

## Stronghold: The Fear of Rejection

The truth is, worries, frustrations, sorrows and hurtful memories can become strongholds. When this happens, they each add a depth of captivity, one placed on top of the other. This makes the strongholds more difficult to uproot, as they reinforce and strengthen each other. We can add many more strongholds to these. Among these could be bitterness, anger and unforgiveness - all of which can easily turn into strongholds. Of course, the worst possible stronghold among those we can face is unbelief. This is a failure to accept and trust Christ as Lord and Savior. Thank God, the power of Jesus's death, burial and resurrection is stronger than even this worst stronghold. There is power in the blood!

A stronghold is designed to be a one-way trap you easily enter, but from which you will have great difficulty escaping. The distinguishing feature of strongholds is that they are all built on a foundation of lies. To escape strongholds, it's necessary to understand their evil purpose. Historically speaking, a stronghold in biblical times was a place designed for protection to withstand any attack or unauthorized entry! Consequently, when they were tightly shut, it would have been impossible to either penetrate them or escape from them. Evil strongholds function in the same way. They result from a spiritual attack, using the sinful actions of uncaring people. This results in ungodly thoughts gripping your mind. They take a strong hold or tight grip on your soul (your mind, will and emotions). Strongholds fall to pieces when we believe God is who He says He is and that He will do what He says He will do.

Many of us live with the stronghold of rejection. Though we should look to others for reassurance and security, we are trapped in the fear they will reject us. A person's previous experience, and especially when they were rejected at a young age, leaves a mark, a stain of hurt on their hearts. As they grow older, these people dread the possibility they will again and again be rejected. This makes it extremely difficult to trust. Though they hunger for acceptance, their self-image has been damaged. They long for people to accept and love them, but fear the possibility that it will not happen. Though they might search for a sense of worthiness in the praises of others, they find it very difficult to accept any praise. This will cause people to withdraw and isolate themselves. It also causes a pattern of self-rejection or criticism of themselves. It causes them to withhold their love because they just don't want to get hurt. They will think to themselves, *"If I expose my heart, it might take another beating and I just don't want to go through that again. Too many times, people have treated me like I*

*was unworthy and condemned me.”*

The good news is that God accepts you just the way you are. He will never consider you unworthy. He will never abandon you. He will never reject you or stop loving you. Nothing can separate you from God’s love.

*Romans 8:15-16 (TPT)*

*“And you did not receive the “spirit of religious duty,” leading you back into the fear of never being good enough. But you have received the “Spirit of full acceptance,” enfolding you into the family of God. And you will never feel orphaned, for as he rises up within us, our spirits join him in saying the words of tender affection, “Beloved Father!” {16} For the Holy Spirit makes God’s fatherhood real to us as he whispers into our innermost being, “You are God’s beloved child!””*

*Romans 8:35, 38-39 (TPT)*

*“Who could ever separate us from the endless love of God’s Anointed One? Absolutely no one! For nothing in the universe has the power to diminish his love toward us. Troubles, pressures, and problems are unable to come between us and heaven’s love. What about persecutions, deprivations, dangers, and death threats? No, for they are all impotent to hinder omnipotent love,*

*...{38} So now I live with the confidence that there is nothing in the universe with the power to separate us from God’s love. I’m convinced that his love will triumph over death, life’s troubles, fallen angels, or dark rulers in the heavens. There is nothing in our present or future circumstances that can weaken his love. {39} There is no power above us or beneath us—no power that could ever be found in the universe that can distance us from God’s passionate love, which is lavished upon us through our Lord Jesus, the Anointed One!”*

## Triumph Over the Lie of Rejection

*Judges 11:1-3, 5-11 (NKJV) - Notice the words that are in bold type.*

*“Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, **but he was the son of a harlot**; and Gilead begot Jephthah. {2} Gilead’s wife bore sons; and **when his wife’s sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out...** {3} Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob;”*

The Teaching Ministry of Dr. Bob Abramson

**Jephthah was an outcast, shunned and rejected. This happened through no fault of his own. Perhaps, in some ways, the experiences we have had can be similar. Then, suddenly everything changed.** Jephthah's people made an attempt to call him back, but he still feared their rejection. He had been left with the bitter taste of being unwanted and even hated. He was hesitant to answer the call.

*“... {5} And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. {6} Then they said to Jephthah, ‘Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon.’ {7} So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, ‘**Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?**’ {8} And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, ‘That is why we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.’ {9} So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, ‘If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?’ {10} And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, ‘The LORD will be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words.’*

**However, when Jephthah finally made the decision to deny his fear of rejection and the bitter feelings that came with it, he was restored.**

*...{11} Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.”*

He stepped out with courage and in new hope. In doing so, he became a mighty judge in Israel. He moved ahead with his life and never looked back.

