

THE DISCIPLE MAKER SERIES

TRUTH  
THAT DEMOLISHES  
STRONGHOLDS

REVISED & ABRIDGED

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ECLIPSE

Equipping **C**hristian **L**eaders  
Internationally:  
**P**astorally, **S**piritually & **E**ducationally

A ministry accountable to the Central Church, Bissau and  
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**Key Scriptures:** *Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2Cor 10:3-5 NIV). You were washed [purified by the atoning sacrifice of Christ], you were sanctified [set apart for God, and made holy], you were justified [declared free of guilt] in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit of our God [the source of the believer's new life and changed behaviour] (1Cor 6:11 Amp).*

**Recommendation:** I would encourage you to read through the whole book fairly slowly and carefully before homing in on any of the specific strongholds. This way, four things will surely happen. (1) You will be strengthened by the statements of truth you will be declaring over yourself, and built up in your spirit by the precious and totally reliable promises of God's Word. (2) You will be obeying the command: *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth (2Tm 2:15 ESV).* (3) You will be teaching yourself sound biblical theology. And (4) you will be familiarizing yourself with the specific verses that will benefit those you seek to disciple and who are struggling in the various areas being covered; you will be equipping yourself to instruct others.

**Special Note:** Can all those listed above strictly be called 'strongholds'? Maybe not; it could be a matter of degree. When does an ingrained dubious thought or habit become a stronghold? Ask the Holy Spirit to show you. They reveal themselves in addictions, being controlled by ungodliness, the inability to relax, and in despair rather than God-dependence.

## CHAPTER ONE : 50 COMMON STRONGHOLDS

What is a stronghold according to 2Cor 10:3-5? Ed Silvoso: 'It is a mind-set, impregnated with hopelessness, which causes me to accept as unchangeable situations that I know are contrary to the will of God'. Neil Anderson: 'It is a mental habit pattern of thought that is not consistent with God's Word'. Dave Devenish: 'It is a body of wrong thinking; wrong arguments and pretensions. It consists of ideas that have not been taken captive to Christ; that have not been submitted to his lordship; that challenge God and his sovereignty today.'

At a personal level, a stronghold is a fortress of lies that the devil has constructed in my mind over a period of time, especially in my earliest years. He is the father of lies. There is no truth in him. If I believe his lies, I partner with him and put myself under his power and into his grip. Therefore, I must take every unclear thought by the scruff of the neck, unsheathe the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, and either slay it with the truth or affirm it as being of God. The thoughts we are concerned with here are those that control our inner motives and affect our feelings and actions. Our minds and wills determine our conduct. Our attitudes are governed by the way we think. Thoughts that need to be tested are those that reinforce one another to shape the way we live.

How can we identify and get rid of enemy strongholds that have been firmly established in our hearts and minds, in many cases since we were small children? First of all, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to search our hearts and to see if there is any 'offensive way' in us; any 'hurtful way' causing us pain, and causing pain to the Father about us (Ps 139:24).

What follows are truths from God's Word that have the power to destroy some fifty strongholds. And they are not empty structures. They provide a refuge for demonic powers, giving them a secure foothold in our lives. The god of this world gets to work on us from the womb and tries to drip-feed his lies to us 24/7 until the day we die. How often do we deliberately and painstakingly feed our souls with the wholesome and powerful truth of God's Word to combat this? What might be our time ratio between listening to the devil's lies and giving ear to God's truth?

Studies have shown that it can take up to six weeks for a false belief to be unwired from the brain. We need God's help to bring this about. But we also need our local church to become a healing family that replaces the dysfunctional one in which many of us were brought up. Only spiritual fathers and mothers, who are filled with Spirit, can, through loving kindness and affirmation, do for us what our own parents failed to do: instil in us a true sense of worth. See 'Changes that Heal' Henry Cloud.

# 1. STRONGHOLD OF FEELING A FAKE

## THE TRUTH: I AM IN CHRIST

**The Father chose me and placed me in His Son** before I was born: *He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world* (Eph 1:4 NIV). *It is God who establishes us ... in Christ* (2Cor 1:21 ESV).

**I have been invited:** *Come to me, all ... who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest* (Mt 11:28 NLT).

**I have been drawn to Christ by the Father:** *No-one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him* (Jn 6:44 NIV).

**I am a gift of the Father to the Son:** *All that the Father gives me will come to me* (Jn 6:37 ESV).

**I have come to Christ, and He will never reject me:** *Whoever comes to me I will never [no never] cast out* (Jn 6:37 ESV).

