

# How to Overcome the Sin Within III Strongholds!

Fred R. Coulter—December 8, 2012

Since this is around Christmas time, we are all reminded of those songs we would like to forget, but they play them everywhere. Part of that is *reinforcement of deception*. Why in every store do they have to have music?

I remember I went into our local supermarket and it was about nine o'clock in the morning. They had all this razz-ma-tazz music for teenagers going and banging and all that sort of thing. I told the clerk, 'What you need to do is look at the clientele in here that we're all gray-headed. If you want us to stay a little longer and spend a little more money, give us some smooth music in the morning; we're waking up. Play the razz-ma-tazz in the evening.' I think even McDonald's understands that, because I like to get my McDonald's senior coffee. I get it for half price.

In the morning they have nice soothing music and here are all the seniors gathered in there with their cup of coffee and their breakfast and everything. At least they did that. What all of this does, it points out how fantastic our minds are, how vulnerable they are and how much we retain *even things we don't want to retain* when we are given a reminder of it.

The song that I've had a hard time resisting this year is, *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year*. Satan gets out there and gets all of the great singers, the great voices, the great musicians, all of great talent and he thinks that he's really going to do good because God gets all of the weak, the sick, the uneducated of this world. Frankly ***you need to be uneducated by the world in order to understand the Truth*** because it's so permeated with Satan's teaching from birth right on through to the highest level of teaching.

## 1. Demon Possession

We end up with *strongholds*. Strongholds are very important to realize where they come from. They come from many sources. The strongest of the stronghold is demon possession. We have examples of that in the Gospels. Remember the one man who was possessed by Legion. No one could restrain him. Broke chains, broke fetters, wandered in the tombs. That was his home. No clothes, nothing could be done to him. Jesus cast out the demons after asking what his name was. He said, 'Legions, because we are many.' That's the strongest kind of hold that can be there.

In the world, they have institutions to put a lot of these people in, because you're dealing with a situation that in casting out demons, the one who has the demon must want it out. I've been in situations where we cast out demons. Along with that, one of the doors which helps open demon possession is bad diet, because you don't have the nutrients that give you the strength so you can resist.

There are some people who want the demons. You have 'ghost busters' and 'ghost finders' on television today where they are actually going out into haunted houses and saying, 'Hello, are you there?' *Yes, we're here. Come a little closer.* That's dangerous to do.

You also have a great variety of demons, murderers, serial killers, perverts, homosexuals; you also have those who are 'do-gooders,' religious, fasters—those who fast and beat the body. Most people don't have demons, but I'm starting from the worst case going forward. There is one thing that is true, demons ***must obey the command 'In Christ's name,'*** even if they are not in the Church.

Some cases, like with the Apostle Paul (Acts 20) with the son of the seven sons of the priest tried to cast out demons and they said, 'Jesus we know, Paul we're acquainted with, but who are you?' They jumped on him and beat him up and slashed him and tore off his clothes and threw him out the door.

There are demons who like to get close to people so that perhaps they can be saved from their fate. This is where you get a lot of the false Jesus 'religions.' Also, you have to understand that today more and more people are going to be influenced by demons and demon possession because of the multiplying of the occult.

God did not leave us defenseless, anybody—even not in the Church—can rebuke a demon's intrusion in their life in the name of Christ. Even someone not in the Church, if they recognize that it is demon activity, can rebuke it in the name of Christ. You can tell him, 'The Lord rebuke you, get out!' That's what it has to be.

Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven..." That is at the first resurrection. Many of those people will be reserved for the second resurrection. That shows the love of God, because He did not deal in their lives and they did not commit the unpardonable sin; therefore, they are not worthy of the Lake of Fire.

What they do when they are resurrected in the second resurrection is going to be another whole different situation indeed. We have the religious people who like religious things. We have religious demons that promote religious things.

Here's the contrast, last part of v 21: "...but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven." That is your greatest protection concerning everything of overcoming the sin within regardless of the intensity of it beginning with demon possession or Satan influence.

You can see by some of the movies and *especially* the video games that kids play, all of those are occultism, death, destruction, killing. All of them end up that way.

Verse 22: "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?'" That's getting rid of demons.

Let's see something else, Luke 9:49. This is actually within the New Testament showing us a beginning variety of Christianity already during the days of Christ.

