear of medical ailments, I can now recognize his ploy as a demonic attack. Yes, occasionally I may have an actual symptom. Still, the devil would intensify the manifestation in my body by attacking me with a luring, mind-binding spirit to draw me into focusing on it and coming up with vain imaginations and false scenarios. I can now pray my way through and conquer medical conditions in my family, such as kidney stones, broken bones, medication allergies and others, without physician intervention.

Luring spirits that draw you into focusing on the negative and the very thing you are trying to get free from won't permanently leave you alone. The devil wants to keep you in

bondage. However, as we are empowered and recognize his attacks, we can rise above our situation and pray effectively against the kingdom of darkness. Once you recognize the lie, you can dismiss it.

The Battle for Your Mind

The battlefield for spiritual warfare is the mind. The enemy will penetrate your thoughts. Your soul (mind, will and emotions), which is the fleshly side of you, will agree with the enemy's lies by coming up with vain imaginations and false scenarios. But recognizing his lies will put you on a pathway to discovering how the enemy targets believers' minds to keep them in bondage. When he can keep us in bondage, we feel as if we are unworthy to receive the calling God has on our lives. We feel as if we don't have the knowledge, freedom or empowerment to pray effectively and war in the spirit realm.

When we are attacked with negative thoughts, emotional ailments and fear, we are in a battle of good against evil—the good, the Holy Spirit within us, against evil spirits attempting to deploy against our destinies. There is a constant war, whether or not we see or feel it.

I quoted a portion of this passage earlier, but it bears repeating because Scripture discusses the battle of the mind so clearly here: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:3–5). The Complete Jewish Bible reads: “For although we do live in the world, we do not wage war in a worldly way; because the weapons we use to wage war are not worldly. On the contrary, they have God's power for demolishing strongholds. We demolish arguments and every arrogance that raises itself up against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive

and make it obey the Messiah.”

I love how the Jewish translation states to “take every thought captive and make it obey the Messiah.” This is an excellent, practical exercise you can apply daily. Ask yourself: Does the thought that penetrates my mind obey the Messiah? Does this idea follow the Messiah and align with the Word of God? Life applications such as these can assist you in conquering every negative thought.

Battle Strategies and Tactics

In order to battle as the enemy wages war against us, we need battle strategies and tactics. The Word of God and our minds can be two great tools to have in our arsenals against the demonic world. When we arm ourselves fully with all the weaponry we can, evil spirits won’t be able to plague our minds. The Lord told me once, “Kathy, if your mind is full of Scripture, there will be no room in it for the enemy.”

We must fight the fires of hell with the fire of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Capturing every thought takes practice. I would like to say I was quickly delivered of mind-binding spirits and thoughts that tormented me, but I wasn’t. We have to consider that we have years of behavior patterns, habits and thoughts to undo and renew. When we have a specific way we think, we cannot change that overnight. We must “be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind[s]” (Rom. 12:2, MEV).

We have heard the saying adapted from Scripture, “We are in the world but not of the world.” When it comes to thinking, we cannot think as if we are in the world. We need to think as spirit beings. Let’s not adapt to the way the world thinks but be unique in our thinking. Being unique in our thinking comes from knowing what the Word says about us and our identity in Christ.

Capturing every thought isn’t easy when you feel stagnant or

defeated. Unproductive mindsets can become a struggle to conquer. But the good thing about it is that you don't have to do it alone. You have a helper, the Holy Spirit, to assist you in your times of weakness. He is your strength and portion: "My flesh and my heart fails, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Ps. 73:26). Keep Scripture before your eyes, and the promises of the Bible will assist you in walking out and defeating mind-binding spirits.

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