**I am indwelt by the Holy Spirit:** *No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit* (1Cor 12:3 NASB).

**I have been granted repentance:** [Gently instruct those who oppose you] *in the hope that God will grant them repentance* (2Tm 2:25 NIV).

**I have been declared innocent:** *We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus* (Rm 3:24 NIV).

**I acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah:** *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God* (1Jn 4:15 ESV).

**I love to obey His commandments:** *By this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments* (1Jn 2:3-5 ESV).

**I love the members of God's family:** *We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers [and sisters]* (1Jn 3:14 ESV).

**I am persevering as a believer:** *We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end* (Heb 3:14 ESV).

**I rely on the simplicity of the gospel:** *All who did receive him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God* (Jn 1:12 ESV). *Those God foreknew [fore-loved] he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son* (Rm 8:29 NIV).

## 2. STRONGHOLD OF CONFUSED IDENTITY

### THE TRUTH: JESUS HIMSELF IS MY IDENTITY

**I am a new creation:** *Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2Cor 5:17 NLT) Christ Jesus has made me his own (Php 3:12 ESV).*

**I am light in Jesus:** *At one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord (Eph 5:8 ESV).*

**I am part of God's family:** *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God (1Pt 2:10 NIV).*

**I have already been made perfect:** *By one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy (Heb 10:14 NIV).*

**I have been adopted by the Father:** *God sent his Son ... that we might be adopted and have sonship conferred upon us (Gal 4:4-5 Amp).*

**I am in God's kingdom:** *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his Son (Col 1:13 ESV).*

**My old self was put to death:** *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Gal 2:20 ESV).*

**I am seated with Christ:** *God ... raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:6 ESV).*

**I have a new divine nature:** *Like the rest we were by nature objects of wrath (Eph 2:3 NIV). Through ... his very great and precious promises ... we [now] participate in the divine nature (2Pt 1:4 NIV).*

**I have crossed over from death to life:** *Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life (Jn 5:24 ESV).*

**I have been reconciled to God by God Himself:** *Once you were alienated from God ... enemies ... but now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Col 1:21-22 NIV).*

**I have peace with God:** *There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rm 8:1 NIV). Since then it is by faith that we are justified, let us grasp the fact that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rm 5:1 Phillips).*



### 3. STRONGHOLD OF A SLAVE MENTALITY

#### THE TRUTH: THE FATHER ONLY HAS CHILDREN

**God has always wanted to father me:** *How gladly would I treat you like sons and daughters ... I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me (Jer 3:19 NIV).*

**I am a son or daughter of God:** *You are no longer a slave, but God's own child (Gal 4:7 NLT). You are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal 3:26 NLT).*

**I really am God's child:** *Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown to us in allowing us to be called 'children of God' – and that is what we are ... here and now (1Jn 3:1-2 Phillips).*

**I was predestined to become God's child:** *In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons and daughters through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will (Eph 1:5 NIV).*

**The Spirit does not affirm slaves:** *You should not be like cowering, fearful slaves. You should behave instead like God's very own children, adopted into his family – calling him dear Father (Rm 8:15 NLT).*

**The Spirit affirms me as God's son or daughter:** *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Rm 8:16 NIV).*

**Jesus has purchased my freedom from slavery with His blood:** *God sent his Son to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children (Gal 4:5-6 NLT).*

**I am a baby in His arms:** *The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing (Zph 3:17 NIV).*

**The Father delights in me:** *The Lord's delight is in those who fear him; who put their hope in his unfailing love (Ps 147:10-11 NLT).*

**The Father's delight empowers me:** *Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength (Neh 8:10 NLT).*

**Only the Father's children are eternally secure:** *A slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son [or daughter] belongs to it for ever (Jn 8:35 NIV).*

## 4. STRONGHOLD OF REJECTION

### THE TRUTH: IN CHRIST I AM ACCEPTED

**I will never be rejected:** *Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord will hold me close (Ps 27:10 NLT).*

**I am forgiven and have been brought near to God:** *He forgave us all our sins having cancelled the written code ... that opposed us ... nailing it to the cross (Col 2:13-14 NIV). Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ (Eph 2:13 NLT).*

**I am accepted and complete in Him:** *He has made us accepted in the Beloved (Eph 1:6 KJV). So you also are complete through your union with Christ (Col 2:10 NLT).*

**I am Christ's friend:** *No longer do I call you servants ... but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you (Jn 15:15 ESV).*

