

FACTSHEET

The Strongholds in our Lives

When we start out in life we are like a blank canvas. As we grow, the pages of our story is filled by circumstances, events, and words spoken over us. Many are good but often the negative things stick with us over time, such as destructive words, bullying, loss, divorce, and painful memories. Sometimes these damaging events cause us to turn to destructive patterns of behavior in order to cope.

- Overeating
- Damaging relationships
- Looking at things we know we shouldn't
- Addictive behaviors—smoking, gambling, drugs

These destructive patterns are STRONGHOLDS because they have a strong hold on us. Sometimes we turn to repentance (meaning we change our mind or turn away from them) and resolution, but the more we fall into these destructive patterns, the more they become strong and the more they hold us down, and we can't escape them.

If only we had a reset button to free us of these strongholds!

As Christians, *we're called to replace the things that aren't true (the lies from our past) with the things that God says are true in our lives.* And the more you replace the lies with God's truth, eventually you will be free of strongholds. Free from bondage that has held you down your entire life, and then free to do the things you're meant to do in order to have an impact in your life.

Hebrews 12:1-2 "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

If you want to mature, it takes practice and a commitment to distinguishing good from evil and truth from lies.

That is how you are transformed.

Romans 12:2 says that to be transformed, "do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Then we also have to resist the devil. James 4:7b, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." You do this by removing temptations that can draw you back to your strongholds and finding verses in the Bible to find out what is actually true.

If you persevere, you will tear that stronghold down! Essentially this is just a daily choice to walk free.

What Are Your Goals?

It's fine to have goals for your life, such as what you want to be or what you want to have. *But if we make the dream job, the big house, the relationships, be all and all, we set ourselves up for trouble because these goals will eventually leave us drowning in negative emotions.*

If God has a goal for your life, it must be achievable because God will never ask you to do something you couldn't do, and nobody can block it. So if you're feeling anxious, angry, or depressed, it may well be a sign that you have unconsciously developed a goal for your life that is not a goal that God wants you to have.

FACTSHEET

God's goal for your life is simply to become more and more like Jesus in character. Now, when you adopt that as a goal for your life, it can remove a whole load of anxiety, anger, and depression.

Your Takeaway

The more like Jesus that you are, the more your actions will reflect Him. If we want to know what Jesus would do in a given situation, we need to get to know Him by both soaking in the Bible and yielding to His Holy Spirit in our lives.

The Steps to Freedom in Christ

Step #1 – Counterfeit versus Real

Acknowledging past or present involvements in any counterfeit spiritual guidance, false religious practice, or negative thinking about God and His ways.

Step #2 – Deception versus Truth

Acknowledging areas where your heart has been deceived and recognizing any defense mechanisms or other hindrances to receiving truth.

Step #3 – Bitterness versus Forgiveness

Listing any and all persons by whom you have been offended or hurt in order to extend forgiveness and be free from bitterness.

Step #4 – Rebellion versus Submission

Recognizing any patterns of rebellion against authorities in your life and repenting of such words and actions.

Step #5 – Pride versus Humility

Addressing strongholds of pride or willfulness that have hindered your spiritual growth and maturity.

Step #6 – Bondage versus Freedom

Acknowledging areas where sin has ruled in your life, specifically sexual sin and addictions. There are additional special prayers for intense issues such as fear, anxiety, divorce, gender identity, abortion, suicidal tendencies, substance abuse, eating disorders, self-mutilation, perfectionism, and bigotry.

Step #7 – Curses versus Blessings

Recognizing generational patterns/curses and declaring blessings over your household and family.