



Reflections and Revelations Newsletter
(December 19, 2013)

BRINGING OUR THOUGHTS TO CHRIST¹

2 Corinthians 10:4-5, “⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, ⁵casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” (NKJV).

Not long ago, the Holy Spirit revealed to me, we have been interpreting verse 5 incorrectly. For years, we have been trying to take our thoughts captive, but the verse says we are to **bring** our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ. As we have since learned, the concepts of “bringing” and “taking” are two different concepts. Recently, another group member and I sat down and explored the difference in these concepts.

Imagine before you a piece of paper. That paper represents a thought--any thought that causes you to disobey rather than to obey God. Now, imagine you pick up that piece of paper and hold it in your hand. You have now taken that thought captive, and you carry it with you everywhere you go. Since that thought is still with you, you remain in a constant battle with it each time it rises to the forefront of your mind, and rise it will! As a result, even though you think you are fighting the thought, you are in reality entertaining it and giving the thought increased power in your life! Therefore, rather than taking the thought captive and overcoming it, IT takes YOU captive and overcomes you! So, let's put down that piece of paper and start over.

Now, imagine you pick up that piece of paper; you walk over to your Bible and place it within God's Word. This action symbolizes “bringing” your thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, instead of “taking” it captive. The difference being, when you bring the thought to the Word of God, you are now able to examine that thought against what God's Word says about it. But, how do we do examine our thoughts?

Examining our thoughts begins with a closer look at 2 Corinthians 10:4-5. During our discussion, we identified the four different components found within these verses: **strongholds** (a fortress to keep others out and a prison to keep us in),² **imaginations** (arguments that cause us to debate against God's Word), **high things** (anything that is more important to us than obeying God's Word), and **thoughts** (our perceptions). Going forward, however, rather than imagination, we will use **argument**, and

¹ This newsletter is a continuation of our “I See Me – Follow Up” study (October 30, 2013). It expands upon what we learned that night. Meeting Notes from that evening can be obtained from the website (www.wow2women.com) on the Meeting Notes tab under the Armor of God study drop down menu.

² Rick Renner, *Dressed to Kill: A Biblical Approach to Spiritual Warfare and Armor*, (Tulsa: Teach all Nations, 1991).

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perception rather than thought, because these words seem to better convey the English meaning of the original Greek words. Also, during our discussion, we noticed these four components are progressive.

During the rest of our discussion, we captured an image of what it looks like to bring our thoughts to Christ. Our image began with a box, but based on what we learned that day, I believe the box will eventually transform into something else that better represents how the stronghold is formed. For now, the box we began with represents a stronghold in our mind, and within this box are perceptions, high things, and arguments we have given audience to. For example, someone says or does something that evokes an unpleasant feeling associated with an unpleasant memory. This memory creates a **thought (perception)** in our mind about our current experience and the person or persons involved. Rather than bring this perception to the Word for closer examination, we not only ponder it, but we also respond to it in a way that is not obedient to God's Word. As we ponder our thought, the pain of our experience becomes increasingly more important to us than obeying God's Word. Our pain, thus, becomes a **"high thing"** in our life, for it has exalted itself above our obedience to God, thus becoming an idol in our heart. Over time, when faced with the same or similar situations, we continue to respond based on the pain we feel. After all, we are hurting! We have a right! They should not have treated us that way, etc.! But ... Each time we justify our actions and defend our pain, we create an **argument** that also exalts itself against the knowledge of God ... until ... eventually ... a **stronghold** is formed! In other words, perceptions create high things better known as idols; idols create arguments; and arguments create strongholds! Short version: perceptions → high things → arguments → strongholds!

However, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 teaches us how to free ourselves of the strongholds that have formed in our mind. First, we must pull it down. How? We pull our thoughts from our mind to our heart, so we can examine them against the seeds of God's Word we have planted therein. During our examination, we **MUST** choose to minimize the thought and maximize the Word! For those who are good at self-examination, there are four questions you can ask yourself about any thought you are having:³

- **Is it truth?** The only way it can be truth is if it's found in God's Word or aligns with God's Word and His character.
- **Is it love?** The T entitled, "Love God's Way" outlines how God defines what love is and what it isn't.
- **Is it wisdom?** The T entitled, "Godly Wisdom" outlines how God defines Godly wisdom and worldly wisdom.

³ All Ts referenced in this newsletter are located on the Documents page of the website (www.wow2women.com) in the Individual T-Times drop down menu.