**I have God's promise of acceptance:** *I will live among you, and I will not despise you. I will walk among you; I will be your God, and you will be my people ... I broke the yoke of slavery from your neck so you can walk with your heads held high (Lv 26:11-13 NLT).*

**I have Christ's righteousness:** *You are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1Cor 1:30 NIV).*

**I am a true member of God's family:** *You ... are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens [of heaven] along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family (Eph 2:19 NLT).*

**I will never be rejected:** *The Lord will not abandon [reject; forsake] his people, because that would dishonour his great name. For it has pleased the Lord to make you his very own (1Sm 12:22 NLT).*

**I cannot be separated from God's love:** *I am convinced that ... neither death nor life ... angels nor demons ... our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love ... revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rm 8:38-39 NLT).*

**I have come to Christ, and He will never reject me:** *Whoever comes to me I will never [no never] cast out (Jn 6:37 ESV).*

## 5. STRONGHOLD OF WORTHLESSNESS

### THE TRUTH: I WAS BOUGHT WITH JESUS' BLOOD

**God sacrificed His Son for me:** *God so loved the world [the cosmos] that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16 ESV).*

**God punished His own Son in my place:** *He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed (Isa 53:4-6 NIV).*

**I belong to God:** *The Lord says ... Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine ... I am your Saviour ... you are precious and honoured in my sight, and I love you (Isa 43:1-4 NIV). [Jesus] loved me and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20 NIV).*

**I am the salt and light of the earth:** *You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world (Mt 5:13-14 NLT).*

**I am God's treasured possession:** *The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth (Dt 7:6 ESV).*

**I am a channel of Christ's life:** *I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener ... you are the branches (Jn 15:1, 5 NLT).*

**I have been enabled to bear fruit:** *You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit (Jn 15:16 NLT).*

**I am God's temple:** *All of you together are the temple of God and ... the Spirit of God lives in [each of] you (1Cor 3:16; 6:19 NLT).*

**I am a minister of reconciliation:** *All this is from God, who ... gave us the ministry of reconciliation (2Cor 5:18 ESV). [Jesus] appointed [me], so that [I could] be with him (Mk 3:13-14 NASB).*

**I am God's fellow worker:** *For we are God's fellow workers (1Cor 3:9 NKJV) ... each with his assigned task (Mk 13:34 NIV).*

**I am God's masterpiece:** *We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:10 NIV).*

## 6. STRONGHOLD OF NOT BEING LOVEABLE

### THE TRUTH: GOD HAS ALWAYS LOVED ME

**God loved me before I was born:** *God knew [loved] his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son (Rm 8:29 NLT).*

**The Lord's love is always with me:** *The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him (Ps 103:17 ESV). I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you (Jer 31:3 ESV).*

**I am loved beyond understanding:** *I pray that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend its breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (Eph 3:17-19 ESV).*

**I am loved so much that Jesus died in my place:** *Greater love has no one than this that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you (Jn 15:13-14 ESV).*

**God's love for me is not dependent on my performance:** *The proof of God's amazing love is this: that while we were sinners Christ died for us ... now that we are ... justified by the shedding of his blood, what reason have we to fear the wrath of God? (Rm 5:7-11 Phillips).*

**I am cared for:** *Cast [throw deliberately and decisively] all your anxieties on him because he cares for you (1Pt 5:7 ESV). Each day he carries us in his arms (Ps 68:19 NLT).*

**I am never forgotten and always cherished:** *I have written [engraved] your name on the palms of my hands (Isa 49:15-16 NLT). He who touches you touches the apple of his eye (Zch 2:8 ESV).*

**I am always loved:** *This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy (Mt 3:17 NLT). In this world we are like him [dearly loved] (1Jn 4:17 NIV). The Father himself loves you dearly, because you love me and believe that I came from God (Jn 16:27 NLT).*

**God never withholds His affection from me:** *Blessed be God, because he has not ... removed his steadfast love from me (Ps 66:20 ESV).*

**God rescued me:** *In my distress I called to the Lord ... He reached down ... and took hold of me ... He rescued me from my powerful foes who were too strong for me ... because he delighted in me (Ps 18:6-19 NIV).*

## 7. STRONGHOLD OF BEING FATHERLESS

### THE TRUTH: I HAVE A WONDERFUL FATHER

**Father, I can count on You:** *I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord (2Cor 6:18 NLT). I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God (Jn 20:17 ESV).*

