

FREEDOM DEVOTIONAL

ANATOMY OF A STRONGHOLD

AUTHOR

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ANATOMY OF STRONGHOLD

MEMORY VERSE

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.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

DAY 1

Today, let's approach this topic with open hearts, eager to explore the deeper freedom that God is leading us into. We look to the Holy Spirit to reveal how the core lies in our lives shape what we believe about God, ourselves, and others. Our hope rests in the Lord to guide us back to the truth, enabling us to walk in the freedom Christ has won for us. We press forward, confident that with God's help, we can overcome strongholds in Jesus' name!

PAUSE

Begin with a moment of stillness...breathe deeply and let God's truth settle into your mind, will, and emotions. As you slowly inhale, focus on God's goodness and faithfulness. And as you exhale, release any anxieties, worries, or fears that have crept into your day.

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REFLECT

Strongholds of human reasoning have been a challenge since sin first entered the world, as seen in Genesis 3. The enemy used a lie to distort human reasoning, leading to a false belief about who we are and who God is.

A stronghold is simply a pattern of wrong thinking—a fortress of thought that gives the enemy a foothold in our lives. But here's the good news: we don't fight these false arguments in our own strength. Many of us have tried and failed. Through our authority in Christ, we have access to divine weapons that have the power to tear down these strongholds.

Paul writes that our weapons have “divine power to destroy every lie and take every thought captive to obey Christ.” Teaching our thoughts means confronting them with the truth of God's Word. In obedience, we repent and align ourselves with His truth. It's not enough to simply identify the truth; we must also submit to it. This is the key to breaking free from strongholds.

ASK

Spend time with the Lord today and journal what you sense Him speaking to you. Here are some questions to guide your time:

- *What human tactics might I be using to fight against the lies rooted in human reasoning?*
- *Do I believe that God's weapons have greater power than my own will?*
- *Lord, where in my life have I not trusted You to provide Your power to overcome rebellious thoughts and actions?*
- *Would You reveal Your truth concerning the rebellious thoughts I've been holding on to?*

YIELD

Now, let's yield to the truth God has revealed and align ourselves with the new tools He's given us to fight against the enemy.

Lord, today I release my pride and human tactics in order to surrender to Your divine power. I lean into the spiritual weapons and authority You have given me to tear down every lie and stronghold You reveal as I continue on this journey of freedom.

Lord, thank You for not sending me into battle alone or without the right weapons. You have supplied me with the truth of Your Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to fight against a much weaker enemy. Help me to be sensitive to Your Spirit today as I walk into my home, workplace, and community. May I take every thought captive and bring it into obedience to You.
Amen.

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DAY 2

Today, let's continue with a willing heart, eager to explore the deeper freedom our God is leading us into. We look to the Holy Spirit to uncover the core lies in our lives that shape what we believe about God, ourselves, and others. Our complete reliance is on Jesus, our Savior, to guide us back to the truths that allow us to walk in the freedom He died for. We press forward, believing that with God's help, we can overcome strongholds in Jesus' name!

PAUSE

Begin by taking a moment to pause...breathe deeply, and let God's truth settle into your mind, will, and emotions. As you inhale, focus on God's goodness and faithfulness. And as you exhale, release any anxieties, worries, or fears that have crept into your day.

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REFLECT

As we walk through life, we all encounter various events. Some are positive, like celebrating a milestone or accomplishing a goal. Others are difficult, such as the pain of losing a loved one or facing a broken relationship. These events, whether large or small, can shape how we see God, ourselves, and others. In the anatomy of a stronghold, the event is often the starting point of believing a lie—one that can take root if we agree with it.

Traumatic events may come in the form of hurt, betrayal, or even generational patterns. They don't always have to be something you personally experienced. For me, a seemingly small event—being the only child in class who didn't meet a math benchmark—planted a lie that quietly impacted my sense of worth for years.

These kinds of events make us feel alone, unloved, and unworthy...which is exactly how Satan wants us to respond. But here's the truth: no matter what we've been through, no hurt or event can ever separate us from the love of the Father.

Romans 8:39 says:

"And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away."

This is good news about a good God—His compassion, care, and love for us are deeper than any pain we've faced.

ASK

God, who knows you fully and loves you without end, wants to identify the events that may have caused you to believe lies. He doesn't reveal these moments to make you relive a difficult time, but to expose the starting point of the lie and to heal it. Listen and journal what you hear as you ask:

- *What past event needs Your healing touch?*
- *How has this event impacted my belief about You, myself, or others?*

YIELD

As I yield to God today, I choose to believe that the events of my past do not have to shape my future. Even as I face new events today, I yield myself to the truth and to the tools I have been given to stand firm. Though the enemy may use events to create a wrong pattern of thinking, I remember the victory and authority I have in Christ to say, “You have no claim here.” I speak out today’s verse: “And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can’t, and life can’t. The angels can’t and the demons can’t. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can’t keep God’s love away.”

