

MARRIAGE BY THE BOOK

1. REVIEW

A. **SPEAKING GOD'S WORD:**

1. **OUT LOUD TO SATAN**
2. **BACK TO GOD IN PRAYER**

B. **PRAYING GOD'S WORDS BACK TO HIM...**

1. **WHEN we TRULY UNDERSTAND PRAYER, AND WHO WE ARE PRAYING TO that UNDERSTANDING CHANGES...**

- a. **how we pray**
- b. **what we pray,**
- c. **when we pray,**
- d. **whether or not we pray,**
- e. **as well as the EXPECTATIONS we have ABOUT PRAYER.**

2. **MANY TIMES THE BIBLE RECORDS THAT PRAYER CALLED DOWN WHAT GOD HAD ALREADY INTENDED TO DO... B U T WHAT GOD HAD ALREADY INTENDED TO DO DID NOT HAPPEN UNTIL PRAYER CALLED IT DOWN.**

- a. **The FOUNDATION OF PRAYER is KNOWING WHAT GOD HAS ALREADY SAID.**

C. **PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT**

1. **DOES NOT MEAN SPEAKING IN TONGUES!**
2. **ANYTIME WE TAKE GOD'S WORD and TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT... WE ARE PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT!**

- D. **IF what we're PRAYING is IN ALIGNMENT WITH GOD'S WORD, we DO NOT NEED to CONTINUE TO ASK GOD over and over again.**

1. **AFTER we ASK HIM, the REMAINDER of our PRAYERS should be FOCUSED on THANKING GOD for His PROMISED RESPONSE.**

- E. **Ephesians 6:17b-18a (NASB) And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions...**

2. **PRAYING SCRIPTURE TO OVERCOME STRONGHOLDS**

- A. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NASB) For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for**

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the destruction of **fortresses** . We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and **we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,**

- B. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)** The **weapons** we fight with are not the **weapons** of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish **strongholds**. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and **we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

C. **WHAT IS A STRONGHOLD?**

1. "speculations and every lofty thing raised up against **the knowledge of God**"
2. "every pretension that sets itself up against **the knowledge of God**"
3. A **STRONGHOLD** is anything that **EXALTS ITSELF** in our **MINDS**,
"PRETENDING" TO BE BIGGER OR MORE POWERFUL THAN OUR GOD.
 - a. It steals much of our focus and causes us to feel overpowered. Controlled. Mastered.
 - b. Whether the stronghold is an addiction, unforgiveness toward a person who has hurt us, or despair over a loss,
 - c. It is something that consumes so much of our emotional and mental energy that abundant life is strangled
 - d. Our callings remain largely unfulfilled and our believing lives are virtually ineffective.
 - e. Needless to say, **THESE ARE THE ENEMY'S PRECISE GOALS!**
 - f. **EXAMPLES of STRONGHOLDS IN A CHRISTIAN:**
 - 1) IDOLATRY
 - 2) UNBELIEF
 - 3) PRIDE
 - 4) DECEPTION
 - 5) THE INSESECURITY OF FEELING UNLOVED
 - 6) FEELINGS of REJECTION
 - 7) ADDICTIONS
 - 8) FOOD RELATED STRONGHOLDS
 - 9) GUILT
 - 10)DESPAIR RESULTING FROM LOSS
 - 11)UNFORGIVENESS
 - 12)DEPRESSION
 - 13)SEXUAL STRONGHOLDS

D. **WHERE IS THE BATTLEFIELD?**

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1. **IN OUR MINDS**
 2. The **ENEMY'S CHIEF TARGET** is the **MIND**.
 - a. **BECAUSE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR IS TO INFLUENCE THINKING.**
 - b. Our **MINDS** are the **CONTROL CENTERS** of our **ENTIRE BEINGS**.
 3. That's why **EVEYTHING** that "**EXALTS ITSELF**" in our **THOUGHT LIFE** is called a "**PRETENSION.**"
 - a. Satan plays **MAKE-BELIEVE**.
 - b. He can only **PRETEND** because he **LOST ALL RIGHTS** to presume **AUTHORITY OVER THE BELIEVER'S LIFE WHEN CHRIST**, "having disarmed the powers and authorities, . . . made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross" (**Col. 2:15**).
 - c. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and **every pretension** that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
- E. **WHAT ARE OUR WEAPONS?**
1. According to **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**, there are **4 VITAL PIECES OF INFORMATION IDENTIFYING the WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE**:
 - a. They are **NOT** the **WEAPONS** of the **WORLD**.
 - b. They have **DIVINE POWER**.
 - c. They are associated with the "**KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.**"
 - d. Their **PURPOSE** in warfare is to **TAKE OUR THOUGHTS CAPTIVE**.
 2. In **Ephesians 6:10-18**, Paul listed the whole **ARMOR of GOD**.
 - a. Only **ONE PIECE** of the **ARMOR** is actually a **WEAPON**.
 - b. The figurative **belt, shield, breastplate, shoes, and helmet** are all **DEFENSIVE** pieces of **ARMOR**.
 3. The **SWORD of the SPIRIT**, clearly identified as the **WORD of GOD**, is the **ONLY OFFENSIVE WEAPON** listed in the whole **ARMOR of GOD**.
 4. **2 Corinthians 10:3** uses the **PLURAL**, assuring us we have "**WEAPONS**".
 - a. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)** The **weapons** we fight with are not the **weapons** of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
 - b. **WHAT WOULD ANOTHER PRIMARY "WEAPON" BE?**

