



→ DETOURS

OVERCOMING SPIRITUAL
ROADBLOCKS IN
MINISTRY

Devotion #9 - Mindsets, Worldviews & Strongholds

October 2021

Read: Acts 14:8-20

Close your eyes and imagine a piece of pizza with all of the best toppings on it.

So, did you see pineapple on your pizza? For some people, pineapple goes on pizza, and for others it does NOT belong there. People have different mindsets when it comes to pineapple and pizza.

Together, a series of mindsets form a worldview, which influences how we see and react to our surroundings. Most of the time, we are not conscious of the mindsets that make up our worldview. Just as we don't go through life constantly aware of whether we believe it's appropriate to have pineapple on pizza - until confronted with the issue.

Our worldview is the operating system of our lives, and for the most part, it is something in our subconscious that is reasonably neutral. But it can be influenced by both good and evil. Satan seeks to influence people's worldviews to hinder their relationship with God. Frequently he does this through strongholds.

A stronghold is a tool the enemy uses to block or slow down the advancement of God's kingdom. The stronghold works in such a way as to draw individuals into a particular worldview and entrap them. Once they are pulled into the stronghold, it begins to influence how they think and react.

Evil strongholds are based upon lies or deceptions often centered about who God is or the nature of our salvation. They colour our worldview in specific ways that hinder the advancement of God's kingdom. Strongholds are often a source of resistance we encounter in ourselves or others when we seek to begin a new project or do any work which advances God's kingdom. They are almost always hidden, so we do not see them straight away.

In the passage from Acts, we see how the mindset or worldview of the Lycaonians influenced how they responded to Paul and Barnabas. Their worldview shaped by their understanding of the Greek gods led them to false conclusions about the identity of Paul

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and Barnabas. Paul could see how the stronghold around the Lycaonians was hindering them from encountering God and, specifically, Jesus. This religious Greek god stronghold blocked them from hearing the gospel at first. 🌲🌲🌲

Some years ago, I encountered a stronghold in a church meeting. In a discussion centered around outreach, the comment was made, "Evangelism does not work here!" The statement reveals a foundational deception, which had grown into a worldview that influenced the church's culture. As a result, no outreach efforts had been attempted for

several years. While the church faithfully ministered to its members, it showed no signs of growth. The underlying worldview that "evangelism does not work" had been planted at some point by the enemy. It had slowly grown as more people heard and came to accept and believe the lie. As less outreach was done, the concept of "evangelism does not work" grew and became part of church culture, eventually limiting and blocking the congregation's growth. 🌲🌲🌲



Rest Stop

In Acts 28:1-6, we see another example of how a mindset, or worldview, influences how people react to the Apostle Paul. How did the Maltese mindset affect their attitude towards who Paul was?



Rest Stop

Have you encountered resistance to a ministry opportunity that could be a stronghold?

Many times, we are unable to see a stronghold when we experience it; it is often apparent only in hindsight.

However, the good news is that the Lord has provided spiritual weapons that can deal with strongholds. Through prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit, strongholds can be identified.

We can pray: "Lord, show us the strongholds that are at work in this situation." Then we wait, watching for a revelatory event to take place. The statement "evangelism does not work" was a revelatory statement that revealed an aspect of a stronghold hindering the church.

This gives us a place to begin in prayer and start the work of dismantling the stronghold, a task that requires both the work of prayer as well as a specific action. 🌲🌲🌲

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Rest Stop

Sometimes we are the ones who are stuck in a stronghold. Take a few moments to ask the Lord to reveal if there are strongholds or unhealthy mindsets in your life. Permit God to search your heart. Move into confession and repentance to remove and deal with any mindsets the Lord shows you.

Strongholds can entrap individuals, a specific ministry, a church, a community, or even a whole nation. Asking the Holy Spirit to reveal a stronghold may give valuable insight into why a particular ministry has been unable to gain traction in a specific community.

Prayer is the weapon that the Lord uses to break through and expose a false worldview or mindset. It is the tool that the Lord will use to build good and godly mindsets.



The Scenic Route

(Preferably done as a group)

Ask the Lord to reveal if strongholds are blocking the ministry of the deacons (or other ministries) within your church and community.

- Spend 2-5 minutes in silence, listening to the Lord about this.
- Share what you hear. It could be a picture of something, or a phrase, Scripture, or even a remembered fragment of a conversation.
- As each person shares what they heard, it is like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that may give a fuller picture of what is taking place.
- Make sure to discern if the words being heard are from the Lord and not just our minds.

The following 4 questions may help do that:

1. Does it give glory to Jesus Christ in the present and in the future?
2. Is it consistent with the intentions and character of God as revealed in Scripture?
3. Do other people who are filled with the Holy Spirit have a confirming witness?
4. Is there confirmation in objectively verifiable events or facts?

If the Lord does not reveal anything to you, don't start looking for something. Simply allow the Holy Spirit to guide you and direct you as you pray. If there is nothing, then give thanks to the Lord for that. If the Lord does reveal something, you may need to spend some additional time in prayer asking the Lord to give you a strategy for dealing with the stronghold.

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