God, thank You for a love that covers every event—past or future. Help me rest in the truth that no event can ever separate me from Your love. Holy Spirit, walk with me today as my Helper, guiding me through any past events You reveal and any new challenges I may face. May I hold tightly to Your truth as I look to the day ahead. Amen.

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2 Corinthians 10:3-5

DAY 3

Let's continue today with hearts willing to go deeper into the freedom journey our God is leading us on. We turn to the Holy Spirit for insight, asking Him to reveal the core lies that influence our beliefs about God, ourselves, and others. Our complete reliance is on our Lord and Savior, who brings us back to the truths that empower us to walk in the freedom Christ died for. We press on, trusting that, with God's help, we can overcome strongholds in Jesus' name!

PAUSE

Take a moment to pause...breathe deeply, and let God's truth fill your mind, will, and emotions. As you inhale, focus on the goodness and faithfulness of God. As you exhale, release any anxieties, worries, or fears that may have crept in today.

"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."

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REFLECT

It only takes a fraction of a second for the enemy to whisper a lie—words like, “You’re worthless, you’re a failure, God doesn’t really love you, or you deserved that promotion someone else got.” Lies can be negative or seemingly positive. And they always distort our perception of God, ourselves, or others. That’s why Scripture warns us to be alert and on guard. 1 Peter 5:8 tells us:

“Be careful. Watch out for attacks from the Devil, your great enemy. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.”

The enemy’s goal is for us to become a victim to these lies, allowing them to create a pattern of wrong thinking. He uses events from our lives—both big and small—to whisper or shout these lies whenever he gets the chance.

For me, a childhood event led me to believe, “I need to be perfect and smarter than everyone else, or I will miss out on good things.” That lie quietly shaped my behavior and self-worth for years. But I’ve learned that these thoughts must be taken captive. When God identifies a lie and replaces it with His truth, the power of that lie is broken, and God’s truth empowers us to walk in freedom.

Verse 9a, following 1 Peter 5:8, tells us,

“Take a firm stand against him, and be strong in your faith.”

Our faith is a powerful weapon—one of the mighty tools Paul talks about to tear down the strongholds built on lies.

ASK

When we come quietly before the Lord, He is faithful to reveal the lies we've believed. Ask and listen, then journal what you hear.

- *God, what is one lie I am believing? (It may be connected to an event God has already revealed to you.)*
- *What truth must I stand on to overcome this lie?*

YIELD

Today, I yield to God and commit to being watchful against the enemy's tactics. I surrender to the Holy Spirit, asking for a sober mind to discern the lies and fight them with truth before they take root. As the enemy tries to whisper throughout the day, I will submit those lies to the perfecter of my faith and take a firm stand.

Lord, thank You for giving me Your Word to stand against any lie the enemy throws my way. Though the Devil may be a powerful enemy, You have already defeated him and given me victory. Holy Spirit, continue to reveal the lies I believe and give me the strength to stand firm in my faith today.

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2 Corinthians 10:3-5

DAY 4

Today, we continue with willing hearts, trusting God as we dive deeper into the journey of freedom He's leading us on. We rely on the Holy Spirit to reveal how the defenses we build can affect our beliefs about God, ourselves, and others. Our complete dependence is on our Lord and Savior, who leads us back to His truths and allows us to walk in the freedom Christ died for. With God's help, we can overcome strongholds in Jesus' name!

PAUSE

Take a moment to pause...breathe deeply, and let God's truth fill your mind, will, and emotions. As you inhale, focus on the goodness and faithfulness of God. As you exhale, release any anxieties, worries, or fears that have crept in today.

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REFLECT

If you're anything like me, your first instinct is often to jump to your own defense. Whether it's to protect ourselves from hurt, disappointment, or criticism, we tend to respond quickly—deflecting or building walls. We might bury ourselves in busyness, shift blame, or try to control the situation, but these reactions don't heal the hurt. In fact, they often cause more pain to ourselves and others.

Defending ourselves was never God's intention for us. When we place our trust in Him and walk in integrity, God Himself becomes our defender. He promises to be an enemy to our enemies and a shield around us. Our protection through the blood of Jesus is all powerful and steadfast.

Psalms 59:16 is a reminder of who our true defender is:

"But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love, for God is my defense, and the God of my mercy."

When we let go of our own defenses, He surrounds us with His perfect protection and shows us His love, revealing the lies and fears that led us to build up our own walls in the first place.