**The New Testament records another example of rejection.** In this instance, as Jesus was being taken away to be tried and crucified, a servant girl confronted **Peter**, asking if he was associated with Jesus. His denial showed his fear of the consequences. Peter feared the rejection he would suffer. Below, is the biblical narrative:

### Mark 14:66-72

*“Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. {67} And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, ‘You also were with Jesus of Nazareth.’ {68} But he denied it, saying, ‘I neither know nor understand what you are saying.’ And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed. {69} And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, ‘This is one of them’ {70} But he denied it again. And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, ‘Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it.’ {71} But he began to curse and swear, ‘I do not know this Man of whom you speak!’ {72} A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’ And when he thought about it, he wept.”*

**Though Peter rejected Jesus three times, the Lord never rejected Peter.** Mark 16:7 tells us that following Jesus' resurrection, an angel of the Lord instructed Mary specifically to tell Peter that Jesus had risen. Hearing these words, Peter knew that Jesus still loved Him, even though Peter had denied and abandoned Him. When Jesus later appeared to Peter, He confirmed that Peter would have much to do in God's kingdom. **God loves you. You are always accepted, never rejected. You have much to do!**

### Ephesians 1:6

*“...He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”*

We live in a throwaway society. Just walk down the aisles of the local supermarket or convenience store and look at all the plastic, cans and paper products that hold the food we eat. For the most part we consume what is inside **and throw away the containers**. So, now we set up recycling centers in an effort to capture back some of the enormous amount of rubbish we generate. Still, most of it slowly decays on the trash piles of our cities.

**This is what happens to people who have experienced being thrown away by those who should have loved and cared for them. They feel like they are living on a trash pile. (Because that's where trash goes, they are feel like they are nothing more than discarded trash – never valued as somebody special.) The reaction is to build walls to keep out the possibility of being emotionally hurt. The problem is that the same walls**

**will keep the hurt inside.**

**For too many people today, the same throwaway condition exists in their lives. Many of us have been treated like yesterday's trash.** People find themselves struggling to live amid the rubble of their past, and cannot find a way to release the feelings.

We are churches full of people who find themselves victims of other people's sinful choices. They feel stuck with all kinds of hurts. These good people are trapped, feeling buried under feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, shame, guilt, anger and unforgiveness. Many have tried and tried, but have failed to extract themselves from all of that garbage. Instead, they accept, deep in their hearts, that they are just not worthy of other people's respect. The world offers few solutions to the problem of picking up the pieces and going on with life. In a very real sense, broken relationships leave a mountain of emotional rubble to deal with.

If what I have described has burdened you, I have good news. God has made a way out of all this emotional wreckage. There is a proven path change - a change for the better! It is a biblically based path that will empower you to go ahead with your life. It will give you a new vision for your future and an ability to see it come to pass. This path is full of healing for your heart that only God can provide. It comes from knowing how God really sees you. Here is what His Word says about how He thinks about you.

*Psalm 139:16-18 (The Passion Translation)*

[The Psalmist is Speaking to God.]

*"You saw who you created me to be before I became me! Before I'd ever seen the light of day, the number of days You planned for me were already recorded in your book. {17-18} **Every single moment you are thinking of me! How precious and wonderful to consider that you cherish me constantly in your every thought!** O God, your desires toward me are more than the grains of sand on every shore! When I awake each morning, you're still with me."*

Whatever you have fastened your mind and emotions on has to change. You must find ways to reject the heartache of the past and allow God to give you a new beginning. Here's how you do this.

## The Key to Overcoming the Trap Your Feelings Put You In

What other people did to you in the past is real. You cannot deny that it was hurtful, and you really suffered. It was a very strong, evil spiritual attack. It was violent and the devil aimed it at your heart. As a Christian, you have been empowered by God, through the Holy Spirit, to counter this attack and the memories that keep you captured. To do this, your weapons must be spiritually based. The attack, at its root, was and still remains spiritual. Its battleground is the mind. God has given us a way to win this battle.

### *2 Corinthians 10:3-4*

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. {4} For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.”*

**You are not a victim. You are a victor. You are more than a conqueror and God is for you. He will never abandon you. Nothing can separate you from God’s love! He will take you far beyond your memories and hurts and set you on a path to your purpose. He is always with you.**

### *Romans 8:28-31*

*“And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. {29} For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. {30} And having chosen them, he called them to come to him. And having called them, he gave them right standing with himself. And having given them right standing, he gave them his glory. {31} **What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?**”*

When we have had enough of being victims, it’s time to become victors, overcomers by the blood of the lamb and the word of our own testimonies. What we choose to allow to stay in our minds and in our thoughts can become a weapon with which we can attack and pull down every evil stronghold that tries to keep a stranglehold on us. Changing our thinking is the way to change our feelings. It’s the way to tear down strongholds.

Here is the key. First, say “no” to the negative thought. If you need to say “no” again, say it again and again. Second, say “yes” to God’s love. You have a choice over who and what you allow to deliver the message... and the message itself. It’s a war. Cast down and take captive every thought or words from others that has held you captive.

The good news is that no matter how painful and devastating your past experiences were, the incredible, unfailing and unstoppable love of your heavenly Father will set you free. Stop surrendering to the memories and feelings. You can make a brand new beginning for yourself. It’s all a matter of choosing to surrender your memories and feelings to Christ. Press into your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. He will give you the ability you to turn from your past and move into new beginnings. It’s the way to kill the strongholds from the past and breath life into your future.

\* \* \* \* \*