

Pretensions and Strongholds

If pride is not dealt with, it will introduce into our lives, a bolder and more arrogant emotion called pretension. It's what pride becomes when we start believing we are invincible and don't need God.

Pretension is when an inflated sense of self-importance takes over our lives. It is what strongholds are made of, which can eventually lead to addictions. This is why we need to cut pride off as quickly as we can. Humble people are never pretentious.

Pretension is dangerous because we begin to believe all the good things that have happened to us have been created by our own determination and hard work. We love quoting, "I can do all things," but we stop there. We forget that verse has a qualifier. We forget Paul really said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13, NKJV).

Paul explained it this way. "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:3-5, NIV).

A stronghold is mindset that is driven by our emotions. One of the monster emotions mentioned that does this is pretension.

In 2 Corinthians 10:5 we saw that strongholds can only be broken by demolishing arguments and pretensions that set themselves up against God. That means these arguments against what God is saying or wanting us to do and the pretentious insistence that we know better than God are where any stronghold of the enemy begins. If someone is not following

what God wants them to do, they are saying by their actions they are better than God. Therefore they are pretentious and against God.

Feeling like we are better than everyone else or being pretentious is a core emotion that captures us in a stronghold of the enemy. However, God tells us exactly how to break any stronghold. To understand it, we need to know how a stronghold is created and how it can be broken.

1. BELIEF—A stronghold is not the substance. It's our belief that we know better than God. This includes arguing against Him. Our belief is fueled by our emotions.
2. HALF-TRUTH—A stronghold begins as a half-truth the enemy is whispering to us. It might be that eating something sweet is what will comfort us and make us feel better and just a little won't hurt us. The lie here is that this is the beginning of relying on a substance to do what only God can do for us. In the moment we may be tired, overwhelmed or worn out and we want to do something that will immediately make us feel better so we agree with the evil one just this once.
3. LIE—When the enemy has us on the hook with that bait, he brings out his bigger bait, the out-and-out lie. "You need more of this to feel better. You wouldn't want it if it wasn't how God made you."
4. HABIT—Then the enemy tells us, "You can't live without this." We've already opened the door to believing this

lie and if we are feeling negative emotion, we can throw the door wide open for this to become the only habit we use to comfort us.

5. **STRONGHOLD**—Once the habit is established as what we go to every hour of every day, it has become a stronghold. We know it's a stronghold when God asks us to stop and we say, "No, God. I need this" or "God, I know better than You do about what I need." That is an argument against God. That is pretension.
6. **ADDICTION**—With the stronghold securely in place we are now addicted to the substance the devil has been pushing. Yes, he is a drug pusher whether it be food, alcohol, drugs, porn, gambling, sexual promiscuity, overspending or whatever we use to find comfort. It all began with him whispering to us what we wanted to hear about a quick and easy fix.
7. **CAPTURE**—When we realize what we have done, to get free we must capture the debilitating thoughts at the root of this. "We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One" (2 Cor. 1:5, TPT). The enemy set up the stronghold in order to take us captive. We must take charge of what the enemy cunningly made us believe. We confess this to God and take those thoughts captive.
8. **DEMOLITION**—The final step is realizing we are caught in a stronghold and want it demolished. For demolition of the stronghold to begin, we have to confess to God what we have done and how we have believed the devil's lies

that this habit will solve all of our problems. Then we surrender our addiction to God and ask Him to meet our needs instead of a substance.

From then on we must guard against falling prey to the lies of the enemy. We do this by walking in His Holy Spirit, being in constant communication with Him, listening to what He says and following Him in obedience. It doesn't happen automatically. We have a choice. We can listen to the enemy or we can listen to God. We must choose God.

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