

Condemnation Robs You

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As I was ministering a prayer line at the close of a service recently, I noticed a tactic that the enemy uses on people was surfacing again. It's one of his favorites, so I wasn't surprised to hear the Lord minister words of encouragement to people in the line.

This tactic is condemnation, and one of its fruits is the feeling of "unworthiness." I first started to recognize this in the early days of my walk with God. Back then, I did not understand righteousness, but I came to a place where I realized that the flesh had a hold on my mind. This hold would torment my thinking to the point where I did not know whether or not I was right with God.

The devil, working through the flesh, robbed me of one of the greatest blessings that a person could possibly have - that deep-seated sense of security and inner peace that comes to a person who knows they are right with God!

The last thing the devil wants is for us to find out that God has made everything Heaven has available to us through the right standing that Jesus has given us, which is righteousness.

So the devil will taunt and taunt a person to sin and, when the pressure gets so bad that they are tempted to give in, he will then badger them with condemnation and say, "See, you are not right with God! If you were right with God, then why are you still tempted to give in to sin? There is something wrong with you. God will never hear your prayers."

Let me assure you: This war that I have just described does not come forth from a born-again spirit. It is a product of Satan's attack against the flesh.

It does not matter how hard the devil tempts, nor does it matter how much the flesh wants to give in. It has nothing to do with our right standing with God, and the quicker we realize that one of our greatest defenses against the flesh is to totally understand its operation, then the better off we are going to be.

Most of us have learned how to survive against the devil and the flesh to the degree that we have made up our minds that we are going to stay saved and serve God no matter what comes our way. The problem is that, even though we determine to stay saved, at times we still allow the devil to put a ceiling on what we will or will not DO FOR God. Or, for that matter, a ceiling on what we will or will not RECEIVE FROM God.

The way the devil does this is by tormenting a person's mind with guilt and condemnation – especially in the area of their shortcomings - until he actually builds a stronghold into their thinking of how unworthy they are.

A person in this condition knows that God can do anything. The only problem is, the devil uses the flesh to subtly convince them that God can do anything BUT He just will not do it for them.

For every problem we encounter, God always has an answer, and He provides one in Second Corinthians 10:4-5: *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

Notice that the weapons we need to fight this kind of war are not natural weapons but supernatural. In fact, the fourth verse says, mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

At first I did not understand what these strongholds were. In fact, I could not help but wonder what kind of strongholds could be so powerful that it would actually take what the Word labels as the "mighty weapons of God" to pull them down. Then finally it dawned on me!

The strongholds Paul was talking about were in the next verse: Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. You see, an imagination is a system of thought, or the way a person thinks, that is empowered by emotions.

So the strongholds, imaginations, and high things we are actually pulling down are the systems of thoughts that the devil has exalted above the Word and knowledge of God.

Because Satan knows that God has given us born-again believers power over all his power, he realizes that the only chance he has against us is to deceive us into accepting our own defeat. The only way he can do this is by continually hammering at us with his own systems of thought - invoking our emotions - until, instead of being transformed by the renewing of our mind, we stay conformed to this world.

One area the devil particularly likes to attack is the call of God on our life. Every person has a call from God. Not everyone is called to preach, but whether they are called to be an apostle, prophet, teacher, or workings of miracles, gifts of healing, helps, governments, or diversities of tongues, the truth is: **GOD HAS CALLED EVERY PERSON TO FILL ONE OF THESE OPERATIONS.**

The problem is, the devil knows you have been called to fulfill one of these operations, too, and he is not going to walk into your life dressed in proverbial horns and a tail and say, "Pardon me while I rob you of your blessings and ministry!"

No, he is too smart for that. But what he will do is build a stronghold in your life by using imaginations until he has replaced the Word of God and the call of God on your life with an operation of the flesh!

In order for the devil to keep you defeated in any area of your life, he literally has to build a stronghold in your thinking. This stronghold might be "how unworthy I am" or "I know God can prosper me but..." or "I know He hath borne my sickness and carried my pains but..." or "I know there is sin in my life but I just cannot help it..."

In each of these cases, the stronghold could be so powerful that even though the person might know what the Word of God says, the Word cannot work in their lives. Why? Because it keeps running

into a fortress - a stronghold - made up of systems of thoughts that have become so powerful, they become the HIGH THING that has exalted itself against the knowledge of God's Word. And instead of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, these systems of thoughts will capture this person and subject them to failure.

The most important weapon God gave us was the Holy Spirit. In order for Him to become the weapon that pulls down these strongholds, a person has to let Him replace the systems of thoughts that the devil has built with God's systems of thoughts - which is the REVELATION KNOWLEDGE of His Word. I call this process "transformation of the mind" and the apostle Paul talks about it in Romans 12:2: *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

There is even a battle trying to work this process in our life. You see, when a person is caught up in a war between their own spirit and flesh, a part of them wants to obey and a part does not. If they never do anything to strengthen the part that does want to obey, and never do anything to mortify the part that does not, then they may never win.

