

## Protecting Yourself From Demonic Influence & Attacks



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With all of the *chaos and confusion* that is taking place in the world today ... battle lines being drawn, truth vs. lies, good vs. evil, hate vs. love, rational vs. irrational etc. ... **The Bible is very clear and the evidence present in the world today is unequivocal regarding Satan and demons ... "THEY LIVE!"**

The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians, "*Our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens*" (Ephesians 6:12). Here Paul readily admitted that, we are often assaulted by demonic spirits and we need to be ready to combat them!

While spiritual warfare might sound frightening to some, the good news is that our strength does not come from ourselves, **but from Jesus Christ!** It is God alone who can assure us victory, as left to our own devices, we would certainly fall. But the good news is ... God will never leave us alone and He has equipped us to be victorious in this battle! 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 (NKJV) says:

***"<sup>3</sup> For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, <sup>5</sup> casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, <sup>6</sup> and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled."***

***These are fighting words! Dem's fighting words...for us! Amen?***

Now these fighting words are metaphorical: they speak of weapons, strongholds, high things and bringing into captivity, yet these are not carnal or worldly weapons, but spiritual ones ...

- Not strongholds of stone ... but of imaginations or arguments;
- Not high things in high towers ... but "*high-falutin*" attitudes;
- Not taking into captivity enemy soldiers ... but enemy thoughts.

I think it would be helpful to consider the figurative aspect of the metaphor a bit more.

## **What is a stronghold? Why are strongholds important in literal warfare? A**

stronghold is a defensive structure: Psalms 9:9 (NIV) says .. *"The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a **stronghold** in times of trouble."*

- Hebrew ***misgav***; properly, a cliff (or other lofty or inaccessible place); figuratively, a refuge:--defense, high fort (tower), refuge.

So a cliff could be a stronghold, because it's high and inaccessible to one's enemies. 1 Samuel 23:14. David stayed in the desert strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Or it could be a man-made fortress or tower.

- Psalm 144:2 says ... *[The LORD is..] my lovingkindness, and my fortress; My high tower [misgav, stronghold], and My deliverer; My shield, and He in whom I trust; who subdues my people under me.*

Why would a "high thing" like to hang out in a high cliff or a high tower, exalting itself? Because it's safe and secure up there! If an enemy comes, it's much easier to drive him away from a stronghold in a high place.

David took the stronghold of Jerusalem and made it his capital. In 2 Samuel 5:6, The Jebusites taunted David, *"You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off."* They thought, *"David can't get in here."* But David was determined; and he got in there all right — Joab broke through a tunnel that led to a spring and opened the gates to the citadel! You can learn about the strategic importance of strongholds in the history of the wars of Israel.

***God knows all about strongholds and He knows how to take them — and He'll tell you how to do it, if you're willing to fight!*** When you come up against a stronghold in your life, do you just want to give up? Or are you going to willing to fight to take the stronghold? Strongholds are captured by people who are willing to fight ... If you're willing, God will help you!

### **One thing you should bear in mind about a stronghold: it's a place, not a person.**

A stronghold is only a threat if there are enemy soldiers inside. Indeed, a stronghold can also be a place of comfort, a safe place: For example, in 2 Samuel 22:2-3, David said: *"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior--from violent men you save me."*

In a spiritual stronghold, there could be demons or in a positive way the Holy Spirit. **A spiritual stronghold is a habitual pattern of thought, built into one's thought life.** Satan and his minions want to capture the minds of people: the mind is the citadel of the soul. He who controls the mind controls a very strategic place!

Romans 8:5-6 says ... ***“Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.”***

- **If you want the abundant life and peace that Jesus promised, you must let His Spirit capture the stronghold up there!**

A stronghold is a way of thinking and feeling that has developed a life of its own in a person. It might be a rut of depression or recurring unbelief or habitually bad temper. It might be a repeating pattern of failure: Sometimes a stronghold will cause you to provoke others to reject you (without necessarily knowing you're doing it). It might be a stronghold of resentment or worthlessness etc. **The enemy tries build and use strongholds to control and destroy!**

- A stronghold creates inner captivity to deception and misery.
- A stronghold keeps a person from thinking clearly, accepting the truth, repenting of sin, and receiving deliverance.
- A stronghold can keep a unbeliever from hearing the good news.
- A stronghold can keep a believer from hearing the fullness of the good news.

***So how do you take a stronghold?*** First, you have to see it, so you know what you're dealing with. It's kind a hard to take a stronghold you can't even see. But strongholds of the mind can be hidden—evil things hang out in darkness. Satan is the prince of darkness, but Jesus is the prince of light. You have been called out of darkness into His wonderful light!

## **How To Defend Yourself From Demonic Attacks**

James 4:7 (NIV) says ... ***"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."*** Once you recognize the stronghold, the next step to bringing it down is repentance. Be honest before God, and humbly let the Spirit expose the stronghold in the darkness.

## **CONFESSION OF SIN**

The most common way a demon can harm us is through a habitual state of sin. The more we distance ourselves from God through sin, the more susceptible we are to a demon's attack. Sin can chip away at our relationship with God and can expose us to the enemy's advances.

Confession of sins, then, is the primary way we have to put an end to our life of sin and start out on a new path.