Luke 9:49: "Then John answered *and* said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbid him because he does not follow with us.'" Not all things are restricted to the Church of God, because those who are in the Church of God are those who are called unto salvation and have the Spirit of God. But God does not leave Himself without witness in the world for those who are not called to salvation. You can see what would happen with this thing.

Verse 50: "But Jesus said to him, 'Do not forbid *him*, because everyone who is not against us is for us.'" Are there a lot of people out there for Jesus but not truly converted? *Yes!*

Let's see the parallel account here in Mark 9:38: "Then John answered Him, saying, 'Master, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbid him because he does not follow us.'"

What is the result of this? How did this start? When Jesus preached there were multitudes—correct?

- He healed the sick
- He cast out the demons
- They saw that being done
- They used Jesus' name

God honored the casting out of the demons, but He didn't call them for salvation, which then becomes a very important thing to understand.

With Truth and proper teaching, could people like that today come to the knowledge of the Truth and be converted and be baptized? *Yes, indeed!* Remember, the dividing line follows this:

- Sabbath
- Holy Days
- Passover
- repentance
- conversion
- Holy Spirit

All of those constitute the dividing line between Christianity of this world and the Truth of God. So you look at all of those who are for Jesus today, yet, they keep Christmas, Easter, New Years, and so forth. You talk to them, they are nice, they are wonderful people. They are kind, they give and help, and all of this sort of thing, *but they haven't been called to salvation.* In Matt. 7 when they tell Jesus, 'We did these things,' He said, 'Depart from Me you who work lawlessness, I don't know you. I never knew you.'

Why does God allow that? *So that those who really want God will go further and God can deal with them and call them!* That's why! Like some women were in their Bible study were saying, 'Only those in the Church of God, God hears their prayers.' No, that's not true. Why does God answer prayers of people not in the Church? *So that they might*—with that prayer being answered, knowing that it could only come from God—*seek more of God!* That's why. That's a witness. If they don't, it's a witness against them.

Verse 39: "But Jesus said, 'Do not forbid him, for no one who does a work of power in My name can easily speak evil of Me. And the one who is not against you is for you'" (vs 39-40). Doesn't say they are with you, they are for you.

Have you ever had grace and favor in the eyes of people in the world? *Yes, indeed!* That's what it's talking about here. So, the #1 stronghold is demon possession.

## 2. Occult practices beyond the holidays

That gets into witchcraft, casting spells, horoscopes, getting further and further from direct possession by Satan the devil. With the second one you have familiar spirits. Those who are witches deal with familiar spirits. They may not be possessed.

In that you have this: You have those demons who carry out the things as familiar spirits that do *evil things* and those that *appear to do good things*, but still keeps them away from God. so the ultimate purpose of it is still evil.

### 3. Strongholds then become what enters into our minds during our lifetime.

Let's look at some of the things that are very important. First of all, we've already covered in other sermons, especially in the book of Romans, that everybody has the law of sin and death by inheritance within them. *Only the Spirit of God can overcome that law of sin and death within.* Other things such as disciplining yourself, training your mind, can help you overcome some of those things, but it cannot override 'the law of sin and death.'

Because of that, here's what 'the law of sin and death' plus education do for us. Remember Jesus blessed the little children and said, 'Forbid them not, let them come to Me.' They are innocent because their brains have not been filled with a lot of nonsense.

#### ➤ Mild forms of occult and witchcraft

Today that's considerably different. Kids are raised on cartoons and kid's games, *which is the entrance of the knowledge of this world and mild forms of the occult and mild forms of witchcraft*, ala Walt Disney.

Look at how he started. Look at how it progressed down through the years to bring in more and more of the occult, more and more of good vs evil. Then we get down today, we have Harry Potter. Now, with Harry Potter then we have got kids getting into witchcraft, etc. It is a mammoth thing because of that. Children today are not as innocent as they were before the advent of the electronic media that we have today.

All human beings are born with the *law of sin*. All human beings are subject to death at any time from conception and birth and their last breath. Their last breath can come at any time. God is the One Who sustains us. However, let's use the example—and I like this one from William Tyndale: A newly hatched or birth-given snake—because you have those that lay eggs and you have those that give birth—the new baby venomous snakes may not be able to bite you and kill you with venom, but what is in their genes? *They are going to grow and become just exactly like their wicked parents* as it were full of venom.

