

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL: STRONGHOLDS

Please add this to your current strongholds material.

How do strongholds function and how do we have to respond?

Let's take a look at the stronghold of finance.

Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:4-20)

Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (2 Timothy 9-10)

People come under the influence of this stronghold because of what it can offer them:-

- 1. The ability to use their wealth to control their destiny. (Rich Farmer.)**
- 2. The ability to use their wealth to control others. (Nehemiah 5:1-5)**
- 3. Ultimately it gains its power because of the "deceit of riches", the love of money and possessions. It plays into a natural instinct of the unsaved human character- to have, to have more, to own and to control.**

These temptations can easily lead to oppression and restriction on those who do not have wealth, or do not belong to this stronghold. Many businesses,

organisations and Nations have been dominated by this stronghold. Many in the Christian world have struggled against financial lack of resources, and the refusal of people to release into God's work. Those who won't be cowed struggle, and face the possibility of being destroyed.

We have to know how to tear the heart out of this and every stronghold. First we have to understand some things about them.

"Now the gates of Jericho were securely barred because of the Israelites. No one went out and no one came in." (Joshua 6:1)

"Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof and said to them, "I know that the Lord has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. Now then, please swear to me by the Lord that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death." (Joshua 2:8-13)

1. They are full of fear. (Mark 4:38)
2. Their strength is an illusion. Power belongs to God. (Mark 4:39)
3. Attempts to dominate and restrict can be crushed by the power of the Lord. (Goliath 1 Samuel 17: 48-54)

Armed with these realities, how do we destroy them?

The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath. Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah." So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they seized the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan. (Judges 7:20-25)

Ultimately victory is a spiritual issue, and we have to use spiritual principles:-

- * Fix eyes on Jesus. (Matthew 14:29-31; Hebrews 12:2)
- * Power of the word. (John 11:43)
- * Release the power. (Exodus 14:26-28; Acts 3:6-8)
- * Believe. (Exodus 14:13; Matthew 17:20)