**Father, You have adopted me:** *God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure (Eph 1:5 NLT).*

**Father, You delight in me:** *The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you (Zph 3:17 NIV).*

**Father, You have always fathered me:** *When [you were] a child I loved [you] ... It was I who taught [you] to walk, taking [you] by the arms ... I led [you] with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from [your] neck and bent down to feed [you] (Hos 11:1-4 NIV).*

**Father, You have never humiliated me:** *Again Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground ... until [he alone] was left with the woman ... Jesus straightened up and asked her: Where are they? Has no one condemned you? ... then neither do I condemn you (Jn 8:8-11 NIV).*

**Father, You have always shown me respect:** *God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Gn 1:27 NLT).*

**Father, You yearn for me:** *[Are you not] my dear child in whom I delight? ... my heart yearns for [you]; I have great compassion for [you] (Jer 31:20 NIV).*

**Father, You hold me:** *He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms ... close to his heart (Isa 40:11 NLT).*

**Father, I can relax with You:** *Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields [them] all day long, and [they] rest between his shoulders (Dt 33:12 NIV).*

**Father, You know my frailty:** *The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate ... He knows how weak we are (Ps 103:13-14 NLT). There is no partiality with him (Eph 6:9 ESV).*

**Father, You will always father me:** *A father to the fatherless ... is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families (Ps 68:5-6 NIV).*

## 8. STRONGHOLD OF FEAR

### THE TRUTH: IN CHRIST I NEVER NEED BE AFRAID

**I must intentionally trust in Jesus' promise:** *I give [my sheep] eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand ... [or] out of the Father's hand (Jn 10:28-29 ESV).*

**I am never alone:** *Do not be afraid, for I am with you (Isa 43:5 NLT). I will never fail you. I will never abandon you (Heb 13:5 NLT).*

**I am always helped by God:** *The Lord is my helper, so I will have no fear. What can mere people do to me? (Heb 13:6 NLT)*

**I am known by God and belong to Him:** *Do not be afraid for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine (Isa 43:1 NLT).*

**God's love dispels all my fear:** *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love (1Jn 4:18 NIV).*

**My love for God is proof that I am His:** *If anyone loves God, he is known by him (1Cor 8:3 NASB). We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God (Rm 8:28 NLT).*

**I am protected:** *O Sovereign Lord, the strong one who rescued me, you protect me on the day of battle (Ps 140:7 NLT). The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous one runs into it and is safe (Pr 18:10 ESV).*

**God safely hides me:** *You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance (Ps 32:7 NIV).*

**I will trust His promises:** *When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. I praise God for what he has promised. I trust in God (Ps 56:3-4 NLT).*

**God's love for those who fear Him is immeasurable:** *For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him (Ps 103:11 ESV).*

**God is my provider:** *No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly (Ps 84:11 ESV). He gives to his beloved even in their sleep [while they are sleeping he provides for them] (Ps 127:2 NASB).*

**How I can conquer fear:** *You [Satan's Goliath] come against me with sword and spear ... but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty ... for the battle is the Lord's (1Sm 17:45-47 NIV).*

## 9. STRONGHOLD OF GUILT

### THE TRUTH: I HAVE BEEN DECLARED INNOCENT

**My sin has been taken away:** *He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us (Ps 103:10-12 NIV).*

**I have been washed clean:** *You were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1Cor 6:11 NLT).*

**My sin is covered and forgotten:** *Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered ... whose sin the Lord will never count against them (Rm 4:7-8 NIV). I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins (Heb 8:12 NLT).*

**Christ's righteousness is God's gift to me:** *A righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known ... This righteousness ... comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (Rm 3:21-22 NIV).*

**I have been declared righteous:** *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and [all who believe] are justified ... freely by his grace ... through Jesus Christ ... through faith in his blood (Rm 3:23-25 NIV).*

**I am forgiven:** *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1Jn 1:9 ESV). In him we have ... the forgiveness of sins [of a lifetime] (Eph 1:7 NIV).*

**My sin has gone:** *If you ... kept a record of sins ... who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness (Ps 130:3-4 NIV). As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our sins from us (Ps 103:12 ESV).*

**I am righteous now:** *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2Cor 5:21 NIV).*

**I am faultless:** *He has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ ... he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault (Col 1:22 NLT).*

**I am free from guilt:** *Behold, this burning coal has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for (Isa 6:7 ESV). I will write my law on their hearts ... I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more (Jer 31:33-34 ESV).*

