

Part 2 - Pastor Jason Spencer

The Power of the Spirit

Bible Study Lesson - Part 1

The Spirit's Power to Tear Down Strongholds

While the potential benefits may be obvious to all parties involved, achieving them will require a well-defined plan, clearly defined objectives, meticulous documentation, and a great deal of dedication on the part of all parties.

Key Text: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (ESV)

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

1. Introduction

- "Have you ever tried breaking a bad habit—or overcoming fear—only to find yourself falling back into it again and again
- Maybe it's worry, anger, shame, or even just a way of thinking that keeps you stuck.
- It can feel like you're trapped inside a fortress you can't escape."

Transition: The Bible calls these things strongholds—patterns of thinking or living that keep us from walking in the freedom Christ has given us.

Key Idea: You don't fight strongholds with willpower, clever strategies, or self-help tricks. Paul tells us we need divine power—the power of the Holy Spirit—to pull them down.

2. Walking Through the Text

Background Before Verse 3

In this part of his letter, Paul was being criticized by some people in Corinth who said he looked weak in person and only seemed bold when writing letters (2 Cor. 10:1, 10). He was facing negative voices that tried to tear him down and discredit his ministry.

Instead of lashing out in anger or relying on human tactics to defend himself, Paul shows the church a better way: our battles are not fought with human strength or human weapons. He's about to teach them how to respond to opposition and negativity—not in the flesh, but in the Spirit.

v. 3 – “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.”

- Paul acknowledges that we live in human bodies (“the flesh”), but our real battles are not fought with human weapons.
- Point: Our struggles are spiritual in nature (Ephesians 6:12), and must be fought with spiritual resources.
- **Takeaway: What looks like a natural problem (fear, anger, anxiety, bitterness) often has a deeper spiritual root**

d – “For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.”

- Our weapons are not of the flesh—they are spiritual: prayer, God’s Word, faith, and the power of the Spirit.
- **What would be considered “weapons of the flesh” in Paul’s context?**
 - Sharp Retaliation – fighting critics with insults or anger.
 - Self-Promotion – boasting about achievements to prove himself. -
 - Worldly Persuasion – relying on eloquence or manipulation to win people over.
 - Human Authority / Control – forcing people into submission by intimidation.

Contrast: Paul shows that real power comes through spiritual weapons—prayer, God’s Word, faith, and the Spirit’s power—because only these can demolish strongholds.

- Divine Power (Greek: *dunatos tō theō*): literally “mighty through God” → same root (*dunamis*) as in Acts 1:8. This is Spirit-empowered strength, not human effort.
- Strongholds = not external castles but internal fortresses. The lies we wrestle with often come from the negative opinions or words spoken over us, which we then internalize.
- The Battle of Internalizing Lies:
 - Key Insight: What you *believe about yourself* will determine how you live.
 - If lies define your identity, they will dictate your choices. But when God’s truth defines you, the Spirit gives you freedom and power to live in victory.

Illustration: Think of a fortress with walls so thick no human weapon could break through—but God’s power brings them down, Just like the walls of Jericho (Joshua 6).

Takeaway: The Spirit doesn’t just weaken strongholds—He demolishes them completely, tearing down lies and replacing them with God’s truth.

v. 5a – “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God...”

Whose arguments and opinions? Paul is speaking broadly: any reasoning, idea, or worldview that sets itself against God’s truth.

- For Paul, this included the accusations and criticisms spoken against him.
- For us, it includes cultural philosophies, false teachings, and even the negative words we’ve internalized about ourselves.
- Arguments (Greek: *logismos*) = rationalizations or reasoning that oppose God’s truth.

- Lofty opinions (Greek: *hypsōma*) = prideful or arrogant thoughts that exalt themselves above God's Word.
- Point: These arguments can come from critics, from culture, or even from within us when we believe lies instead of God's promises.
- **Takeaway: The Spirit empowers us to demolish every idea — whether external or internal — that sets itself against the knowledge of God.**

v. 5b – "...and take every thought captive to obey Christ."

- To "take captive" (Greek: *aichmalōtizō*) = military term for leading a prisoner at spearpoint.
- Paul says every thought must submit to Christ's authority.

Point: Victory begins in the mind. The Spirit teaches us to replace lies with God's truth (John 8:32).

Takeaway: Winning spiritual battles means submitting our thoughts to Christ and letting His Word define reality.

Application – How Divine Power Destroys Strongholds, Arguments, and Lofty Opinions

Paul says divine power doesn't just manage struggles — it demolishes strongholds, arguments, and lofty opinions. But when something is torn down, it must be replaced with God's truth or the lie will return. Here's how:

1. By Exposing the Lie (Strongholds)

- Strongholds are internal fortresses built on lies we've believed and internalized.
- *John 16:13* – "When the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth."

2. By Confronting Arguments (False Reasonings)

- Arguments are rationalizations and excuses we or others use to resist God's truth.
- Divine power tears them down by showing that God's wisdom is greater than human reasoning.
- *1 Corinthians 1:25* – "The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

3. By Pulling Down Lofty Opinions (Prideful Thoughts)

- Lofty opinions are prideful ideas that exalt themselves above God's Word—whether cultural worldviews, false teaching, or negative labels spoken over us.
- Divine power humbles these opinions and brings them under Christ's authority.
- *Isaiah 2:11* – "The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled."

4. By Breaking the Chain of Agreement

- Strongholds, arguments, and lofty opinions gain power because we agree with them.
- Divine power breaks that agreement and brings our thoughts into obedience to Christ.
- *Amos 3:3* – "Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?"

5. By Replacing Lies with God's Word

- Destruction is not enough — we must rebuild with truth.
- Each stronghold torn down must be replaced with Scripture so our minds are renewed.
- *Ephesians 6:17* calls the Word of God the "sword of the Spirit."

6. By Taking Every Thought Captive

- We have divine power to capture every thought and align it with God's Word.
- When our thoughts are brought into obedience to Christ, our lives naturally begin to change.
- *2 Corinthians 10:5* – "...take every thought captive to obey Christ."

Summary:

Divine power destroys:

- Strongholds = internal lies we've believed. -
- Arguments = false reasonings that resist God's truth.
- Lofty Opinions = prideful thoughts and cultural/worldly beliefs that exalt themselves above God.

And when those are destroyed, the Spirit replaces them with God's Word and gives us power to take every thought captive — so that truth rules our minds, and our lives are transformed.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do human weapons (willpower, self-help, positive thinking) fall short in tearing down strongholds?
2. Have you experienced the Spirit tearing down a stronghold in your life? What did that look like?
3. What does it mean in practical terms to “take every thought captive to obey Christ”?

Closing Prayer

“Holy Spirit, thank You that You have given us weapons that are mighty through God. We ask You to tear down every fortress of lies, fear, shame, and pride in our lives. Help us to take every thought captive and walk in the freedom that is ours in Christ. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”