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- **What behavior is my thought producing?** Sometimes, it's hard to determine if our thought is truth, love, or wisdom, but we can always judge our thoughts by its accompanying behavior. The T entitled, "God vs World" outlines how God defines works of the flesh and fruit of the Spirit. If our thought is not producing the fruit of the Spirit, we may be dealing with a perception, high thing, argument, or stronghold. We must also be mindful, because the devil can twist God's Word in our minds to create a stronghold. Remember, he used the Word to try to tempt Jesus in the wilderness (Luke 4:9-12), but Jesus responded according to God's character and not according to the devil's schemes!

However, if we find it difficult to self-examine or if we're faced with a particularly challenging situation, a more in-depth list of questions is in attachment 2. Regardless of which set of questions we use, a thorough self-examination can help prevent the development of or blast a hole in any stronghold IF we are honest with ourselves in light of what the Word reveals!

Once our self-examination is complete, our next step is to pull our thoughts from our heart to our feet, for the feet represent our walk and the choices we make! In other words, what we walk out with our actions is determined by our faith! Or, as James 2:20 says, "faith without works is dead"! Thus, a quick summary of how to pull down a stronghold is 1) we pull our thoughts from our mind to our heart 2) we examine our thoughts against the seeds of God's Word in our heart, and 3) we pull down the result of our examination to our feet, so we can walk out what we have learned. If we have successfully obeyed 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, rather than standing on what we think and feel, we are now standing on God's Word. Consequently, once we have demolished the stronghold, we must know what Word we are standing on.

The best visual image I have ever seen of standing on God's Word was during a teaching given by Pastor Olin Holly at Victory World Church in Norcross. As Psalm 119:105 teaches, the Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Thus, with lights dimmed, one spotlight was shining on his feet. This spotlight represented the Word of God. As the spotlight moved, he stepped into the light, following where the light led. Similarly, just as Pastor Holly followed the path illuminated by the spotlight, we are to follow the path illuminated by God's Word! Had Pastor Holly lost his focus and strayed from the light of his path, he could easily have come to harm. Likewise, we must stay focused on the light, because if we look into the darkness we can lose sight of our path! In other words, if we don't stay focused on the Word and what it tells us to do, but allow circumstances to distract us, we WILL come to harm! But, if we step where the Word tells us to step, with faith and patience, we will eventually produce good fruit!

Hence, the process of bringing every thought into the obedience of Christ begins in our mind and ends with our feet! We must first be willing to examine every thought we are entertaining. Are we allowing our perceptions to cloud our thinking? Has a perception

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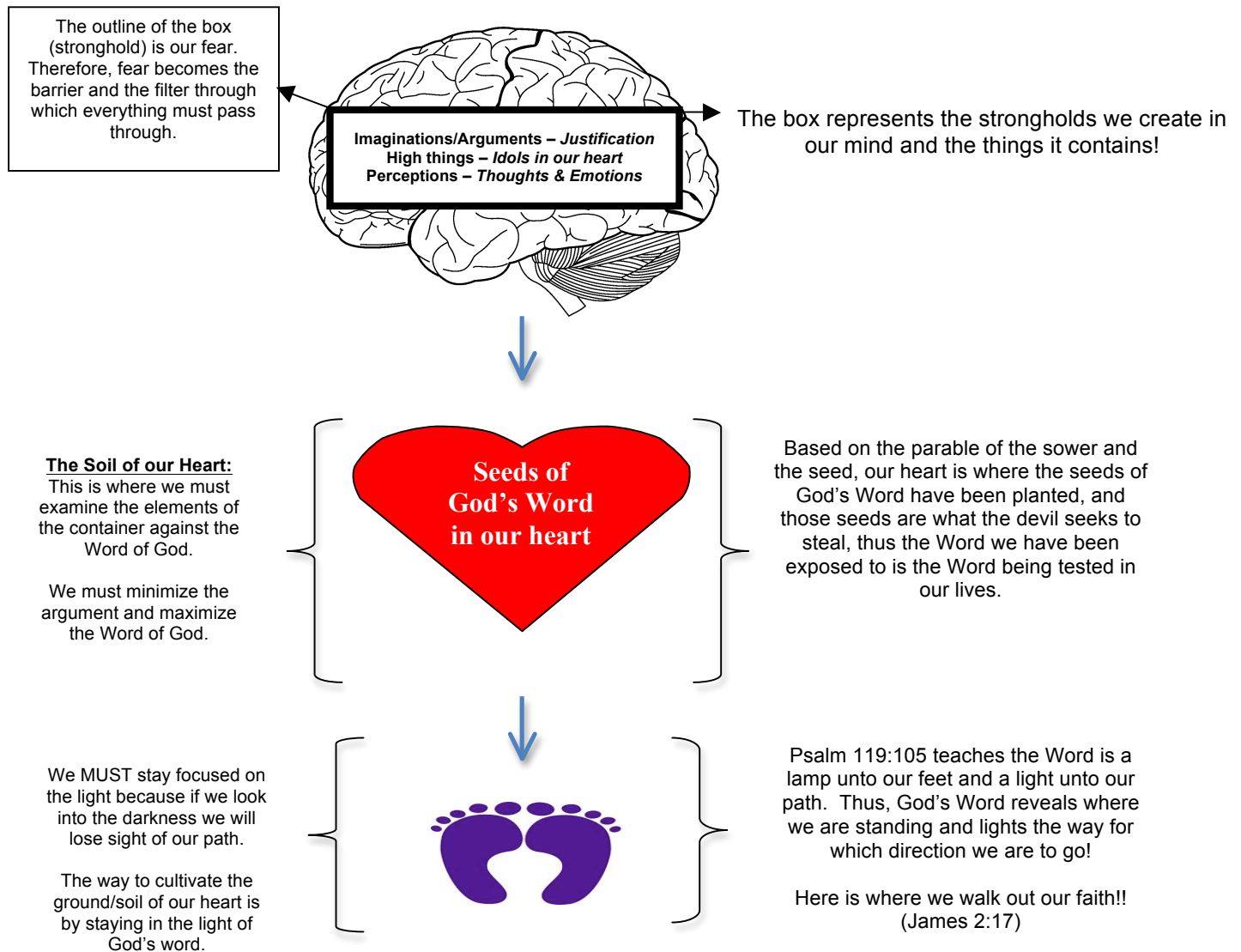
developed into a high thing that is now more important to us than obeying God's Word? Has a high thing caused us to argue against what God's Word says, causing us to justify and defend our actions rather than obey God? Have we allowed our perceptions, high things, and arguments to create a stronghold in our mind? Once we have determined WHAT we are thinking, we can then examine those thoughts against the seeds of God's Word planted in our heart! What we do with the results of our examination will determine what we truly believe. If we are standing on God's Word, we will "walk out" our faith by being obedient to God. If we are still standing on our thoughts, feelings, and emotions, we will "walk out" our fear, doubt, and unbelief. The choice is ours: obedience or disobedience; light or darkness.