## 10. STRONGHOLD OF RESTLESSNESS

### THE TRUTH: I AM AT PEACE WITH GOD

**Jesus gives me perfect rest:** *Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly (Mt 11:28-30 MSG).*

**His peace is my peace:** *Peace I leave with you [as a gift in my will]; my peace I give you. Not as the world gives [not a fleeting peace] (Jn 14:27 ESV). He himself is our peace (Eph 2:14 ESV).*

**I can be at peace in every situation:** *May the Lord of peace himself grant you his [kingdom's] peace at all times and in all ways – under all circumstances and conditions, whatever comes (2Th 3:16 Amp).*

**I must grasp the fact that I have peace:** *Since then it is by faith that we have been justified, let us grasp the fact that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rm 5:1 Phillips).*

**I will never be shaken:** *My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken (Ps 62:1-2 NIV).*

**Peace need never be lost through failure or trouble:** *I have said these things to you [about deserting me], that in me you may have peace [not in your performance]. In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world (Jn 16:33 ESV).*

**The Holy Spirit imparts peace to me:** *Letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace (Rm 8:6 NLT).*

**God's peace is wholeness, completeness, soundness and harmony:** *The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace [shalom] (Nm 6:24-26 ESV).*

**Trusting God and His Word brings peace:** *Those who love your instructions have great peace and do not stumble (Ps 119:165 NLT). You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you (Isa 26:3 NIV).*

**Peace brings victory over Satan:** *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet (Rm 16:20 NLT).*



## 11. STRONGHOLD OF INSECURITY

### THE TRUTH: ONCE SAVED ALWAYS SAVED

**I will never be put to shame:** *The one who trusts in him [Jesus] will never be put to shame (Rm 9:33 NIV). There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Rm 8:1-2 NIV).*

**I stand on the Rock:** *He lifted me out of the pit of despair ... He set my feet on solid ground and steadied me as I walked along (Ps 40:2 NLT). This is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day (Jn 6:39 NIV).*

**Jesus is praying for me:** *Who then will condemn us? No one – for Christ Jesus died for us and was raised to life for us, and he is [now] sitting at ... God's right hand, pleading for us (Rm 8:34 NLT).*

**God will keep me strong:** *He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God who has called you into fellowship with his Son ... is faithful (1Cor 1:8-9 NIV).*

**I cannot be lost:** *My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one [including Satan] can snatch them away from me (Jn 10:27-30 NLT).*

**My soul is anchored in God:** *We have this [our trust in God] as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place [heaven] ... where Jesus has gone as a forerunner (Heb 6:19-20 ESV).*

**I bear God's seal of ownership:** *It is God who makes us stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts ... guaranteeing what is to come (2Cor 1:21-22 NIV).*

**I am and will be saved completely:** *He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them (Heb 7:25 ESV). For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3 ESV).*

**God will complete what He started in me:** *I am sure ... that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion (Php 1:6 ESV). We know that ... the one who was born of God [Jesus] keeps them safe [every believer], and the evil one cannot harm them (1Jn 5:18 NIV).*

**God is trustworthy:** *I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him [my very soul] until the day of his return (2Tm 1:12 NLT).*

## 12. STRONGHOLD OF IT ALL APPLYING TO OTHERS

### THE TRUTH: ALL GOD'S PROMISES APPLY TO ME

**I can share my doubts with God:** *Come now let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow (Isa 1:18 ESV).*

**No one is excluded:** *For God so loved the world [the cosmos] that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16 NLT).*

**God's hand is on me:** *The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him (Ezra 8:22 NIV).*

**The fear of God is in my heart:** *I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me (Jer 32:40 NIV).*

**God delights in me:** *The Lord's delight is in those who fear him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love (Ps 147:11 NLT).*

**I live in God and He lives in me:** *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God (1Jn 4:15 ESV).*

**God longs for me to find Him:** *If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you, says the Lord (Jer 29:13-14 NLT).*

**I am shown compassion:** *The Lord is ... compassionate; slow to anger and rich in love ... he has compassion on all (Ps 145:8-9 NIV).*

**I will not be judged:** *The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who takes refuge in him will be condemned (Ps 34:22 ESV).*

**I really do love God, so I will inherit all His promises:** *No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him (1Cor 2:9 NLT).*

**I have decided to follow Jesus:** *Those who doubt are like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. They should not think they will receive anything from the Lord; they are double-minded [facing in opposite directions at the same time], unstable in all they do (Jm 1:6-8 NIV).*