ASK

We can ask our loving Father to show us the defenses we've built up and the lies we've believed. Sit quietly, listen, and journal what you hear.

- *God, where have I been using my own defenses against You or others?*
- *Have I been seeking comfort or protection in someone or something other than You?*
- *What is the lie beneath that defense or source of comfort?*

YIELD

Today, I choose to yield by giving thanks for God's provision and His complete protection. He is my defense and my refuge. I release my own defenses and welcome the true, lasting comfort that is only found in Him. I renounce any lies that are revealed, knowing that these lies open me up to attacks from the enemy. I take hold of God's truth and rest in His strength.

Lord Jesus, thank You for Your work on the cross and the precious blood You shed that assures me of your great defense. Keep my life hidden in You. Holy Spirit, continue to reveal the ways I've been relying on my own defenses, and show me where they may have caused hurt to others. As I go about my day, remind me of Your goodness and surround me with Your presence. Open my eyes to see how Your defenses are so much stronger than anything I could build on my own.

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2 Corinthians 10:3-5

DAY 5

Today, we continue our journey with hearts open to the freedom God is graciously leading us toward. As we rely on the Holy Spirit, He reveals how core lies affect our beliefs about God, ourselves, and others. Our hope is in our Savior, who brings us back to His truths and enables us to walk in the freedom Christ has already won for us. We press on, believing that with God's help, we can overcome strongholds in Jesus' name!

PAUSE

Enter into prayer by taking a moment to be still...breathe deeply, and meditate on God's truth, allowing it to travel through your mind, will, and emotions. As you inhale, focus on the goodness and faithfulness of God. As you exhale, release any anxieties, worries, or fears that have crept in today.

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REFLECT

Whether we admit it or not, we often allow others' words and actions to shape how we view ourselves. Over time, as we build up defenses and seek comfort in other things, we begin living out of a false identity—one shaped by lies rather than by God's truth. When others encounter our defenses, they may respond by building up defenses of their own.

Consider a child who reacts in anger, lashing out with harsh words. The response might be: "You're just a mean kid. Stay away from me!" This reaction feeds the lie, dragging the child back to a place of hurt, reinforcing that false identity. And so, the cycle continues. To break it, our focus must be on the true source of our identity: Christ! 2 Corinthians 5:17 reminds us,

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

This means we no longer have to live according to the false version of ourselves—built on lies stemming from past events. The reactions of others become less significant, and Christ's view of us becomes the source of our identity.

No amount of willpower or attempts to change our behavior (or the behavior of others) will enable us to live in our true identity that Christ has paid for. Only through the help of the Holy Spirit can we fully recognize and begin living in the identity we've been given in Jesus.

ASK

Come humbly to the Father, who restores our true identity. Ask Him to reveal where others' responses are influencing you and journal what He speaks to you.

- *God, where am I allowing someone else's response to my defenses to reinforce a lie I believe?*
- *God, reveal your truth that stands against the false identity I have created.*

YIELD

Today, I choose to yield the weight I've given to the reactions of others. I surrender my false identity, built on lies in order to embrace my true identity—found only in Christ and what He says about me. I am not defined by my defenses or by how others see me. I am a new creation, where my past experiences are only a testimony to who I am in Christ today. I yield to the promise found in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Father, thank You for helping me stand against the false identities others may try to speak over me. Teach me not to focus on the reactions and behaviors of others, but instead to focus on Your response to me—truth wrapped in love. Holy Spirit, walk with me today. Guide me as I interact with others, and remind me of my true identity, anchored in You. Amen.

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DAY 6

Today, we continue with hearts open and willing to dive deeper into the freedom God is graciously leading us toward. We look to the Holy Spirit to help us uncover how the core lies in our lives impact what we believe about God, ourselves, and others. Relying completely on our Lord and Savior, we trust Him to restore us with the truths that empower us to walk in the freedom Christ has already died for. We press on, confident that with God's help, we can break free from strongholds in Jesus' name!

PAUSE

Take a moment to enter into prayer...breathe deeply, meditating on God's truth, and allow it to settle in your mind, will, and emotions. As you inhale, focus on the goodness and faithfulness of our God. As you exhale, release any anxieties, worries, or fears that may have crept in today.

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REFLECT

Have you ever had to write a research paper in school, making sure to cite reliable sources? I remember my teacher giving us a list of credible resources to use, but when I searched online, the easiest and most readily available one was Wikipedia—right at the top of the page. It seemed to have plenty of information, so I used it as my primary source. When I got my paper back, I was shocked to see an “F” marked on it! I hadn’t realized that almost anyone could edit Wikipedia, making it an unreliable source. I thought I was using good information, but I was building my entire paper on something flawed.

