

The Battle of the Mind - 2

by Anton Bosch

To win the battle of the mind, we must understand and be convinced that everything the world has to say is in opposition to God's Word, and we must be able to discern between good and bad

Scripture: Romans 12:2

Topics: "Mental Strongholds", "Spiritual Warfare"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches on the importance of tearing down strongholds in our minds that are opposed to God's principles. These strongholds, built over time with negative thoughts, must be dismantled stone by stone, not converted or remodeled. The battle of the mind involves stopping the reinforcement of these strongholds by controlling what we expose ourselves to and replacing bad information with God's thoughts. Understanding that the world's influence is contrary to God's Word is crucial in this ongoing struggle.

Transcript

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2Corinthians 10:3-5).

The solution to these strongholds is they have to be broken, pulled, and torn down. They cannot be converted or remodeled. That is one of the most serious and frequent mistakes we make. We feel we can somehow convert or change these strongholds for the good. Thus we see people ministering from a platform of pride, or channeling their anger into their preaching or finding an outlet for their lust for power and money in the church. There are countless ways in which the strongholds of the flesh are given a make-over and presented as something useful to the Kingdom. That was precisely Paul's struggle with the antagonists in the Corinthian church.

These strongholds cannot be converted; they are in their very essence opposed to God and His principles. They can only be dealt with in one way - they have to be torn down. But how? Strongholds do not appear in our lives overnight, they are built stone by stone as we reinforce bad thoughts and allow them space (and time) in our minds. The longer, and more often, we think and dwell on things we ought not to, the more stones we add to these strongholds and the more powerful they become. They must be dismantled the same way they were erected - stone-by-stone.

I know that we all wish there was some kind of miracle cure, which could destroy these strongholds in an instant - just like they implode big buildings with explosives. Sometimes the Lord does do that in individual cases. But it is not the norm and the majority of believers have to struggle to dismantle these fortresses one thought at a time. Unfortunately, many preachers offer instantaneous "deliverance" by various means, including the "casting out of demons". But that is not the reality taught in the New Testament. The Bible teaches an ongoing struggle and ongoing renewing of the mind (Romans 12:2).

How does this work? Well, first we have to stop fortifying the strongholds that are already there. We collect thousands of experiences and bits of information which we glean from all sorts of sources - mainly through what we see and hear. These we cement together with the mortar of our own reasonings to form a castle of inferiority, pride, fear, lust etc. To stop the building of these forts we must control what, we listen to, watch, read, and spend time with. This will stop the negative flow of information, but that in itself is not sufficient. Even if we put a complete stop to the adding of new material (which is impossible), we all have enough raw material in our memories to keep the strongholds reinforced and well-maintained for the rest of our lives.

We live in a world which bombards us with a constant stream of information which is contrary to God's Word. Almost everything the world has to say through it's media is contrary, no matter how good and wholesome it may seem. I am not saying we have to live in a monastery, but we do need to begin to understand that God's ways are dramatically different to the world's ways. That is exactly where our first problem lies. Most of us do not understand how negative the world's influence is. This is aggravated by a host of "Christian" preachers who insist that the world and it's systems are basically good. I have been shocked by the slew of books on how to see the "gospel" in "The Sopranos", "Harry Potter" or any other evil program designed to make us feel good about murder, rape, robbery, adultery, witchcraft and any of a thousand other vices. I am tired of "Christian" books that quote Hollywood characters as examples of godly characteristics. Since when is evil good? Is this not the accusation against the prophets of the Old Testament? (Isaiah 5)

Do we not understand that "our Lord Jesus Christ ... gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:3). "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: ... to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27) "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4).

Beloved, we will not win the battle of the mind until we fully understand and are convinced that everything the world has to say is in opposition to God's Word. The world will only agree with the Word in order to trick you into dropping your guard. "Has God indeed said..."

Once we stop the building of the strongholds, we must begin to tear them down. This is done by replacing the bad information with God's thoughts. That is easier said than done.

Many Christians attend church for one hour a week, listen to the message and go home. To make it worse, in some churches the message is only ten minutes. The rest of the week their thinking, values and views are shaped by the world and then they wonder why they cannot get victory in their personal lives. You cannot break those strongholds down through one sermon a week while you rebuild and reinforced the few rocks that were pulled down in the service, by the time you have finished reading the Sunday paper.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying you should not read the newspaper or watch television or expose yourself to any form of worldly media. A child cannot be allowed to eat anything in the supermarket until he is able to read the labels on the cans and can figure out what is food and what is poison. Even then, he needs to be well educated because much of what is sold for food in the supermarket is very bad for you. Only someone with some understanding of diet and physiology can make the right choices. In the same way it seems very few Christians are able to discern between good and bad, especially if it has a Christian or wholesome looking label. Frequently people, who should know better, recommend various "Christian" books to me. On closer inspection such books are often anti-Christian in essence and again I have to groan within myself for the naivety of people and their leaders. Oh that Christians could just see and understand what they are doing to themselves by filling their hearts and minds with stuff which is downright poison and which is slowly killing them!

Until you stop the enemy coming in through the gates of your senses you will never stand a chance against him. Close those gates today and challenge every thought and idea before giving it right of entry by that age-old question: "friend or foe?"

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