**God can deal with all my doubts:** *Nothing is too hard for you (Jer 32:17 ESV). God ... does not lie ... He does not change his mind ... Has he ever promised and not carried it through? (Nm 23:19 NLT) This is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life (Jn 6:40 ESV).*

## 13. STRONGHOLD OF DOUBTING GOD'S CHARACTER

### THE TRUTH: GOD IS GOOD TO ALL

**God is totally trustworthy:** *I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Ascribe greatness to our God, the Rock, his work is perfect ... all his ways are just. A God of faithfulness ... just and upright is he (Dt 32:3-4 ESV).*

**God won't explain it all:** *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us (Dt 29:29 ESV). You are good and what you do is good (Ps 119:68 NIV).*

**God is good to me:** *The Lord keeps you from all harm and watches over your life. The Lord keeps watch over you as you come and go, both now and forever (Ps 121:7-8 NLT). Your promise revives me; it comforts me in all my troubles (Ps 119:50 NLT).*

**God will rescue me:** *Because he loves me, says the Lord, I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him (Ps 91:14-15 NIV).*

**God isn't out to punish me:** *No misfortune is in his plan for Jacob [for the people of God]; no trouble is in store for Israel (Nm 23:21 NLT).*

**God is faithful:** *The Lord ... remains faithful for ever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free, the Lord gives sight to the blind, the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down ... The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow (Ps 146:6-9 NIV).*

**God is close by:** *He stands at the right hand of the needy one, to save him from those who condemn his soul to death (Ps 109:31 ESV).*

**God's love sustains me:** *When I thought, my foot slips, your steadfast love, O Lord, held me up. When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul (Ps 94:18-19 ESV).*

**I am protected:** *As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people (Ps 125:2 ESV). O Lord, my Lord ... you have covered my head in the day of battle (Ps 140:7 ESV).*

**God is very patient:** *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise ... He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2Pt 3:9 NIV). I urge ... that prayers ... be made for everyone ... This is good and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1Tm 2:1-3 NIV).*

## 14. STRONGHOLD OF AVOIDABLE WEAKNESS

### THE TRUTH: WITH GOD I CAN DO ALL THINGS

**God enables me to be strong whatever is happening:** *I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation ... I can do everything through him [Jesus] who gives me strength (Php 4:13 NIV).*

**God strengthens me:** *The Lord will not grow tired or weary ... He gives strength ... and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary and ... stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint (Isa 40:28-31 NIV). The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him (2Ch 16:9 NIV). Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts (Zch 4:6 ESV).*

**God's joy in me is my strength:** *Do not be grieved for the joy of the Lord [his delight in you as his child] is your strength (Neh 8:10 ESV).*

**Only in God can I be strong:** *Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might (Eph 6:10 ESV). It is God who arms me with strength (2Sm 22:33 NIV). Happy are those who are strong in the Lord (Ps 84:5 NLT).*

**Only in grace can I be strong:** *My dear son [or daughter], be strong through the grace that God gives you in Christ Jesus (2Tm 2:1 NLT).*

**God's mighty power is mine:** *I pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead (Eph 1:19-20 NLT).*

**God longs to make me strong:** *[By faith] Gideon ... David, Samuel and all the prophets ... overthrew kingdoms ... received what God had promised ... [their] weakness was turned to strength (Heb 11:32-34 NLT).*

**God is with me:** *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid and do not panic ... For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you [and] be with you; he will never fail you nor abandon you (Dt 31:6, 8 NLT).*

**In God the weak become fearless soldiers:** *Let the weak say, I am strong! I am a warrior! (Joel 3:10 ESV)*

**Weaknesses promote God-dependence:** *My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness ... so that Christ's power may rest on me ... I delight in weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions ... for when I am weak, then I am strong (2Cor 12:9-10 NIV).*

## 15. STRONGHOLD OF LEGALISM

### THE TRUTH: IT CANNOT CHANGE THE HEART; BUT GRACE CAN

**Legalism concerns externals:** *These people say they are mine. They honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules (Isa 29:13 NLT).*

**Legalism is judgemental:** *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand (Rm 14:4 NIV). Do not judge others, and you will not be judged (Mt 7:1 NLT).*

**Legalism produces hypocrisy:** *Do not judge others, and you will not be judged ... Why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? ... Hypocrite! (Mt 7:1-5 NLT)*

**Legalism offers no help:** *[The Pharisees] crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden (Mt 23:4 NLT).*

**Legalism is powerless against sin:** *Sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace (Rm 6:14 ESV). [The principles of legalism] provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires (Col 2:23 NLT).*

