

Strongholds of the Mind

by Mike Bickle

Satan erects every stronghold he can in our minds to keep us from the true knowledge of God. To the degree that he is successful, we will not enjoy an intimate relationship with the Lord. We will not come to know for ourselves the loveliness and excellence of God's personality. The result is that our emotional lives will not be released into full affection for God.

A stronghold in the mind is a spiritual fortress made of wrong thoughts, a fortified dwelling place where demonic forces can hide and operate in power against us. The ideas and thoughts that make up the stronghold are based on lies that challenge the truth of what God has revealed about Himself.

Wrong ideas about God are not automatically eliminated when we are born again. Paul instructs believers to “put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Col. 3:10, NKJV). We are continually in the process of being renewed by the true knowledge of the personality of God.

Satan's goal is to keep us in darkness by keeping us deceived about what God is like. His strategy is to distort our knowledge of God's personality so that what we believe is erroneous and inadequate. Thus we are emotionally weakened and held in spiritual bondage.

How does the enemy construct a spiritual stronghold in our lives? He starts with a foundation of lies, usually about the personality of God or about how God views us in Christ.

On this foundation, he builds brick by brick: vain philosophies, erroneous interpretations of Scripture,

inaccurate ideas about the person of God, and distorted perceptions of how God sees us and feels about us when we sin. Held together by the mortar of mistaken reasoning, the walls rise higher and higher. Soon lofty towers of stubborn pride and vain imaginations loom above the shadows.

Most Christians have vague, contradictory ideas about God's personality. And our ideas usually come from our relationships with earthly authority figures. If we think of the authority figures who were the most influential in our early years, we will find that many of our ideas of God are connected to these people, particularly to our fathers.

I grew up with an affectionate father. But what if my life had been different? What if my father had hated me? What if he had beaten me until my spirit felt as bruised and bloody as my body? What if he had been a junkie, an alcoholic or an ex-convict instead of a man people liked and respected?

What if all the other human influences in my life had been negative as well? What would I think about God?

It's wonderful to have known people who showed us what God is really like. Their examples can help lay the groundwork for an accurate perception of Him. But if we have never known even one loving, godly person, we can still experience personal wholeness and be filled with passionate affections for Jesus. God, His Word and the Holy Spirit's work in our lives are sufficient to bring us to personal wholeness and spiritual maturity.

The key to bringing down the strongholds Satan has constructed in our minds is the knowledge of God's personality. Getting to know the true God and seeing how He views us in Christ will help to strengthen the inner man and tear down the lies Satan has fed us.

As Christians, we must become God-centered. We must recover a lofty concept of God and rediscover His majesty. We must

practice the art of long and loving meditation on the truths of the Scriptures and the being of God.

Only one thing will ever set us free and satisfy our deep cravings. We must come to know God as He is: the excellencies of His person; His extravagant passions; and His ravished heart.

The church knows Jesus as her Savior. But the Son of God is getting ready to reveal Himself as her Bridegroom, clothed in majesty and splendor. His love will ignite the passions of His people and cause the strongholds to come tumbling down.