Children you see right away the activation of 'the law of sin and death,' though they are innocent, but it's still functioning. They will steal, take toys, fight, lie and scheme at a very early age. Let's look back:

- Did you not lie to your parents?
- Did you not do things that they never, never knew of and you probably never told them? *Yes!*

- Did not they do the same thing? *Yes!*

Perpetually, every generation because of 'the law of sin and death.'

#### ➤ Puberty and sex

Let's add some growth to that. Let's come to puberty. The sex hormones begin coursing through the body and the mind and the imagination. That can be controlled if it is not exacerbated or magnified. Today we start teaching in the 'state schools' about homosexuality beginning in kindergarten. So, by time they get into high school and all these sex hormones are raging in their system, they have sex education classes and guess what's on their minds? *It puts sin within* and it locks onto the brain because the brain is made to connect the synapses, to connect thoughts, to connect sites, to connect instructions and put it together in a full range of potential activity in your mind.

#### ➤ Music and drugs

In light of that, Mark 7:20: "And He said, 'That which springs forth from within a man, that defiles the man. For from within...'" (vs 20-21). Though you are born innocent and know nothing, you have 'the law of sin and death' and the potential is there. This helps to explain why nice, sweet little children, when they are growing up and make the wrong choices, especially when you get into music, drugs, entertainment, they go bad. They know better!

I don't know of a single parent who said, 'Oh, it's okay to go out and take meth and heroin. Hey, that's great.' Now, there may be some today who will want them to smoke 'pot,' but it shows how absolutely degenerate the society has become, because now there are two states that legalize smoking 'pot' by allowing possession of one ounce of marijuana. It shows the absolute stupidity, the schizophrenia of human thinking.

We have learned how bad smoking cigarettes have been for the last 50 years. So now we've penalized smoking, taxed cigarettes, tell people don't smoke, it's caused lung cancer, caused ovarian cancer, caused heart attacks, so you shouldn't do it. Now the younger generation comes along and says, 'Oh, boy, this pot is really, really good. Are you stressed? Go home and smoke a joint. It's not like going home and drinking.'

You may become an alcoholic if you drink, but you may become a drug addict if you start with 'pot.' They're not told the TH-factor in marijuana causes the brain to shrink. Just like the toxins of smoking lodge in the lungs, the toxins of smoking 'pot' lodge in the lungs and in the brain and you soon become very subject to stupors, lack of

initiative, bad thinking, and addiction. That can be overcome with a lot of discipline and hard work.

Here's what comes out of the heart of men; remember what it says, 'Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.' Out of the abundance of the heart and the evil that is there, men produce evil things as well—don't they? *Yes!*

Verse 21: "For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts..." They're reinforced today by television, Internet, books, games, friends. You add onto it: *Satan is deceiving the whole world and the whole world* is like there's a great web and pall of deception around the whole world.

So, you get some of these younger people now and even at 13 they are so convinced of the world, having been brought up in this way, that the Truth of the Bible sounds absolutely insane. If they reach a certain point, their lives are messed up because of music, drugs, sex, and they cannot stand the thought of being told, 'You must stop.'

This is when I recommend when you have a rebellious teenager. I don't know how you are going to do it, but you've got to do it. No music, strict television watching, no video games, no cell phone, no texting. You get your mind into the book of Proverbs. That's one of the reasons we've done this video on Proverbs. You learn them! You study them! Because your mind is all messed up, the only way that you can come out of this is that you must **reprogram your brain with right thoughts and right behavior**. You cannot allow yourself any slip backs. Just ask any heroin addict.

I remember talking to a man and he said, 'I've overcome heroin.' I said, 'Good, I'm glad you did.' He said, 'But I want to tell you something. The urge for it and the craving for it is there everyday the rest of my life.' So, those who are involved in that need to understand: You need to repent of that and you have gone too far, and if you do not grab hold of your mind and change and begin to put into right things, you're in deep trouble! Furthermore, *do not blame anyone else* because that person may have introduced you to things, but you chose to say *yes* and now you've got a stronghold in there.

"...go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders... [See the progression? Isn't that the way it is? *Yes, indeed!*] ...thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man" (vs 21-23). The word there for *man* is 'anthropos'—which means *human beings*—men and women. That's how these things get in there.

➤ Humor

Why do all comedy shows eventually end up with some sort of sexual connotations? Then it goes from there. It can be drama. Look at the wonderful, wonderful production that Walt Disney put out, *The Beauty and the Beast*. What is he really teaching? *Bestiality!* How about the great, marvelous one, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs? Witchcraft!* You have all seen them—haven't you? What did the wicked witch say as she stood before the mirror? We could all say it together. '*Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of all?*' Teaching what? *Demon communication, witchcraft, poison apples!* You can get rid of your enemies with poison.

