



December 7th, 2025
Pastor Josh McPherson
"THE ART OF WAR"

"HOW SATAN WANTS TO DESTROY YOUR LIFE"

*"Satan's strategy to gain power in your life is to establish **strongholds**..."*

STRONGHOLDS DEFINED:

"A fortified position to occupy un-harassed while amassing resources to fuel ongoing attacks that secure more ground."

The key in war is to reject the enemy's attempts at dominion. We do this by destroying strongholds and driving them out.

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have **divine power to destroy STRONGHOLDS**. We **destroy arguments** and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and **take every thought captive to obey Christ**..." (2 Cor. 10:3-5)*

2 KEY STRONGHOLDS YOU MUST IDENTIFY & DESTROY:

1) INNER VOWS

2) FEAR & ANXIETY



STRONGHOLD #1: INNER VOWS

DEFINITION: An unholy promise made to ourselves in response to **past** pain in order to protect ourselves from **future** pain.

PROBLEM: Jesus said not to do it.

1. Inner Vows Are Sinful.

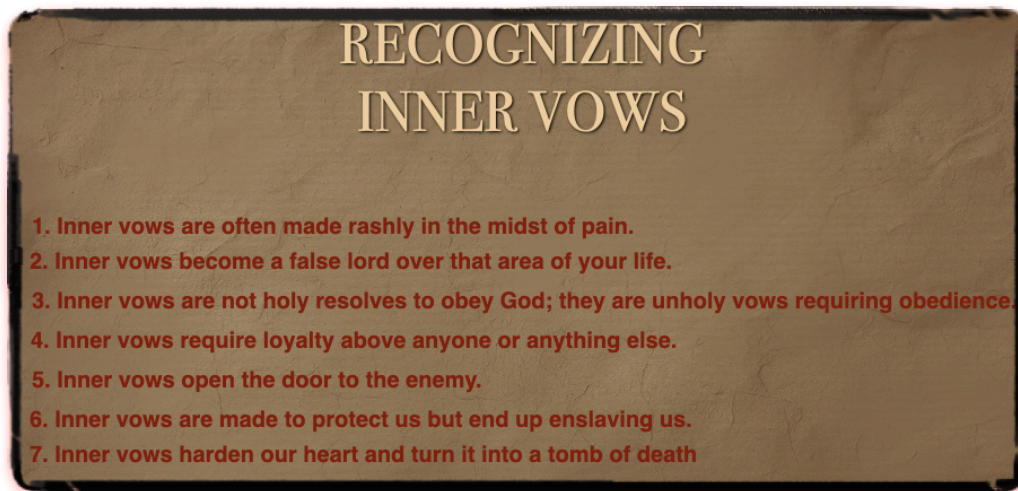
*"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; **anything beyond this comes from the evil one.**" (Matthew 5:33-37)*

2. Inner Vows Make Us Irrational.

3. Inner Vows Become Controlling.

4. Inner Vows Are Demonic.

RESULT: You create an unspoken allegiance to a higher power other than Jesus. You submit to the vow rather than to God. This becomes a **stronghold**.



HOW TO CRUSH THE STRONGHOLD OF INNER VOWS:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any inner vow you carry.

2. Forgive anyone who's sinned against you. Purge all bitterness.

"See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." (Hebrews 12:15)

3. Invite the Holy Spirit to rule, reign, lead, guide, and heal your heart.



STRONGHOLD #2: FEAR & ANXIETY

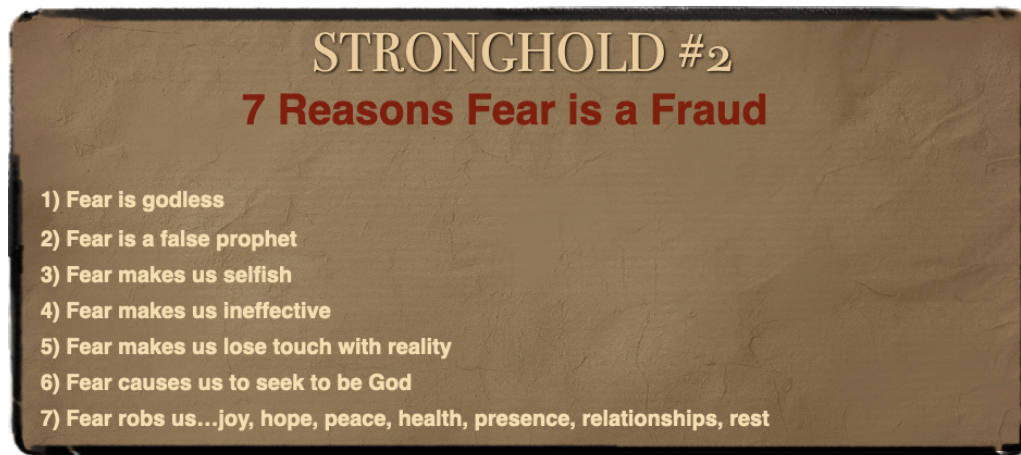
DEFINITION: Faith in a lie instead of faith in God's Word.

PROBLEM: Jesus said not to do it.

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God..." (Isaiah 41:10)

"Be anxious for nothing... the peace of God will guard your hearts and minds..." (Philippians 4:6-7)

"Cast all your anxiety on Him, for he cares for you... And your adversary the devil prowls like a roaring lion..." (1 Peter 5:7-8)



HOW TO CRUSH THE STRONGHOLD OF FEAR & ANXIETY:

1. Don't focus on just one track.

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4-7)

2. Make your rudder your will, not your emotions.

"Let your reasonableness be evident to all..." (Phil. 4:4-7)

3. Replace panic with prayer as a first response, not last resort.

"The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Phil. 4:4-7)

4. Be open with the Father, knowing He listens.

"Present your requests to God..." (Phil. 4:4-7)

5. Enjoy the presence of God.

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 4:4-7)



Discussion Questions:

Getting to Know Me

1. As you've listened to the last three sermons of "The Art of War" series, what have you found helpful or intriguing so far?
2. As Christmas approaches, what dominant thoughts & feelings have characterized your December? Is there anything causing you apprehension this Christmas? What are you most looking forward to or excited about?

Into the Bible/Sermon

1. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Pastor Josh talked about the enemy tactic of establishing strongholds. Where do you see the enemy attempt at establishing strongholds at work in our culture? What about in your own life? The life of your family?
2. Under the "Recognizing Inner Vows" section, which of the 7 truths about inner vows was most impactful to you? Why did that particular truth stick out in your mind?
3. Under the "7 Reasons Fear is a Fraud" section, which of the truths about fear have you experienced in your own life or story?

Application

1. What was your main takeaway from the sermon? What truths were you reminded of? What challenged or encouraged you? Was there anything that especially resonated with you this week?
2. As you consider Pastor Josh's teaching on inner vows & examine your own life, do you believe you have made any inner vows? What would it look like for you to walk in freedom & health in the area you have made a vow in? How can this group be in prayer for you?
3. Pastor Josh talked about the stronghold of fear and anxiety. We all face temptation to fear the wrong things...Where in your life are you personally tempted towards fear & anxiety (faith in a lie) instead of faith in God? What truths do you think might God want to remind you of in the midst of your situation?
4. How do you sense God leading you to respond? Where do you need God's help to follow through? What step of courage might God be calling you into? What step towards freedom might the Holy Spirit be urging you to take?