

'LOVE FROM ABOVE'
(Fullness of Joy through Biblical Fellowship in Christ)
Studies in 1 John

Stronghold Strategy

When David became king of a united Israel, the first location he was led of the Lord to conquer was the stronghold fortification of Jebus. The Jebusites (*Canaanite descendants*) formidably occupied this high, elevated location, protected by deep valleys on three sides. This mountain top citadel, called Zion, was easily defensible because of its own water supply, the Gihon spring, that made it extremely difficult to conquer by a siege. The Jebusites were so confident of their stronghold that they mocked and scoffed David and his warriors who came against it (**2 Samuel 5:6-7**). David knew that a normal frontal attack had been repelled by others in the past so a different strategy had to be used to overcome the Jebus' stronghold, freeing the city to become Jerusalem, the permanent capital of Israel.

David knew that victory would have to be achieved by first getting inside the walls of the city and then defeating the enemy from the inside (**2 Samuel 5:8-10**). Rather than storming the city with armies, the strategy was to go under the walls through the water tunnel coming in from the Gihon spring, just outside the fortress wall. The victory was easily won and the region became Mount Zion and Jerusalem, the eternal capital city of Israel. The plan of going under a wall or over it instead of trying to knock it down was remembered by David's son, Solomon, in **Proverbs 21:22**: "***A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the trusted stronghold***". Strongholds require a wise, prayerful strategy to overcome them and achieve victory – this is true not only in battles and wars with human armies, but also true in spiritual warfare as well (**2 Corinthians 10:4-6**).

Spiritual strongholds, like military fortress strongholds, are things in a believer's life that over time have become fortified through repeated spiritual disobedience and moral failure. The believer's flesh has habitually conspired with a godless secular world system and the devil's sensuous influence, in '*searing (numbing) the conscience*' (**1 Timothy 4:1-2**) and building up strong resistance to God, the Spirit and the Scriptures (**Romans 1:21-22**).

These *strongholds of sin* may be spiritual stubbornness in an area of religious error, moral uncleanness, or mental disturbance that cannot be subdued just by the usual practices of an average Christian lifestyle. Nor will such areas of resistance to God's fullness, occupation, and Lordship be achieved through loud rebuking of the devil or hollering at demons to be bound or cast out – this is like a battle where soldiers stand outside the walls yelling at the forces within to surrender – nowhere in Scripture is this fanatical approach commanded or seen. A better strategy is needed to bring down *personal strongholds* so Christ can be enthroned as Lord of even that difficult area within us.

The Apostle John addresses this matter of spiritual warfare in **Chapter 5** of his general epistle: "***For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith...***" (**1 John 5:4-5**). John does not go into specifics of how to overcome worldly strong-holds because he already did so in the previous chapters:

- Chapter 1** – Have no unconfessed sin in your life;
- Chapter 2** – Be aloof from things in the world that arouse your sinful flesh and all false teachers;
- Chapter 3** – '*Abide in God*'/ live in close connection with Him and keep a distance from the secular world system; and
- Chapter 4** – Practice a holy lifestyle of Christ-likeness and loving fellowship with other mature Christians.

If believers live like this, they are in great position to grow in the faith, overcome strongholds, and experience a victorious Christian life. In addition to living the abundant life daily, all the time, other resources for winning battles from the inside out are:

- Scripture memory about the particularly tenacious habitual sin (*Psalm 119:9-11*);
- Concentrated prayer and fasting (*Matthew 17:21, Luke 5:35, 2 Corinthians 6:5*),
- Mental discipline of calling on the Lord to reign in all stray thoughts about that stronghold sin entrenched in the mind (*2 Corinthians 11:5/ as often as necessary every day until thinking in that area is continuously under the Spirit's control*) and
- Public, humble admission of the area in which you need victory (*stating it as modestly as possible*) so your church family can join in praying for you (*2 Corinthians 11:6, Ephesians 6: 18, James 5:16*).

Victory is sweet and there is fullness of joy if *strongholds of sin* are being overcome and become *strongholds of the Savior*: “*So, (after the battle for Jerusalem) David went on and became great and the LORD God of hosts was with him*” (*2 Samuel 5:10*). What may seem to be a *stronghold of defeat* can become a believer’s high point of Christian growth, victory and progress, when it is overcome and conquered in God’s way, in God’s strength! PtL

‘Fun-damentals of Victorious Living’ ***(Fullness of Joy by Overcoming the World by Faith)*** 1 John 5:3-13

The Work of Victory

‘The Overcomer’s Power – Our Faith’

“For this is the love of God, that we love God and keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”
5:3-5

The Walk of Victory

‘The Overcomer’s Pattern – Our Savior’

“This is He Who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit Who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness - (*in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth) - the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son”
5:6-9

*(*the passage in parenthesis is found in only 4 of 8 late (after the 10th century AD), variant Greek manuscripts. The statement is true however according to **Matthew 28:18-19, 2 Corinthians 13:14, etc.**)*

The Way of Victory

‘The Overcomer’s Promise – Our Eternal Life’

“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, that you may KNOW you have eternal life and that you may continue to believe in the Name of the Son of God.”
5:10-13