➤ Sex

I've heard several cases of both young men and young women, they get out on their own, they don't believe their parents, they have friends that are actively involved in same-sex activities and they are enticed to do it because they do not say *no!* Every individual is confronted with the thing to say *yes* or *no*. It's very difficult once you have gotten yourself into that kind of situation to say *no*.

But when it gets down to it, what did Paul write concerning sexual immorality or fornication? *He says flee!* That means *get up and run* because your brain's not working good enough to say *no*, so you better remove yourself out of there fast; otherwise you're going to be enticed. Once you are enticed and once you have gone through the experience of same-sex *sex*, the dynamics of the sexual response of the body become so great that they are convinced that it's right.

I remember reading the account of a 12-year-old girl who was a lesbian. She came in a 6-years-old doing the nice little dances and all of that sort of thing. Through the years gained the trust, all this sort of thing. Then they had a dance that they were going to do out of town and the parents gave permission to go with the dance instructor. 'After all, she was a wonderful, worthy woman.' She seduced the 12-year-old in lesbian activity and she is a proud lesbian now.

***These are things that are confronting people today!***

Whether the Supreme Court actually holds up marriage as between a man and a woman or not, sooner or later it's all going to come apart. Without God and without His laws, even people in the world, the only way they can come out of the things that they are doing is to obey God in the letter of the law at the least. They can modify their behavior a little bit. They can change certain things a little bit. They can reprogram their minds to a certain extent, but *they can never, never get rid of the stronghold* that's deep within.

The reason I bring that up is this. All of us know the things we went through growing up—don't we? *Yes!* Thankfully, they're all buried in the watery grave of baptism. Most of those things we have been able to forget. Once in a while you'll get a flashback. This is something that we'll talk about here in a little bit how to do that. All of these things come from 'the prince of the power of the air.'

Good comment was made that in growing up, those of us who are older, this was not that kind of a problem. It was there in a low degree hidden in the background, not like the problem that we have today. All of these things create *strongholds in the mind*. We'll talk about how to overcome some of those. The youth today have so many things pulling against them, plus the lack of education in school. They are taught to get along, go along, and sex is a wonderful thing.

Just like the ad that was put out by the Democrat National Party. This 13-year-old girl saying right on the ad, whether you're going to vote or not, 'we need to have women's rights. So, all you girls when you want to sacrifice your virginity—and there's a reason why God gave virginity—make sure you hook up with a good guy.' Right on national television. The Democrat National Party had the hardest time getting God back on the party platform plank in writing. When they did, they even had people booing. So, you just need to understand, in America we have an ungodly, Satanic government that is set to destroy and steal and rob and kill.

They have it very similar with healthcare in the United Kingdom and they're running out of money, so they have to cut back. The death panels have to make a decision. The decision that they have made in addition to letting older people go without any kind of service of all; so everyone who is older, you better start taking care of your life. You better quit thinking you're going to run onto the doctor and you're going to run on and get this prescription or that prescription. Most of the prescriptions that you have today, beyond some that do help in healing, they're going to kill you anyway. You need to find out what you can do.

But the decision that they made in addition to not giving service to the older people is that those newborn infants that are on life support, they cannot continue to afford to take care of them. So, they take them off the life support. ***We have a wicked and evil world, run by wicked and evil people!*** Hard to find anyone who is righteous even in the letter of the law.

Since we've covered the young people, let's get all of us old folks involved here and how do you overcome what's in there.

(go to the next track)

- What do we do when we're adults?

- How do we overcome strongholds, some of them going back to our childhoods?

Let's see the progression of what God does. The first thing that God does is ***let you wallow in your sins and you become miserable and things go wrong!*** You finally say, 'God, help me.' At that point, God will begin to deal in your life.

For those who are not called to salvation, they have to come to the point that they know that they need to change their behavior and do things in what we would call the letter of the law. When they make that change, that is *a* repentance, but not a repentance unto salvation.

Romans 1:26-32 lists all the evil, all the things that Satan perpetuates and perpetrates generation after generation. There is a *progressive degeneration* from one generation to another. As that happens, lawlessness becomes the law of the land. That's where we are today! They institutionalize sin. When you institutionalize sin the whole society gets on the *slippery slope of destruction*. Everything starts to come apart. That's exactly where we are in America today. We are going down the slide of degeneration and corruption to destruction.