## PRAYER

Another way to be protected from demonic attacks is to make prayer a habit and stick to a consistent prayer life. This puts a person in a daily state of grace and relationship with God. A person who regularly converses with God should never be afraid of the devil.

Satan and his minions may seem frightening to us, and the darkness in the world can often lead us to anxiety. However, if we stick close to God, we have nothing to fear. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

## BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

In Ephesians 5:18 we are told just as the person filled with wine is under the influence or control of the wine, so the person filled with the Spirit is under the Spirit's control. Furthermore, Paul is talking here primarily about a condition of increasing spiritual maturity, not about a momentary experience.

- TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT ... IS TO LIVE WITH EVERY CONSCIOUS AREA OF YOUR LIFE YIELDED TO THE SPIRIT'S CONTROL.

Being filled with the Holy Spirit, however, is not a once-and-for-all experience. There are many fillings, as is made clear in Ephesians 5:18. In the Greek language, in which this command was originally written, the meaning is clearer than that in most English translations. This command of God means to be *constantly and continually* filled, controlled and empowered with the Holy Spirit as a way of life.

***I cannot control myself and be controlled by the Holy Spirit at the same time.***

Christ cannot be in control if I am on the throne. So I must abdicate. This involves faith. As an expression of my will, in prayer, I surrender the throne of my life to Him, and by faith I draw upon His resources to live a holy and fruitful life.

**The command of Ephesians 5:18 is given to all believers to be filled, directed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, continually, every day of our lives!**

- TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT ... IS TO LIVE WITH THE WORD OF GOD PERMEATING EVERY AREA OF YOUR LIFE.

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The basic biblical teachings regarding the believer's means of becoming free from demonic influence involve seven aspects which commence following the new creation.

1. Considering ourselves dead to sin;
2. Being filled with the Holy Spirit;

3. Fleeing from temptation;
4. Submitting ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness;
5. Practicing righteousness;
6. Regular, ongoing confession of sin;
7. Resisting Satan and his demons by the power of our testimony and with the armor of God.

In contrast to the absence of biblical instruction regarding exorcism or deliverance, numerous Scripture passages address the above matters. We are instructed: "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (James 4:7-8). We are to "*put on the full armor of God, that [we] may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil*" (Ephesians 6:11). Having been freed from sin, we are to become slaves to righteousness, knowing that God has called us to such and that the result is beneficial in sanctification and eternal reward (Romans 6:11-22).

These basic instructions are repeated throughout the New Testament epistles: submit to God, resist the devil, and use the resources God provides for the life we are to live as believers. *In His high priestly prayer just before his crucifixion, Christ prayed that his disciples would be protected from the evil one* (John 17:15). This prayer was not only for the disciples, but for all believers (John 17:20). Thus, God's goal appears to be to protect us through the means outlined above, rather than to remove us from the world, which is the sphere of Satan's influence.

### ***The Armor of God***

In Ephesians, Paul presents a brief summary of the resources that God has provided for us in our struggle against satanic and demonic influence. In his description of the armor of God, Paul draws a parallel between the equipment of a soldier prepared for battle and the equipment of the believer for spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:12-17).

A careful study of Ephesians 6 will be of great value in preparing to deal with demonic influence. Here we can only outline the major elements.

First, we notice that the warfare is spiritual, thus the equipment must be spiritual. Its employment enables us to resist and to stand firm.

We are to wrap ourselves with the truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, cover our feet with the gospel of peace, take up the shield of faith, wear the helmet of salvation, and take up the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. It is noteworthy that the major elements of this warfare are defensive, with one exception, the Word of God.

**Notice Again The Armor: Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, Salvation, and the Word of God.** In appropriating the armor of God we must begin with these. People are sometimes tempted to say that we begin with one, adding others one by one. But it is not so simple. Salvation is not possible apart from a knowledge of and faith in the truth; the moment salvation is taken up it begins to produce righteousness and peace with God. Thus, these qualities, these pieces of armor, cannot ultimately be thought of as separate elements from which we may pick and choose those we would use on a given occasion. Rather, there is an intimate interconnectedness among them; we must appropriate all of them if we are to be protected effectively from demonic influence; the alternative is to risk more serious demonic influence (Luke 11:24-28).

### ***Slavery to Righteousness***

It is not enough for demons to be cast out of a person. Something has to take their place before he or she can be assured of ongoing freedom from demonic influence.

The process of becoming free from demonic influence requires developing new patterns of living which replace the old sinful patterns associated with demonic influence. This involves spiritual growth, and the discipline of righteousness. The Bible speaks of this process as that of becoming slaves (or servants) to righteousness.

This transformation from sinful to godly patterns of living takes time. Only through the repeated experience of testing and trial ... are we able to cultivate the specific pattern of righteousness we need, or develop more fundamental traits of patience, hope, endurance, and the love of God, which characterize maturity (Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-4).

***Since the abundant life and victory in righteousness is not instantaneous, absolute, or accomplished in isolation ... the Believer needs to be involved in a supportive community, in fellowship, individual and corporate prayer, Bible study, worship, and service to others.***

***ONLY THEN CAN WE ATTAIN THE PROTECTION WE NEED FROM DEMONIC INFLUENCE AND ATTACKS!***