

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Conquering Your Jericho

Dear Friend,

What could be more shocking than this; a Holy Ghost filled believer, who has decided to make praying in tongues their lifestyle, only to find themselves at an impasse where they no longer want to pray, and not only that, go out of their way to slander the message of praying in tongues? They make statements like: "That praying in tongues stuff doesn't work. It's all just 'works'. I am fine the way I am." On and on they go. All the while these people are in fact proving that praying in tongues does work. It has exposed a stronghold in the person that will be there until that person gives the Holy Ghost everything He needs for its destruction. Please keep in mind that in no way are we suggesting that praying in tongues is a requirement for going to heaven. But, it does affect how much of God's plan for our lives we fulfill before going to heaven.

Friends and relatives may look at this person, who is now struggling with prayer, and think, "My, some big devil must have attacked them and pushed them right out of prayer." Is that really the case? Think about it, if "big devils" can just run right up to us anytime they want and force us to do as they choose, then we are all in trouble. Obviously, that is not the case. Remember, the devil and all his demons have been defeated by our Lord Jesus Christ and all the authority of the enemy has been placed under the feet of the body of Christ. Ephesians 1:20-23:

(20) "Which He (God The Father) wrought in Christ, when He (The Father) raised Him (Jesus) from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, (21) Far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. (22) And hath put all things under His (Jesus) feet, and gave Him (Jesus) to be the head over all things to the church, (23) Which is His (Jesus) body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

The moment we say "yes" to Jesus and make Him Lord of our lives we are instantly seated in heavenly places in Christ. Ephesians 2:6:

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

The devil and all his demons are under our feet. Their authority over us has been destroyed by Jesus forever. Consequently, the only authority the devil has in our lives is what we give him. That's right, the only inroad the devil and his minions have into our lives is what we give them. The idea that the devil can do anything he wants to us any

time he wants is foolishness. What chance would mankind have had against a rogue archangel like lucifer had God not placed restrictions on his powers against man. God did this back in Genesis 3:14:

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, ‘Because thou has done this, thou art cursed above all the cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon they belly shalt thou go, and the dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.’”

It is with these words that God placed a limitation on the devil’s power over man. Many Christians think God was just being mean to snakes. No, what God was really doing was taking away the devil’s ability to use his raw, destructive, power on mankind. God was restricting satan to the limitations of this natural world. In so doing, God took away the devil’s ability to simply wipe out all of mankind in an instant. As hard as it may be to believe, if the devil is tormenting us it is because he has found something in our flesh that he can torment us with. In other words, the fact that we allow things to remain in our flesh really means that we are responsible for leaving the door open to satan and his band of despots to torment us. We will see this more clearly before this lesson is done.

The idea that “the devil made me do it” is simply wrong. There are accounts of witches who have risen to the heights of their practice who acknowledge that they could always say “no” to whatever instructions were given to them by their demons. The devil can never override a person’s will. So, what does the devil and his demons love to do, they love to exploit the weaknesses of born again Christians by luring them into sin through enticing them with the bait they know they like. In other words, it’s not the devil pushing people out of prayer or into sin, it’s those weaknesses inside our flesh that the enemy targets and lures us with. James spoke about this drawing away process when he wrote, James 1:14:

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed.”

Wait a minute that sounds bad. In other words, the devil and his demons can’t force a Christian to do something they don’t want to do, but they can sure lure them with enticements with which Christians are susceptible. What about “Just say No!”? Is that really the answer, just say “No”? In other words, use the force of our own will power to keep from sinning. Haven’t we all tried to say “No!” at one time or another and how did that work out? It may have worked for a while, but eventually, when the right bait is used, we are right back in that same mess again. Has anyone every felt like this; “No, I am not going to do that again. I know it’s wrong. I know I shouldn’t be doing it. How is it that I want to stop, but something inside kind of likes it and doesn’t want to stop?” Sure, everyone has felt that way at one time or another because we all come into this new life as Christians with strongholds in our flesh. Strongholds include everything from fornication to lying to gossip to hating our neighbors. Paul gives us a pretty good list of these things in Colossians 3: 5, 8-10:

**(5) “Mortify (*put to death, what a strong word*) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness (*lustful living*), inordinate affections (*affection of the mind or wrong thoughts*), evil concupiscence (*a longing desire for what is forbidden*), and covetousness which is idolatry. (wanting other people’s stuff and being willing to do whatever is necessary to get it)
(8) But now you also put off all these; anger (*bad temper*), wrath (*Hot anger*), malice (*vicious character*), blasphemy (*speech injurious to another’s good name, or gossip*), filthy communication (*obscene speech*) out of your mouth. (9) Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds (10) and have put on the new, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”**

Notice what is listed in verse 5 seems to be the more blatant sins whereas those in verses 8 and 9 are much more common and generally accepted among Christians. Most see how wrong the offensive sins are and fail to realize that those more common sins among us are just as wrong. Clearly, Paul is saying that even the more “acceptable” sins must stop. The problem is, not only do we think these “acceptable” sins aren’t so bad, we actually like to do them.

Herein lies the problem. We still do these things because something in our flesh enjoys it and wants to do them. Whether it be the sin we deem “acceptable” or not; we sin because we choose to sin. The place where that “want to”, or desire, lives is certainly not in our reborn human spirit, obviously. Those wrong desires reside safe and secure, nestled quietly in our flesh, our unrenewed soul and body. Why are they so safe and secure? Because we like them. They have become our friends. These desires are what we call strongholds, defined as systems of thought empowered by emotion. The Apostle Paul talks about these strongholds in II Corinthians 10:3-5:

(3) “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (4) (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) (5) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

I can hear someone right now saying, “I thought that was talking about pulling down the strongholds over a city or over a nation?” No. In order to believe that, a person would have to totally ignore verse 5 and the instruction to cast down imaginations and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Why? Because thoughts and imaginations aren’t on the outside, they are on the inside. Paul is talking about the strongholds in us.