The United Kingdom is about half way down that slide right now. We're quickly following. However, out of that, and out of every society regardless of the degree of sin, God calls people. How does He do it? Jesus said, 'Many are called, few are chosen.' ***The few who are chosen are those who respond to God!*** Now we're going to talk about how to overcome the sin within for those of us who are converted, in the Church for whatever length of time. Let's go back and see that God convicted us of all these sins and here's what He did.

We begin to see the things going on around us, Romans 2:1. "Therefore you are without excuse, O man... [Looking at everything there at the last part of Rom. 1.] ...everyone who judges *another*; for in that in which you judge the other, you are condemning your own self; for you who judge *another* are doing the same things."

- You see that it's wrong!
- You want to get out from it!
- You see the problems that are happening!

Verse 2: "But we know that the judgment of God is according to Truth upon those who commit such things.... [all the above listed] ...Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God?" (vs 2-3). That's why never compare yourself among yourself; those who do so are not wise.

Verse 4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?” God has to lead you to repentance. How does He do that? *The Spirit draws* (John 6:44)! Go back over the sermon, *The Holy Spirit and the Seven Spirits of God*. God draws!

Every one of us can look back at that time when God began the process. I can, you can, etc. Then we begin to understand that we need to quit sinning. We find that sin is *the transgression of the law*. We need to amend our behavior. God leads us to repentance, which is not only an acknowledging that *sin is a transgression of the law*, but it is also a very emotional thing that you go through too. God leads you to understand that ***the only way out of your circumstances is that you throw yourself unconditionally upon His mercy*** and then follows baptism.

We’re going to see some things that tell us *how to overcome the strongholds*. We will get more specific as we go along here in what we need to do.

### **Fruits of the Flesh:**

Galatians 5:16: “Now *this* I say, walk by the Spirit...” You need the Spirit of God to overcome. That’s why we have the series, *How to Use God’s Holy Spirit*. That comes through prayer, through study, and realizing and understanding that you have to yield your whole being to God, not just that part of your mind that you want to get rid of the evil, but your whole being—*commitment to God!*

“...walk by *the Spirit* and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (v 16). Just like we discussed before, where Job said that he did not lust after beautiful women because he made a covenant with his eyes. He made the determination not to let that happen to him. So, when you are baptized and receive the Spirit of God, you have made a covenant with God. He has given you His Spirit, the begettal, which is a start. You have yet to grow in grace and knowledge and overcome and begin resisting evil and changing.

Here’s what you find, v 17: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit... [The pulls of the flesh are there. Many different aspects of it: lying, swearing, cheating.] ...and the Spirit against the flesh...” Now you have something happening, because you have the Spirit of God: before conversion doing all of these things, you had no conviction of conscience, right and wrong. Now with the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of His Word, now God’s Spirit *brings to your attention the sinful thoughts* that are going on in your mind. That is God’s Spirit bringing it up ***so you can repent and get it cleansed from your mind!***

You have this inner battle. This is what Paul wrote about in Rom. 7, ‘the law of sin and death.’ He wanted to do good, but when he did good he got so far in doing good and then something happened. He probably lost his temper or he got mad or he was terrible in his behavior, whatever it may be, even converted. He said, ‘I don’t desire to do it, but I do.’ That’s a *stronghold*. We’ll see how he said to overcome it in just a little bit.

Verse 17: “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these things are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do those things you wish to do”—just another way of summarizing Rom. 7.

Here are the things that people have been brought out of, and the sins in their lives, called the works of the flesh, v 19: “Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness...” That follows almost parallel with what Jesus said. He said evil thoughts. That’s what we need to overcome. That way these other things will not progress.

Adultery, fornication and sex sins are the major problems of human beings—period—aren’t they? *Yes, indeed!* And lead to all kinds of problems, especially when children come around. This is why this evil society in order to restrain evil, must perpetuate more evil by saying ‘we’ll provide abortion service for you. We will provide contraception for you; go ahead and be as licentious as you want, but don’t burden us down with these unwanted children, because we don’t have the tax money to pay for them.’