This is a lot like what happens when we build strongholds in our lives using the wrong source. If we turn to anything other than God for truth after an event—whether it’s our own reasoning, the opinions of others, or anything else—we’ve allowed the enemy to become our source of truth. It’s no wonder we get stuck believing lies!

When we look to something or someone other than God to provide what only He can, we’re stepping into idolatry. In Judges 10:14, the Israelites were doing the same thing. They were turning to other gods for help, and God called them out by saying:

“Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them rescue you in your hour of distress.”

But look at what happens next: the Israelites put aside their foreign gods and turned back to the Lord, and the passage says “He was grieved by their misery.” God doesn’t delight in watching us suffer the consequences of our misplaced trust. He loves us deeply. His desire is that we turn away from false idols and seek Him as our only source of comfort, so He can rescue us from the strongholds that hold us back.

ASK

Draw near to the Lord and ask Him to reveal what is truly shaping your thoughts and beliefs. Take a moment to reflect and journal what you hear.

- *God, who is my source of truth?*
- *Who am I allowing to define events in my life?*
- *Who is my source of security or comfort?*

YIELD

Today, I yield my false gods—the sources of truth that I have relied on instead of God. I refuse to let them define the events in my life any longer and choose to let God, in His grace, be my only source. I ask the Lord to show me the ways I have constructed my own defenses and to reveal the lies I’ve believed. I place in Your hands, Father, any agreement I’ve made with the enemy as my source of truth and align myself with Your promises, revealed through Your Word and Your Holy Spirit.

Oh God, I confess that I’ve sought my way over Your way and looked to other sources instead of the greatest source—Jesus Christ. I repent of this, and I ask You to deliver me from these false beliefs today, tomorrow, and every day that follows. Help me not to run after other gods in this world but to seek You alone as my source. Holy Spirit, help me live according to Your Word, fully surrendered to You.

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DAY 7

Today, we continue with hearts open and willing to explore the freedom God is graciously leading us into. We look to the Holy Spirit to help us uncover how the core lies in our lives impact what we believe about God, ourselves, and others. We rely completely on our Lord and Savior to restore us with the truths that empower us to walk in the freedom Christ has already died for. We press on, confident that with God's help, we can break free from strongholds in Jesus' name!

PAUSE

Take a moment to enter into prayer...breathe deeply, meditating on God's truth, and allow it to settle in your mind, will, and emotions. As you inhale, focus on the goodness and faithfulness of our God. As you exhale, release any anxieties, worries, or fears that may have crept in today.

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REFLECT

As we've explored the anatomy of strongholds this week, one theme has been clear: when we rely on ourselves and our own willpower, we're bound to repeat the cycle and reinforce our strongholds. If we want to break free and let God's truth bring lasting change, we don't need a change in behavior—we need a change of mind. This true solution to breaking free from lies and transforming how we view ourselves, God, and others is found in repentance.

You may have heard the term for repentance in the New Testament: *Metanoia*. This word has two meanings: “a change of mind” and “regret/remorse.” When Jesus began His ministry in both the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, His message started with a call to repentance. Similarly, in Acts 3:19, Paul calls us to:

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

The motives for repentance are rooted in the goodness of God, His divine love, and His desire for us to be saved and experience new life as members of His kingdom. True repentance involves acknowledging our sin, confessing it, and deciding to change our mind with a 180-degree shift in direction. When the Lord reveals a lie that has been holding us captive, we must repent for believing that lie and change our source to God's truth. This means exchanging our false source of security and comfort for the only true source—Christ.

To demolish strongholds, we must first recognize and turn away from the lies we've believed. We then invite God to reveal our sin and move forward by embracing His truth, receiving His forgiveness, and confessing our new direction in Him. God longs to bring us into these times of refreshing, where His truth brings freedom and healing.

ASK

Draw near to the Lord and allow Him to speak to you. Listen carefully, and journal what you hear.

- *God, what lie am I believing that I haven't fully repented of, allowing my mind to be transformed by Your truth?*
- *What first step are You asking me to take in true repentance?*

YIELD

Today, I yield my own efforts and willpower and trust in the authority You've given me to fight against strongholds. I yield my own limited understanding of repentance and ask You, Lord, to transform my heart and mind. I choose to yield to a new source of truth—knowing that my security, comfort, and identity come only from You.

Lord, thank You for Your forgiveness. Thank You for not abandoning me to my mistakes but for reaching out in love to bring me home. Holy Spirit, give me wisdom and strength to close the door to wrong thinking and tear down the lies that have been built up against Your truth. Help me always to hear Your voice, believe what You say, and obey You as I step into the fullness of who You've created and redeemed me to be. Amen.