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ATTACHMENT 1: Visual Image for Bringing Our Thoughts Captive to the Obedience of Christ



Summary: As we bring our thoughts from our mind to our heart, we are able to examine them against the seeds of God's Word planted in the soil of our heart. This examination and what we discover reveals what we are standing on: God's Word or something else! If we are not standing on God's Word, we bring our thoughts into the obedience of Christ by choosing to obey God and walk in faith rather than disobey God

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by walking in fear, doubt, or unbelief. If we follow the Word, we will walk in the light, but when we stray from the Word, we walk in darkness and lose our way!

ATTACHMENT 2: Bringing Our Thoughts to Christ

Enter one specific thought you would like to process through the Word of God

Thought:

Directions: First, read the question, then read the Bible verse(s) associated with that question. Next, answer each question about the thought based on what you learned from the Bible verse(s) you read. Do not try to find an answer to the thought. Merely circle the appropriate answer based on your reading and record what you found in the Bible that led to your answer (i.e. the verse in the Bible that responds to your thought, the reason why your thought is or is not wisdom, the type of faith you are hearing with, etc).

Question	Answer (Circle One)	Result (Biblical Reference)
1. Is what I'm hearing the Word of the Lord? (Psalm 33:4)		
a. Can I find this thought in the Bible?	Yes/No	
b. Does it bring healing? (Psalm 107:20)	Yes/No	
c. Does it bring life or death? (Deuteronomy 30:19)	Life/Death	
d. Is it love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8 or the "Love God's Way" T)	Yes/No	
2. Is my thought Godly wisdom? (Psalm 31:56) (James 3:13-17 or the Godly Wisdom T)	Yes/No	
3. What kind of faith am I hearing with? (Hebrews 11:1) (Hebrews 10:39 and The Just Live by Faith T)	No faith Faith Little Faith Great Faith	
4. Am I being diligent in my pursuit of God with my thought? (Hebrews 11:6)	Yes/No	
5. Am I using carnal weapons to fight in the flesh (2 Corinthians 10:3)		
a. Am I fighting against a person or against unseen spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:12)	Person Spiritual Forces	
b. Is what I am thinking a stronghold, an argument, high thing that is exalting against the knowledge of God, or a thought that is not obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:4-6)	Stronghold Argument High Thing Thought	
c. Is this thought creating godly behavior or worldly behavior (Galatians 5:19-25 or God vs the World T)	Godly Worldly	
6. Is WHAT I am hearing something I need to give audience to? (Mark 4:24)	Yes/No	