That’s when things really get out of hand. That’s why when they took God out of the schools, they took Bibles out of the schools, they took prayer out of the schools, they took morality out of the schools, and by the license of the state ***taught evil***, as Rush Limbaugh says: ‘to the skulls full of mush. And taught them that evil was good and good was evil. That’s where the society is. We have to live in this society, so we feel very much like Lot. What did it say about Lot? *He was frustrated everyday with the conduct of those in Sodom.*

“...licentiousness, idolatry...” (vs 19-20). The idolatry that we fight is not an idol in our house. The idolatry we fight are ***the idols in our minds***: our thoughts, our ideas, our greatness. ‘God had to call me because I’m so good.’ *Phooey!* I’ve heard people even say that. Never fails! They end up with a great trial to realize *God called them because they were sinners!* Once you have idols in your mind, maybe it can be music or whatever. It can be another person. Do you have stalkers? *Yes, stalkers have an idol of this person in their mind!* They’ve got to have this

person. They are obsessed, a fixation, a *stronghold*. That's an extreme.

Come back here to Ezekiel 14 and we will see God wants us to get rid of these things. As we read this, this will help us understand the lame excuse that the Catholics have when you point out that they worship idols. 'Oh, no, we just venerate them.' God says don't make them. How did they get in there?

Here's the idolatry we need to overcome, right here. What does self-idolatry do? What happens with every one of these 'improve yourself' programs to tell yourself how good you are? What does it do? *It builds your own self up as an idol in your mind!*

Ezekiel 14:1: "And some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I at all be inquired of them?'" (vs 1-3).

You're coming to a Holy, righteous God! No man is going to command God or tell Him what to do. No human thought of inculcating sin into your relationship with God because it's a good idea: 'Let's have a cross; let's have a cross with Jesus on it. The virgin Mary, she made it into heaven. All these other saints made it into heaven.' All of those things, add-ons, all of that idolatry. Or a person would say, 'I'm so important. I have so much money. I don't need God.' Watch out!

Verse 4: "Therefore, speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Every man of the house of Israel... [that means *anyone*] ...who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him according to the multitude of his idols.'""

I suppose in counseling people, after you've gotten so far, this would be a good place to begin. 'Why don't you write down all the idols you have in your mind and then read v 5, because v 5 is going to tell you you're at a crossroad, you have a choice. What are you going to do; now you know the Truth?

Verse 5: "So that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart because they have deserted Me for their idols—all of them." Therefore say to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD, '**Repent...**'" (vs 5-6). Repentance is not just repent and be baptized. Repentance is *a daily thing*, because as we go in our walk with God, **God reveals to us more and more of the hidden sin deep within that He wants us to repent of!** Why? *Because He is preparing us for eternal life!*

"...Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations.... [notice what happens]: ...For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger who lives in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to a prophet to ask of him concerning Me; I the LORD will answer him Myself'" (vs 6-7).

I don't know what that involves, but I do know in the case of Israel and the Jews, how did God answer them because they didn't repent? *He removed them from the land and took everything they had away from them—correct? Yes, indeed!* Furthermore, if you persist in it, God says this. So, you lay it before the person and say, 'How about this, do you want this?'

Verse 8: "**And I will set My face against that man, and I will make him for a sign and for a proverb. And I will cut him off from the midst of My people; and you shall know that I am the LORD.**"

If you've got your life full of problems and sins, *you better come to God*. You also have to understand that since you've done it and it's ingrained in you and you have lived by it and you have nourished it, you have loved it, now the penalty is coming upon you and you begin to hate it! You have a whole lot to overcome, but God will help you; God will be there. You're going to have to understand it's a day-by-day process to *overcome the strongholds* because they are there with a grip on your mind. You need to have it changed. You might start asking:

- What has my fullest attention most of the time?
- What activity?
- Is it God?
- Is it His Word?
- Is it how to live?

or

- Do you poke your head into church on the Sabbath and now you've done your duty to God?

and

- When you poke your head back out in the world, you're back out there in the world again?

That's what happens with more modern Christianity.

With those who have the Spirit of God and are in the Church of God, *it's a full-time activity overcoming*. Things can come upon us in this world today. It could never come upon them living out in the country and taking care of the animals. Like David was out there shepherding the sheep. No television, no SmartPhone, no media. You get out

there, sit under the tree and watch all the sheep. You can pray to God. You can have a leisurely time. You can strum on your harp. You can sing praises to God. You can watch the animals; take care of them. Have a little excitement, drive away the lion, drive away the bear. You better be strong and up to that. Have your sword, have your spear or today have your gun, whatever it may be. Life was totally different.

