STRONGHOLDS

2 Corinthians 10:3–4
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;)

The Apostle Paul is pointing out in this verse that every believer is engaged in a battle (WARFARE). Moreover, this warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual entities. According to Paul, these spiritual entities are launching an aggressive attack against us in the form of "strongholds".

WHAT are strongholds?

A stronghold is essentially a defensive structure (fortress or high wall). Spiritually, these stronghold come in the form of philosophies, false arguments and deeply held beliefs.

> ***2 Corinthians 10:5***
> ***5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;***
>
> Strongholds don't just pop up. Instead, they are built up over time through false doctrine, repeated sins and even trauma.

WHY are strongholds built?

Again, strongholds are defensive structures. Therefore, they're built, first of all…

TO OPPOSE *THE TRUTH*

Mark 7:8–9
8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

Apparently, their traditions was causing them to 'lay aside' (abandon, forsake) the word of God. Thus, we could say that their "traditions" were operating like a kind of stronghold that caused them to oppose and reject the truth.

> If something keeps causing you to abandon (no longer follow) the word of God, that thing is a stronghold to you!

Strongholds are also built…

TO CAUSE MEN TO OPPOSE *THEMSELVES*

Acts 18:5–6
5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

When Paul encountered the Jews in Corinth, they were opposing the truth just like the Pharisees were did in Jesus' day. However, the Bible adds that they were also "opposing themselves".

> The phrase "opposed themselves" means *to take a stand against an opponent like an army who takes up a position in battle.* This is the SAME picture that is represented by the word stronghold! The only difference is the person is not opposing the *truth*, they're actually opposing and fighting *themselves*.
>
> ***2 Timothy 2:24–25***
> ***24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;***
>
> Again, Paul is talking about someone who is resisting the truth. Notice how he once again describes them as "opposing themselves"! Thus, anyone who's opposing and rejecting God's word is *also* harming themselves.
>
> *We participate in our own demise (and failure) when we elevate our thoughts and opinions above the knowledge of God!*

Strongholds are built…

TO BIND MEN AND BRING THEM INTO BONDAGE

2 Timothy 2:25–26
25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Notice, those who “oppose themselves” ALSO are snared by the devil! Therefore, strongholds are not just erected to keep things OUT. Strongholds are also erected to keep people IN and bring them into bondage.

Colossians 2:8
8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

The word “spoil” doesn’t mean to go bad. It means to take captive!

Colossians 2:8 Lexham English Bible
8 Beware lest anyone take you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world and not according to Christ,

Paul is warning them not to allow their traditions to bring them back into bondage. (Satan will use philosophy, traditions and even experiences to keep men in emotional, psychological and spiritual bondage!)

Stronghold are also built…

TO BLIND MEN TO THE TRUTH

2 Corinthians 4:3–4
3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So, Satan will also use strongholds to not only reject the truth, but to blind men to the truth (to keep them from understanding and believing it). Thus, strongholds are often nothing more than spiritual *blindfolds*! Satan uses these blindfolds to keep men ignorant and in a state of ruin.

2 Corinthians 4:3
3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

Again, the word “lost” means to destroy, ruin or perish!

2 Corinthians 4:3 New International Version
3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

2 Thessalonians 2:10
10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Notice, rejecting the truth leads not only to blindness. It also leads to ruin

Strongholds are also created…

TO CORRUPT MEN'S MINDS

2 Corinthians 11:3
3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Someone whose mind is corrupted is vulnerable to future deception!

Titus 1:15
15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Finally, strongholds are created…

TO CORRUPT MEN'S OBEDIENCE

Titus 1:15–16
15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

Notice, when a person's mind is defiled (corrupted) their obedience (works) is also affected. Therefore, strongholds don't just affect our minds. They also affect our actions (obedience)!

2 Corinthians 10:5
5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

If obedience helps us to cast down (dismantle) strongholds, then disobedience must help to create them!

> Furthermore, disobedience will not help create a stronghold that keeps out the truth, it can also cause a person to lose whatever truth they do have!
>
> ***Mark 4:23–24***
> ***23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24 And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.***

First, we are told to take heed to what we hear. Second, we are to told take heed to what measure we mete. In other words, we are to pay attention to WHAT WE LISTEN TO, and to THE VALUE (measure) WE PLACE on what we listening to! Because being attentive (watching what you hear, being obedient to what you hear) will not only break the power of deception (strongholds), but it will also result in more understanding!