**Legalism is an impossible burden:** *Why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? (Ac 15:10 NLT)*

**Legalism refuses to submit to God:** *For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness (Rm 10:3 ESV).*

**Legalism insists that only one way is right:** *One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind (Rm 14:5 ESV).*

**Legalism despises relationship:** *Look [you]! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends (Lk 15:29 NIV).*

**The Spirit, not legalism, empowers me to be holy:** *[When living under legalism] what I want to do, I do not do ... the evil I do not want to do ... I keep on doing! (Rm 7:15, 19 NIV)*

**Legalism cannot save me from hell:** *By works of the law no human being will be justified [declared not guilty] in his sight (Rm 3:20 ESV).*

**Grace, not legalism, reigned in the NT church:** [In Antioch Barnabas] saw the evidence of the grace of God and was glad (Ac 11:23 ESV). Paul and Barnabas ... urged them [new converts] to continue in the grace of God (Ac 13:43 NIV). The Lord ... confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders (Ac 14:3 NIV). They had been committed to the grace of God for the work (Ac 14:26 NIV). My life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus – the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God (Ac 20:24 NLT). All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing ... since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth (Col 1:6 NIV). The grace of God ... teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness (Titus 2:11-12 NIV).

**Legalism enslaves and opposes freedom:** For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery [the law]. Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision [a gospel of works], Christ will be of no advantage to you. I testify again to every person who accepts circumcision that they are obligated to keep the whole law [to live a perfect life]. You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith [not works], we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness ... The only things that counts is faith expressing itself through love (Gal 5:1-6 NLT & NIV).

Our former unsaved state is portrayed as slavery and Jesus as our Liberator. Conversion is an act of emancipation from the Old Covenant. The Christian life is a life of freedom. 'This freedom is not primarily a freedom from sin, but rather from the law. It is not so much to set our will free from the bondage of sin as to set our conscience free from the guilt of sin. It is freedom from the tyranny of the law, the dreadful struggle to keep the law, with a view to winning the favour of God' (John Stott).

If we are still, deep down, trying to commend ourselves to God in order to earn his acceptance, Christ will be of no advantage to us; we are 'severed from Christ'; we have 'fallen away from grace'. If we think, deep down, that our good deeds, our good character, our ability not to sin, our hard work and sacrifice in serving the cause of the gospel, our soul-winning, have anything whatsoever to do with whether or not we will go to heaven; we will have returned to a gospel of works and rejected the New Covenant. If we are under the deadly delusion that we could make any sort of contribution to our eternal salvation, Christ's death and resurrection would have been insufficient to save us. The truth is that salvation is in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone.

## 16. STRONGHOLD OF RELIANCE ON WORKS

### THE TRUTH: RELIANCE ON WORKS IMPRISONS ME

**It means trying to become my own Saviour and abandoning Jesus:**

*You died to the law through the body of Christ that you might belong to another to him who was raised from the dead (Rm 7:4 NIV). We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus (Ac 15:10-11 NLT). We have been released from the law, for we died to it and are no longer captive to its power (Rm 7:6 NLT).*

**It means abandoning the Spirit:** *How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? (Gal 3:3 NLT)*

**It means I have no peace:** *Since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [having] gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand (Rm 5:1-2 NIV).*

**It opposes righteousness by faith:** *Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for all who believe (Rm 10:4 NIV).*

**It keeps me from victorious living:** *If, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ (Rm 5:17 NIV).*

**It keeps me under a curse:** *Those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse ... But Christ has rescued us ... He took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing (Gal 3:10, 13 NLT).*

**It robs me of joy:** *You are turning back to those weak and miserable principles ... What has happened to all your joy? (Gal 4:9, 15 NIV)*

**It nullifies the cross:** *If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing (Gal 2:21 NIV). You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace (Gal 5:4 ESV).*

**It keeps me enslaved:** *It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1 NIV).*

**It makes it impossible to accept myself as I am, forgive myself and extend grace to myself:** *Accept each other [including yourself] ... just as Christ has accepted you [that is, just as you are] (Rm 15:7 NLT).*

## 17. STRONGHOLD OF NOT RELYING ON THE GOSPEL

### THE TRUTH: JESUS IS MY JOY & MY IDENTITY

**Jesus is my life:** *The life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20 ESV). I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (Jn 10:10 ESV).*