As we saw in Second Corinthians 10:4-5, God has not left us defenseless. He has given us spiritual weapons to use that we often refer to as keys or tools. I want to tell you about some of these keys and encourage you to take the offense against the devil's tactics. Whether he is attacking you now or has planted strongholds in your past ready to go into full bloom, you need to build yourself up and go forward with God no matter what.

Would you be surprised if I told you that a major key of transformation is praying in tongues?

When you pray in tongues, you are yielding your born-again spirit to the Holy Spirit so that you are praying prayers designed to be answered. You are also praying mysteries and divine secrets. And, in this case, tongues is a revelation gift - the Holy Spirit is actually transferring divine secrets (mysteries) INTO YOUR SPIRIT.

At first the revelation will show up in your life in the form of spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then, as you establish yourself in prayer, the mystery of everything that Christ is in you will open up more and more. The strongholds of imaginations and every HIGH THING that has exalted itself against the knowledge of God will then be pulled down and replaced by the SYSTEMS OF GOD'S THOUGHTS. The understanding of His Word and the anointing within you will stand guard, armed with the knowledge of Christ in YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY.

Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations but now is made manifest to His saints: *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you the hope of glory!* Colossians 1:26,27

If the Holy Spirit is able to illuminate the Word of God in you when you pray in tongues, it stands to reason that another key would be to meditate on and assimilate the Word into your life.

Meditating the Word is taking a book or portion of scripture (in context) and reading it over and

over. As you do this, your soul starts to assimilate what you are reading. It becomes a part of you, in a sense, and gives the Holy Spirit something to work with to transform your soul to the truth.

Hebrews 4:12 gives insight to the power of Word: *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

The Word of God is alive and powerful. It is truth that cannot be altered or changed, and there is no counsel against it.

Thank God that we have access to the written Word, whether it be a Bible printed on paper or brought up on a computer. But there are also valid words from God delivered through prophecy. We find this in First Timothy 1:18-19, where the apostle Paul was writing to Timothy: *This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:*

These verses are telling us a few things. One, that Paul considered prophecies to be valid. Two, that we can wage "good" warfare by them. And, three, we need to hold these words in faith, because those who have not done so have had their life or calling on their life become "shipwrecked."

I encourage you to take words that you received through ministry or prayer times and pray over them, spending time in God's presence and asking Him to show you if these words are truly from Him. Take the ones you are confident are from Him and meditate on these. Let them become a part of your very being. Remember, you are trying to create a new stronghold - one that consists of what Almighty God says about you, not what the world or the devil says.

This brings us to the next two keys that go hand in hand with first two keys. Praying in tongues will build up your spirit and the Word will give you something to conform to, but you also need to deal with the emotions that empower the strongholds. This is where private worship comes in - the kind where it is you alone with Him. This might be difficult at first when emotions rise up, but believe me, if you continue to press in past the emotions, you will enter His presence and His peace will begin to sustain you in the midst of any turmoil.

I recommend that you begin by worshiping for at least a half an hour a day while walking the floor, lifting your hands and calling yourself free and God's Word true. In breaking strongholds, I would use Ephesians 5:18-20 as a guideline. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;*

First, I would find the scripture or prophecies that described the victory over my stronghold. Then I would make spiritual songs out of them and minister to God with them in my private prayer closet, singing or speaking them over and over. For example, "I worship You and praise You, Jesus. I am a free because You came and set the captives free. There is therefore now no condemnation against me

because I walk after the spirit and not the flesh. Your Word is true and you are not a man that you would lie; your Word says I can have what I say and I say I am free..."

In addition to private worship, you need to confess the Word. When you pray in tongues, you minister to your spirit. When you fast, you are ministering to your body (the positional truth that you are dead in Christ), but when you confess the Word, you are ministering to your own soul.

The soul is where you find the battleground, because that is where the strongholds reside. When you speak God's truth, whether it is scripture or your prophecies, you are subjecting your soul to the truth. The Word and prophecies provide an image for your mind to conform to. As you speak the truth, you are not only declaring it to be so, you are reinforcing the image of truth to take root and grow into a godly stronghold. You will find that, as you confess the truth, you will change and your situations will, too.

I could also mention fasting as a mighty weapon of God because fasting, combined with prayer, helps cause strongholds to come to light in our lives more quickly. Tests and trials will also bring them to light, but I would rather not wait for the trials. Fasting and prayer allow the Holy Spirit to reveal those things hidden in darkness and to deal with them before the trials come. When we deal with them, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word, our character becomes strengthened.

So you see, we don't have to stay trapped by strongholds any longer. God, by His grace, has provided a way out and has even given us the Holy Spirit to help us on our way to victory. It's not works, but it is taking action and doing something about our situation with the weapons and tools He has provided.

Please, don't let the devil condemn you with imaginations and systems of thoughts that he has built in you. You see, the devil is really afraid of God's grace - he will even lie about it. He doesn't want you to think that a loving God really loves you and has provided for your victory.

God knows we will miss it sometimes, but just don't quit. Don't let the condemnation program begin; stop it as soon as you recognize this favorite tactic of the devil. And remember, you really are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus!

Your co-laborer and friend,
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