

## Briefing Document: Stronghold: Lies or the Lord

March 8, 2026

### Executive Summary

The following briefing document synthesizes the theological and practical insights regarding "strongholds" as discussed in the March 8, 2025, presentation. A stronghold is defined as an entrenched pattern of thought that dictates a person's behavior and perceptions of God. These mental structures begin as "seeds" or "flaming darts"—simple ideas or lies—that, if believed, reinforce negative behaviors until they become a permanent part of an individual's personality.

The core analysis identifies three primary areas where strongholds form: lies about the nature of God, lies about one's own identity, and lies about the necessity of control in life. To dismantle these structures, believers must employ "divine weapons" rather than human strategies. This involves confronting lies with the truth of Scripture, taking every thought captive to the authority of Christ, and exercising faith to extinguish spiritual attacks. Ultimately, the document concludes that a stronghold can be either a fortified lie that protects a person from God's truth or a place of refuge where a person is protected in God's presence. The objective of the spiritual life is to tear down the former and run to the latter.

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### The Nature and Formation of Strongholds

A stronghold is not merely a single action but an entrenched way of thinking that produces entrenched behavior. It is a deeply rooted pattern of thought that shapes how an individual lives, responds to their environment, and perceives the Creator.

### The Progression of Entrenchment

Strongholds often begin quietly during childhood through the development of character traits, habits, and responses to social atmospheres. The process follows a specific progression:

- **The Idea (The Seed):** The enemy utilizes "flaming darts," which are often simple, subtle ideas rather than dramatic attacks.
- **Belief and Reinforcement:** If a dart is not extinguished, it is believed. Because belief shapes behavior, the individual begins to act in ways that support the lie.
- **Entrenchment:** When these behaviors are repeated, they become a habit that is difficult to change. The stronghold ceases to be just a thought and becomes a structure within the personality.

### The "Fortified Lie" vs. The "Place of Refuge"

The presentation distinguishes between two types of strongholds:

1. **Negative Strongholds:** These are fortified lies that protect the individual from God’s truth.
2. **Positive Strongholds:** These are places of refuge in God that protect the individual within His presence.

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Identifying Strongholds in Daily Life

Strongholds reveal themselves through recurring cycles and patterns that persist despite efforts to change. Identification is the first step toward dismantling these structures.

Indicators of a Negative Stronghold

- **Recurring Negative Thought Cycles:** Habitual fear, anxiety, or feelings of defeat.
- **Cycles of Sin:** Habitual behaviors or sins that return repeatedly.
- **Emotional Withdrawal:** Escaping through unhealthy behaviors (e.g., isolation, addiction, or defensive attitudes).
- **Defensiveness:** Becoming defensive when challenged or confronted about specific behaviors.

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Categorization of Stronghold Sources

Strongholds generally germinate from three categories of deception. Each lie is countered by the truth of the NKJV Bible.

Category	Common Lies	Scriptural Counter-Truth
<b>Lies About God</b>	God is distant, disappointed, or withholding good.	<i>“For in Him we live and move and have our being...” (Acts 17:28)</i>
<b>Lies About Self</b>	"I'll never change," "That's just who I am," or "I've gone too far."	<i>“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)</i>
<b>Lies About Life</b>	I must control everything; security comes from my own achievements.	<i>“Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it...” (Psalm 127:1)</i>

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Divine Weapons for Tearing Down Strongholds

The dismantling of a stronghold cannot be achieved through human strategy or carnal effort. It requires spiritual tools provided by God.

## 1. The Weapon of Truth

The Word of God acts as a catalyst for dismantling lies. As stated in *Hebrews 4:12*: “*For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” When Scripture confronts a lie, the structure of the stronghold begins to fail.

## 2. Taking Thoughts Captive

Believers are instructed not to be ruled by their thoughts but to rule over them by bringing them under Christ’s authority. This is derived from *2 Corinthians 10:5*: “*casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*”

## 3. The Shield of Faith

Faith is the choice to believe God’s truth over emotional or fearful impulses. According to *Ephesians 6:16*: “*above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.*” By rejecting a lie early through faith, the individual prevents it from ever becoming a fortified stronghold.

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### Evidence of Transformation: Case Studies

The source context provides real-world evidence of how strongholds are formed and subsequently destroyed through the power of Christ.

#### The Case of Steve: From Violence to Repentance

Steve was described as a historically violent and intimidating man who took pleasure in terrifying others. After a solitary experience where he felt compelled by a voice to read the Bible, he underwent a total character transformation.

- **The Result:** He sought forgiveness from those he had intimidated and became a servant to his community, demonstrating that even the most "mean-spirited" strongholds can be broken by God.

#### The Case of Mike and Charlie: Breaking the Grudge

A twenty-five-year estrangement between two brothers, Mike and Charlie, was fueled by a stronghold of bitterness and the refusal to forgive.

- **The Catalyst:** Mike recognized the grudge as a stronghold and chose to ask for forgiveness for his own attitudes, rather than waiting for the other party to change.
- **The Outcome:** This act of humility broke the stronghold, leading to the reconciliation of the family and the eventual baptism of Charlie and his grandchildren.

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### Conclusion: Running to the True Stronghold

The removal of a negative stronghold leaves a vacuum that must be filled. Man's predisposition is to replace one inappropriate behavior with another. Therefore, the goal is not just to destroy the bad but to run to the "True Stronghold."

The Bible defines the Lord Himself as the ultimate stronghold:

- *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."* (Psalm 18:2)
- *"The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?"* (Psalm 27:1)

Ultimately, an individual has only two options: to fortify a lie that protects them from God, or to run to Jesus, who protects them in God. Mature Christian practice requires the active identification and dismantling of these internal barriers to live fully as a "new creation."