Go shopping: What do you walk into? Stop and ask yourself, ‘When I go shopping at the supermarket, how many things are there to grab my attention to stir up my lust?’ *The whole store, yes!*

Back to Galatians 5:19, we’ll read it again because if you are addicted to television and soap operas you better find where the *off switch* is on your television. Let’s read the works of the flesh in view as what comes into our homes, invited because we turn the switch on.

Galatians 5:19: “...adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, strifes, jealousies, indignations, contentions, divisions, sects... [splits and divisions] ...envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such things as these; concerning which I am telling you beforehand, even as I have also said in the past, that **those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God**” (vs 19-21).

What we need to do is limit that kind of exposure through media devices that we have today. Sometimes you can’t avoid it except to make your mind up to not let those things grab your attention. Ninety-nine percent of all of the magazines displayed in supermarkets are right at the entrance to the checkout stand. Why do you suppose that they are there? *Men will lust after it because the male mind is gauged that it appreciates and lusts after a beautiful female body!* But that is secondary. The primary is for the women through jealousy and envy wanting to be like the image of the woman on the cover of the magazine. Is that not true?

So you have that; you’ve got all the advertisements. You have all of the products. You have the music. You have the squalling brats. You have in some cases the teenagers that are dressed in unfit manner for civilized human beings. Isn’t that true? You go out into the world and you’ve got to fight this music wherever you go. I tell you what— young people, teenagers—how are they educated into accepting this? We already talked about it. Starts out with cartoons, babysitting with Walt Disney; all of those things.

We have a greater battle today. We really, really do. Let’s see what we are to do with it. 2-Corinthians 10, here’s what we are to do. It is a battle and it is full-time proposition. Think about it!

Never before in the history of the world were there devices, which with the push of the finger, you can turn on various media devices and you can have hundreds of sins per day parade through your house. Isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!*

Just do a channel-surf if you don’t believe it. We’re just talking about regular TV. We’re not talking about online pornography, online gambling, online solicitation. We’re not talking about that, but that is absolutely crazy and evil much more than we would understand. Sometimes you need to view some of these things from the point of view like Brian Williams on CNBC where they do the entrapment against men looking for sexual exposés with teenagers.

Now you know why the politicians want to lower the age of consent? The way you make crime go away is you change the law. The way you make crime go away *by God’s way* is **you cease doing the activity**. Especially with young people, if they say, ‘It’s not against the law.’ You better let them know **whose law** are you talking about? *Yes!* In the mix in this is that they have changed the meaning of words. That’s how Satan works incrementally so that things that are sin do not become sin in the law of the land. But *it’s still sin against God*.

The Bible does not give a chronological age. **Sin is sin!** Even the Proverb says that a child is known by his works, ‘whether they are good or whether they are evil.’ They’ve had trouble with 7-8 year olds in school and they’ve had trouble with teachers in school. ‘Oh, why don’t you come by my house this afternoon and I’ll show you some really good things in sex, personally’—right? *Yes!*

2-Corinthians 10:3: “For although we walk in *the* flesh, we do not war according to *the* flesh.” If you war according to the flesh, and we are in a spiritual warfare, you can only accomplish so much. That is self-discipline to a point. Self-discipline cannot conquer lust. It takes the Holy Spirit of God.

Verse 4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God **to the overthrowing of strongholds**.” This is what we’re talking about: the **deep sin within** that must be cleansed. It is a process. Especially today, it’s something that must be done everyday because it’s there. If you have things in your mind that are *strongholds*, list them down:

- Take them before God.
- Pray about it.
- Ask God to help you overcome it.
- Ask God to help you get rid of it
- **He will!**

I’ll show you the key thing. You will know what it is, because we’ve covered it before.

Verse 5: “Casting down vain imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God...” A little sin is all right. God will understand. What do they teach in the cartoons? They have Donald Duck or Mickey Mouse and up on one shoulder is another Donald Duck that’s evil and another one Donald Duck that is good and arguing back and forth, should I do this or that. This is what we do in our minds. Anything that goes against the laws and commandments and love of God

- is exalting itself against God
- is an idol in the mind
- is a stronghold that needs to be gotten rid of

***That’s the process of conversion!***

“...and bringing into captivity every thought...” (v 5). ***You must control your mind with the Spirit of God!*** If something comes along, grab hold of it, bring it before God and have it eliminated.