“That’s all well and good, but what does all that have to do with explaining why the person stopped praying in tongues?”

That person, who had been so excited about the benefits of praying in tongues didn’t just suddenly change their mind overnight for no reason. Nor did some demon spirit sneak up when they weren’t watching and hold their head under water and demand that

they never again pray in tongues, or else. No, what happened was that their praying in tongues accomplished exactly what it was supposed to accomplish. Their praying in tongues empowered the Holy Ghost to begin His “search and destroy mission”, using our reborn human spirit to light the way, Proverbs 20:27:

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.”

As we pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit utilizes our reborn spirit like a huge search light exposing anything in us (our flesh) that is not of God. Paul said it like this in I Corinthians 2:13:

“Which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”

It is during this “comparing” process that we begin to understand more about who we have become as a reborn child of God, while at the same time, exposing those hidden strongholds in our flesh that are in direct opposition to God and His plan for our life. What is so hard for many believers to accept is the fact that those strongholds are still lurking in the dark recesses of our flesh. Surprising as it may sound, the reason those little “darlings” have been allowed to survive for so long is because we have allowed them to stay. You might be thinking, “No, that can’t be right. I would never allow anything that is in opposition to God or His plan for my life to stay in my flesh.” We might not want to believe there are any strongholds lurking in our flesh, but the truth of the matter is that none of us are “stronghold free” and until we give the Holy Ghost what He needs to destroy those strongholds once and for all, it’s ours.

“What exactly is it that the Holy Ghost needs in order to destroy these strongholds?” The first thing we have to understand is the reason why these strongholds still exist is because we allow them to exist. They have survived prayer line after prayer line and all efforts to cast them out have failed because you can not cast out unmortified flesh. That being the case, in order for any stronghold to finally be destroyed the Holy Ghost needs us to hate them just as much as God hates them. Until then, the Holy Ghost has nothing to work with in order to destroy them because we like them. “No, I don’t like strongholds inside me. I want all of them destroyed today.” The truth of the matter is we really don’t want them gone because if we did they would have been gone a long time ago. What needs to happen is the emotion tied to that stronghold, which generally speaking, is providing our flesh with some kind of enjoyment or pleasure, must be turned; so that instead of wanting to keep that thing we finally hate it as much as God hates it. Now, we are in a perfect position to see that stronghold destroyed.

“Can you give me an example of one of these strongholds I might have inside me?” Certainly, let’s take lying. We all know lying is wrong, but how many of us still struggle with telling the truth 100% of the time. Maybe it’s not an every day, habitual problem, but how about when telling the truth could cost you \$20,000 or \$10,000 or \$500 or just \$10? You might say to yourself, “I’m not going to lie over \$10.” Probably not, but how about \$500? Where is your line? If it were up to Jesus, there would be no line because

we would not lie due to the fact that there wouldn't be anything inside of us, inside our flesh, which would ever want to lie or be willing to lie no matter what. Even if they held our feet to the fire, starved us for a week, threatened us within an inch of our life, we would not lie because lying would no longer be a stronghold in our flesh. Until lying, or whatever stronghold present, is totally destroyed there will always be the propensity to sin when enough pressure is exerted. It is really a form of unbelief because we don't yet believe that God has already resolved our situation and consequently what we do believe is that we must lie to solve our own problem, which is actually a form of idolatry or self worship. The truth is we are believing a lie, while at the same time, operating in unbelief regarding the promise that God has already delivered us out of whatever situation we are in. So, when you get right down to it, the root is unbelief.

Let's step back again to our friend who has stopped praying in tongues. Remember, they began praying in tongues with such excitement, but eventually reached an impasse where they no longer want to pray. They don't even want to want to pray. Here's what happened. Generally speaking, after hearing of all the benefits of praying in tongues, most people jump into praying in tongues with both feet. They begin all bright eyed and bushy tailed and excited over this new found tool. Then, revelation knowledge begins to flow like a river and they are shocked to see all that the Word of God is saying to them. This continues for some time until they come eye to eye with their first stronghold, which believe it or not is the desire to stop praying in tongues. Now they are at an impasse. They are going to do one of two things, they are either going to stop praying or they are going to keep praying in tongues until finally that stronghold is destroyed.

How is it that what was once so new and exciting, praying in tongues, can turn into something that is almost despised? It's like this, the threat praying in tongues poses to all our other strongholds seems to cause such an emotional retaliation in our flesh that we either have to stop praying and live with the stronghold or keep going till it is destroyed. Our flesh knows it is in danger of losing control because of our praying and it is fighting like a maniac to survive. All the while our spirit man, the real "us" clothed in this flesh, made in the image of God, desires our flesh to be totally "stronghold free". If we will refuse to stop praying in tongues, no matter how intense the pressure becomes, we will reach a place where the desire to stop praying is destroyed and we can pray for as long as we want any time we want. Again, a little bit of fasting along with our praying will help. Once that first stronghold has been put to death we are on our way to taking down all the other strongholds, through the power of the Holy Ghost. The end result will be this; God will be free to use us to do whatever he needs us to do because He won't be endangering us due to our strongholds. That's actually what has been stopping God all along from being able to use us; our strongholds. Reason being, God isn't going to ask us to do something if the end result will be that the enemy exploits our strongholds and leads us into destruction. Our Father loves us too much to put us into that kind of danger.

So, let's keep praying in tongues and doing everything we know to do to be "stronghold free" so that God's plan can be fulfilled in our lives and more people will be won to the kingdom of God.

~Grace be with you

Mark Jenkins