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- c. I believe the **OTHER primary WEAPON of our WARFARE** is stated right **AFTER** the words identifying the **SWORD of the SPIRIT as the WORD of GOD in Ephesians 6:17.**
- 1) The **NEXT VERSE (Ephesians 6:18)** says, **“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions.”**
 - 2) I am convinced that the **2 MAJOR WEAPONS with DIVINE POWER in our SPIRITUAL WARFARE... ESPECIALLY TO DESTROY STRONGHOLDS are:**
 - i. the **WORD OF GOD.**
 - ii. and **SPIRIT-EMPOWERED PRAYER.**
5. These **2 WEAPONS HAVE “DIVINE POWER”.**
- a. The **original Greek word for “POWER”** is the adjective form of the term **“dunamai”.**
 - 1) The **English word “DYNAMITE”** is **derived from the SAME ROOT WORD.**
 - b. **Virtually NOTHING we come up against in our individual Christian lives IS MORE FORMIDABLE than a “STRONGHOLD”.**
 - 1) The very nature of the term tells us that **whatever it is, it has a “STRONG HOLD” on us.**
 - 2) **“STRONGHOLDS” CAN NOT be swept away with a spiritual broom.**
 - i. **“STRONGHOLDS” are BROKEN ONE WAY ONLY... they have to be “DEMOLISHED”.**
 - ii. **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)** The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to **demolish strongholds.** We **demolish** arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.
 - c. When we try to **BREAK DOWN OUR SPIRITUAL STRONGHOLDS WITH CARNAL WEAPONS** like **pure determination, secular psychology, and denial** we are **NEVER SUCCESSFUL.**
 - 1) Many of us have **expended unknown ENERGY** trying hard to **topple these strongholds ON OUR OWN, B U T THEY WILL NOT FALL WILL THEY?**
 - 2) That’s because **THEY MUST BE “DEMOLISHED”!**
 - d. **God HAS HANDED US TWO STICKS of DYNAMITE with which to “DEMOLISH” OUR STRONGHOLDS:**

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- 1) **HIS WORD**
- 2) and **PRAYER.**
- e. **THAT IS WHAT TODAY'S STUDY IS ABOUT... taking our TWO PRIMARY STICKS of DYNAMITE: PRAYER and GOD'S WORD... STRAPPING THEM TOGETHER, and IGNITING them with FAITH to "DEMOLISH" THE "STRONGHOLDS" IN OUR LIVES.**
6. **PRAYER**
 - a. **PRAYER keeps us in CONSTANT COMMUNION WITH GOD, which is the GOAL of our entire BELIEVING LIVES.**
 - 1) Without a doubt, **PRAYERLESS LIVES are POWERLESS LIVES, and PRAYERFUL LIVES are POWERFUL LIVES.**
 - b. The **ULTIMATE GOAL God has for us is NOT POWER, but PERSONAL INTIMACY WITH HIM.**
 - 1) **The fastest way to LOSE OUR BALANCE IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE is to REBUKE THE DEVIL MORE than we RELATE TO GOD.**
 - i. **A DEMON BEHIND EVERY BUSH.**
 - 2) **PRAYER is NOT THE MEANS TO AN END... In so many ways, IT IS THE END ITSELF.**
7. **GOD'S WORD**
 - a. **WHAT makes GOD'S WORD such a POWERFUL STICK OF DYNAMITE to DEMOLISH STRONGHOLDS?**
 - 1) **2 Corinthians 10:3-5 STATES that in the PROCESS OF "DEMOLISHING" STRONGHOLDS, our OBJECTIVES are:**
 - i. **To cast down anything that exalts itself in our thought life... ("demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God)**
 - ii. **and to "... take our thoughts captive to Christ".**
 - b. **We "TAKE OUR THOUGHTS CAPTIVE TO CHRIST", making them OBEDIENT TO CHRIST, every time we CHOOSE TO THINK CHRIST'S THOUGHTS about any SITUATION or STRONGHOLD INSTEAD OF SATAN'S or OUR OWN.**
 - c. **WHAT ARE CHRIST'S THOUGHTS?**
 - 1) **The WORD of GOD revealed to us.**
 - d. **We MUST CHOOSE TO THINK CHRIST'S THOUGHTS about the matter RATHER THAN OUR OWN or THOSE INFLUENCED BY THE ENEMY.**

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8. PRAYING GOD'S WORD takes BELIEF, DILIGENCE, AND TIME... BUT THE EFFECTS ARE DRAMATICALLY LIBERATING and ETERNAL.
9. QUESTION??? SHOULD I USE SCRIPTURE EVERY TIME I PRAY?
 - a. NO!
 - b. BUT... **THERE IS NOT A MORE POWERFUL WAY TO DEMOLISH STRONGHOLDS IN OUR LIVES THAN BY PRAYING SCRIPTURE!**
3. **NOTE:** The LAST THING I want to do is SET MYSELF UP AS SOME SORT OF PROPER EXAMPLE.
 - A. I am walking this path **WITH YOU**.
 - B. I have **MADE SO MANY MISTAKES** and **LEARNED TOO MANY HARD LESSONS**.
 - C. If I am an **example of anything at all**, I am an **EXAMPLE OF LIFE AFTER FAILURE**.
4. PLEASE BE OPEN MINDED ABOUT PRAYING GOD'S WORD... IT COMES WITH A **GUARANTEE...**
 - A. Isaiah 55:11 (NASB) So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.
5. **QUESTIONS** and **COMMENTS**
6. **NEXT WEEK... PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PRAYING GOD'S WORD**