

# Session 4 – Overcoming Strongholds

**Aim:**

In this session we aim to identify and help us under God to destroy those areas in our lives where Satan has a hold and it is hard for us to relinquish.

## 1) Who is our enemy?

Check out the following verses and describe what Satan is like. Matthew 4:3; Ephesians 2:2; John 12:31; Revelation 12:10; Job 1:9-11; Matthew 13:19

Satan is not like God

- Not like God – he is not creator, but created. All things were created by God.
- Not omnipresent – as a created being, he can only be in one place at a time, but does have demons working for him
- Not as powerful as God (subject to God’s control – see e.g. Job 1:12 where Satan has to gain God’s permission)
- Not all knowing – he does not know everything about us as God does (God alone knows the end from the beginning – Isaiah 46:9-10)
- Works through our minds, using temptation, accusation and deception as his key weapons – but he does not know our thoughts. (The magicians and astrologers etc. of Daniel’s time didn’t know the thoughts of the king, but “there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries.” (Daniel 2:27))

To combat Satan

- Know our position in Christ – seated with him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6)
- Do not be afraid – at his name the demons flee (Luke 10:17)
- Guard our minds – this is Satan’s favourite playground (Romans 12:1)

Satan is not an equal and opposite force to God

## 2) What are strongholds?

If God is God and so much more powerful than Satan, and if we have been saved by God’s grace, why is it that we so often succumb to Satan?

A stronghold is “A mind-set impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchangeable situations that we know are contrary to the will of God.” (Source: Ed Silvoso)

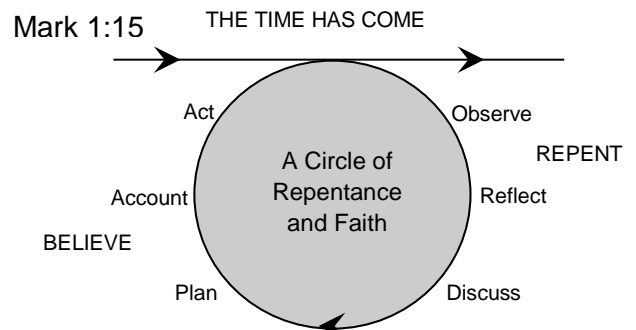
There are three Scriptures that specifically tell us more about strongholds: 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Proverbs 21:22-25; Matthew 12:29 (Who is the ‘strong man’ from whom Jesus came to deliver us?)  
 What is the source of these strongholds?  
 Matthew 15:18-19; Matthew 12:34-35

## 3) Effects of Strongholds

Strongholds have a major effect on our ability to look at the world as it really is (compare: Proverbs 3:5-6)  
 Strongholds tend to prevent us seeing what is really true because of how they make us feel. Strongholds always push us to making bad choices because they are based on false information (compare 1 Corinthians 10:12-13)  
 Are we willing to trust God to look at things the way that He says they are, whether they feel true or not?

## 4) Overcoming Strongholds

Repent: The circle of repentance and faith is a helpful tool. (Source: Mike Breen, 3 Dimensional Ministries)



Look at the different steps in the process:

- Observe – identify the lies we tell ourselves
- Reflect – find the truths in Scripture
- Discuss with God – Example prayer: (Source: Freedom in Christ)  
*Dear Heavenly Father, I renounce the lie that I am not good enough for you and for the position that you have put me in in my day to day life. I announce the truth that I am saved by grace and not because of works. I am your workmanship and that you have created me in Christ Jesus to do good works. I confess my sin to you and claim your forgiveness through the precious blood of my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen*
- Plan – every day go back to the truths
- Account – share with someone
- Act – go in the power of the Holy Spirit

## Going on with God

God wants us to live in freedom and to do so we need to live in that place of closeness to him of repentance and faith. Get into the habit of working through the circle of repentance and faith on a regular basis

## Overcoming unhealthy fear and anxiety

(Source: Freedom in Christ)

The next two pages are essentially for you to work through on your own. However, in your groups first of all work through the principles together and then set time aside to do your personal work.

Some of the biggest strongholds are those caused by fear and anxiety.

Jesus said, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ... So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"... But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." (Matthew 6:25-34 excerpts)

Paul writes, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6)

Fear and anxiety come from Satan. Adam and Eve experienced their first fear after they had sinned and they hid themselves from God. Fear and anxiety drives us away from God.

a) Analyse your fear under God

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*I come to You as Your child. I put myself under your protective care and acknowledge that You are the only legitimate fear object in my life. I confess that I have been fearful and anxious because of my lack of trust and unbelief. I have not always lived by faith in You and too often I have relied on my own strength and resources. I thank You that I am forgiven in Christ.*

*I choose to believe the truth that You have not given me a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). Therefore I renounce any spirit of fear. I ask you to reveal to my mind all the fears that have been controlling me. Show me how I have become fearful and the lies I have believed. I desire to live a responsible life in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Show me how these rears have kept me from doing that. I ask this so that I can confess, renounce and overcome every fear by faith in You. In Jesus' name. Amen.*

The root of any unreasonable fear is a belief that is not based on truth. These false beliefs need to be rooted out and replaced by the truth of God's word. Take as much time in prayer as you need to discern these lies, because renouncing them and choosing the truth is a critical step towards gaining and maintaining your freedom in Christ. You have to know and choose to believe the truth in order for it to set you free. Write down the lies you have believed for every fear, and the corresponding truth from the word of God.

b) The next step is to determine how fear has prevented you from living a responsible life, compelled you to be irresponsible, or compromised your Christian

witness. Now is the time to experience God's cleansing through confession and repentance. (Go through the circle of repentance and faith for every fear that you have).

### **Fear Finder:**

Analyse your fears and anxieties under God's authority and guidance

Identify all fear objects (i.e. what you are afraid of)

When did you first experience each fear or anxiety?

What events preceded that first experience?

What are the lies behind each fear or anxiety?

Determine the ways you have been living under the control of fear rather than living by faith in God.

How has fear or anxiety:

- Prevented you from doing what is right and responsible?
- Compelled you to do what is wrong and irresponsible?
- Prompted you to compromise your witness for Christ?

Confess any active or passive way in which you have allowed fear or anxiety to control your life

Commit yourself to God to live a righteous and responsible life

Prayerfully work out a plan of responsible behaviour

Determine in advance what your response will be to anything that cause you fear or anxiety

Commit yourself to carry out the plan of action in the power of the Holy Spirit.