Let me just give you an example: If you think you don’t have faith, don’t say, ‘I ought to have faith.’ Do a deep word study on faith and prayer and let that get rid of any doubt that you may have. That’s how you do it:

- grab hold of it
- cast it down right in front of you
- examine it with the Word of God
- eliminate it with the Holy Spirit of God
- ask God to cleanse your heart and mind
  - ✓ you may have to go repent to someone else
  - ✓ you may have to ask forgiveness for something that you have done
  - ✓ you need to do that too

“...and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ” (v 5). It doesn’t say *most* thoughts, *some* thoughts, evil thoughts—***every thought!***

Verse 6: “And having a readiness to avenge all disobedience... [of the imagination of the mind] ...whenever your obedience has been fulfilled.” How do you do that?

Ephesians 5:23: “For the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ is *the* Head of the Church...” I’m not focusing on husband and wife relationships here. I’m focusing on Christ’s relationship with us who are part of the body of Christ. He’s the Head of the Church.

“...and He is *the* Savior of the body. For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and

gave Himself for it” (vs 23-25). This shows the effort that we need to have.

- we must put forth the effort
- God must grant us His Spirit
- we must exercise ourselves and our minds unto righteousness and casting down vain imaginations.

Verse 26: “So that He might sanctify it...” Notice, *He might*, showing it’s a process. Sanctify means to be made Holy. That’s what God is doing with us.

“...having cleansed *it*...” (v 26). That’s what we want,

- be cleansed from every sin
- be cleansed from every disobedience
- be cleansed from every evil thought

The truth is, getting rid of these thoughts is a progressive thing, which will last until our very last breath in the flesh. Then at the resurrection, it is all gone. That’s the fight we have to have now, between now and then, every one.

“...having cleansed *it* with the washing of water... [Holy Spirit] ...by *the* Word” (v 26). What have we heard all of our lives in the Church? *Prayer and study, prayer and study!* Let the Holy Spirit of God wash us and cleanse us with His Word. Replace what is in our mind with the Word of God. Replace what is in our mind and conduct with the conduct from God.

Let’s come back to Galatians 5 and see what we are to exercise ourselves to. We’ve seen the fruits of the flesh, now let’s look at the fruit of the Spirit. What you need to do, which I will cover in part 4 this series, is how then we exercise the fruits of the Spirit.

**Fruits of the Spirit:**

Galatians 5:22: “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love...**” There are four aspects of love. Instead of feeling sorry for yourself, wondering why you have these evil thoughts, wondering what you need to do about it, take action:

- get on your knees
- open the Bible
- study what you need to do
- ask God to help you
- ask Him to give you His strength

Four aspects of love: Loving God with

- 1) all your heart
- 2) all your mind
- 3) all your soul
- 4) all your being

That's a fulltime activity—isn't it? God will strengthen you and cleanse you in this.

"...**joy**..." You're getting rid of sin and *inner joy*. That doesn't mean you're running around laughing and praising God, running around in circles, waving your arms in the air. No, this is a joy within.

"...**peace**..." You have peace with God. You're not warring against Him. You have peace with your husband or wife. You're not fighting with them. You have peace with your neighbors, the best you can do. You have peace with the brethren.

"...**longsuffering**...—because there are going to be things you're going to have to suffer. So suffer them. Ask God to help you learn the lesson from it.

"...**kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. But **those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.**" (vs 22-24). You take all of those things that we have mentioned here and you give it a spiritual crucifixion.

Verse 25: "**If we live by the Spirit, we should also be walking by the Spirit. We should not become vain-glorious, provoking one another and envying one another**" (vs 25-26).

If you're living by the Spirit, that is God's Spirit in you, and *your actions in walking the way of God should be reflecting the spiritual motivation within!* So that's why it says 'be walking by the Spirit.'

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 7:21-22
- 2) Luke 9:49-50
- 3) Mark 9:38-40
- 4) Mark 7:20-23
- 5) Romans 2:1-4
- 6) Galatians 5:16-17, 19-20
- 7) Ezekiel 14:1-8
- 8) Galatians 5:19-21
- 9) 2-Corinthians 10:3-6
- 10) Ephesians 5:23-26
- 11) Galatians 5:22-25

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 20
- Romans 1:26-32
- John 6:44
- Romans 7

#### Also referenced:

- Sermon: *The Holy Spirit and the Seven Spirits of God*
- Sermon Series: *How to Use God's Holy Spirit*

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