

# **OVERCOMING LIFE-CONTROLLING STRONGHOLDS**

Through a Relationship With Jesus

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RESET: Addiction, Recovery and Restoration



# Today's Goal

Understanding biblical freedom and practical transformation

Recognize what a life-controlling stronghold can look like.

Understand the battle for the mind and heart.

See Jesus—not self-effort—as the source of true freedom.

Replace destructive beliefs with biblical truth.

Practice surrender, obedience, community, and perseverance.

Leave with one concrete freedom step for this week.



# Opening Question

5 minutes • Discuss honestly, without pressure to disclose personal details

What can begin as a choice but eventually feel like it has control over you?

Examples: addiction • anger • fear • shame • lust • unforgiveness • control • isolation • destructive relationships



# What Is a Stronghold?

A deeply established pattern that influences how we think, believe, feel, and act

Strongholds can involve thoughts, beliefs, emotions, behaviors, habits, relationships, or addictions.

They often become reinforced through repetition and secrecy.

They can create a false sense that change is impossible.

Biblical transformation addresses the person beneath the behavior—not only the behavior itself.



## Scripture: The Battle for the Mind

*“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh...  
bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”*

**2 Corinthians 10:3–5**



# How Strongholds Can Grow

## **THOUGHT**

“I need this.”

## **BELIEF**

“This is who I am.”

## **CHOICE**

I act on it.

## **PATTERN**

It repeats.

## **BONDAGE**

It feels like control.



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# Biblical Principle #1

Strongholds are challenged by the renewing of the mind

*“Do not be conformed to this world,  
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”*

**Romans 12:2**



## Biblical Principle #2

Freedom begins with Jesus

*“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”*

**John 8:36**



# What Biblical Freedom Looks Like

Freedom from sin's control—not permission to continue in it.

Freedom from shame and condemnation.

Freedom from false identity.

Freedom to obey God rather than be ruled by destructive patterns.

Freedom to become who God is shaping us to be.



## Biblical Principle #3

Bring the stronghold into the light

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties.”*

**Psalm 139:23**



# Personal Reflection

2–3 minutes of quiet reflection

What pattern repeatedly pulls me away from God's will?

When does it usually appear?

What emotions or circumstances trigger it?

What am I believing in those moments?

What does God's Word say about that belief?

What would surrendering this area to Jesus look like?



## Biblical Principle #4

Replace the lie with God's truth

**“I am worthless.”**

“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” — Psalm 139:14

**“I will never change.”**

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” — 2 Corinthians 5:17

**“I have to carry this alone.”**

“Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.” — 1 Peter 5:7

**“My past defines me.”**

“There is therefore now no condemnation...” — Romans 8:1



# Truth Replacement Exercise

The lie I have believed: \_\_\_\_\_

God's truth says: \_\_\_\_\_

The Scripture I will stand on: \_\_\_\_\_

My new response will be: \_\_\_\_\_



# Biblical Principle #5

Freedom requires faith-filled action

Knowing truth matters.

Believing truth matters.

Biblical transformation also involves obedience.

James 1:22 — “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.”

Build a new response before the next trigger arrives.



# A Practical Freedom Framework

## **STOP**

Recognize the pattern.

## **SURRENDER**

Bring it honestly to Jesus.

## **REPLACE**

Exchange the lie for Scripture.

## **CONNECT**

Seek trustworthy Christian support.

## **REPEAT**

Practice daily dependence on Christ.



# Biblical Principle #6

We were not designed to fight alone

*“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

**Galatians 6:1–2**



# Healthy Christian Accountability

Encouragement — remind one another of God's promises.

Prayer — bring the struggle before God together.

Accountability — tell the truth about progress and setbacks.

Wisdom — invite mature believers to speak into difficult choices.

Grace — correction without condemnation.

Support — refuse isolation while maintaining appropriate boundaries.



# The 7-Day Freedom Challenge

10 minutes each day with Jesus: Scripture + prayer.

Identify one recurring thought and test it against God's Word.

Memorize or meditate on one key Scripture.

Tell one trustworthy, mature Christian about your commitment.

Practice one new response when a trigger occurs.

End each day: “Where did I see God helping me today?”



# My Freedom Step

The stronghold I am surrendering: \_\_\_\_\_

The lie I am rejecting: \_\_\_\_\_

The truth I will believe: \_\_\_\_\_

The Scripture I will meditate on: \_\_\_\_\_

One action I will take this week: \_\_\_\_\_

One person I can ask for support: \_\_\_\_\_



# God Is Still Working

*“He who has begun a good work in you  
will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

**Philippians 1:6**



# The Core Takeaway

**Jesus → Truth → Surrender → Renewed Mind →  
Obedience → Community → Perseverance**

The goal is not merely to stop a behavior.

The goal is to know Jesus more deeply and learn to live according to His truth.



# Key Scriptures for Continued Study

**John 8:31–36 — Freedom through Christ**

**2 Corinthians 10:3–5 — Taking thoughts captive**

**Romans 12:1–2 — Renewal of the mind**

**Galatians 5:1, 16–25 — Freedom and walking by the Spirit**

**Psalms 139:23–24 — Heart examination**

**1 John 1:9 — Confession and forgiveness**

**James 1:22 — Obedience**

**Galatians 6:1–2 — Carrying one another's burdens**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 — New creation**

**Philippians 4:8 — A transformed thought life**