**Jesus is my joy:** *Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown to us in allowing us to be called 'children of God' – and that is what we are ... here and now (1Jn 3:1-2 Phillips).*

**Jesus is my righteousness:** *In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed ... that is by faith from first to last (Rm 1:17 NIV). Jesus ... has become for us ... our righteousness (1Cor 1:30 NIV).*

**I belong to Jesus' new ethnic group:** [His] *one new people (Eph 2:15 GNT). You are a chosen people ... a holy nation [a new holy ethnic group] ... belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1Pt 2:9 NIV).*

**My acceptance is in Jesus; I cannot save myself:** *He has made us accepted in the beloved (Eph 1:6 KJV). You were like charred sticks pulled from the fire (Amos 4:11 NLT).*

**I serve with God's approval;** not to gain it. I am free to rest and free to fail: *You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased [said to Jesus before he began his ministry and what God says to you and me] (Lk 3:22 NIV). In this world we are like him [like Jesus; dearly loved and fully pleasing to God] (1Jn 4:17 NIV).*

**My reward is His affirmation;** not that of people: *Well done, good and faithful servant ... Enter into the joy of your master (Mt 25:23 ESV).*

**My times and experiences are in His hands;** not in my own hands or in those of others: [Joseph said to his brothers] *It was God who sent me here, not you ... You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good (Gn 45:8; 50:20 NLT).*

**My peace is the peace of Jesus freely given to me:** *I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart (Jn 14:27 NLT). Peace be with you (Jn 20:19, 21, 26 ESV).*

**My joy is the joy of Jesus freely given to me;** not worldly happiness or pleasure: *I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love ... I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! (Jn 15:9-11 NLT)*



## 18. STRONGHOLD OF CONFUSED THINKING

### THE TRUTH: JESUS IS MY EVERYTHING

**Only Jesus can fully satisfy me:** *I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty* (Jn 6:35 NLT).

**Only the Holy Spirit can provide all the comfort I need;** not food, sex, money, etc.: *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate [Comforter, Helper, Intercessor, Counsellor, Strengthener] who will never leave you ... No, I will not abandon you as orphans* (Jn 14:16, 18 NLT).

**I am proud of all that God has done for me:** *I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes* (Rm 1:16 ESV).

**God is not looking for faults, but for faith:** *If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness* (1Jn 1:8-9 NLT). *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost [said by Paul at the end of his life]* (1Tm 1:15 ESV).

**The work God requires is faith;** not human effort or religious rituals: *They replied, We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do? Jesus told them, This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent* (Jn 6:28-29 NLT).

**My perseverance in the faith depends on God;** not on my success or failure: *He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful* (1Cor 1:8-9 NIV).

**God chose to set His affection on me because He loves me:** *It was simply that the Lord loves you [that he] set his heart on you and chose you* (Dt 7:7-8 NLT).

**God's peace is always available to me:** *May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way* (2Th 3:16 ESV).

**God does not want me to be hard on myself; He isn't hard on me:** *The LORD is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust* (Ps 103:13-14).

## 19. STRONGHOLD OF AN INCOMPLETE SALVATION

### THE TRUTH: JESUS SAID IT IS FINISHED

**My salvation is all God's work:** *Since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son (Rm 5:10 NLT).*

**Jesus absorbed the full wrath of God for everyone's sin:** *Christ ... took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing (Gal 3:10, 13 NLT). The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:6 ESV).*

**Jesus cancelled the law's legal demands against me:** *You were dead because of your sins ... God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave us all our sins. He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross (Col 2:13-14 NLT).*

**I have been rescued from judgement:** *Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people [he died for all, but not all will receive him] (Heb 9:28 NLT). He is the one who has rescued us from the terrors of the coming judgement (1Th 1:10 NLT).*

**God sacrificed His Son for me:** *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted ... Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him (Isa 53:4, 10 ESV).*

**Jesus completed His assigned task:** *I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do (Jn 17:4 ESV). It is finished [the work I came to do; I can rest now] (Jn 19:30 ESV).*

**Jesus took away my condemnation:** *Who will condemn us? Christ Jesus is the one who died – more than that, who was raised – who is at the right hand of God ... [always] interceding for us (Rm 8:34 ESV).*

**I am free from any accusation:** *He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation (Col 1:22 NIV).*

**My conscience is cleansed:** *The blood of Christ will purify our consciences from sinful deeds so that we can worship the living God (Heb 9:14 NLT). He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him (Heb 5:9 ESV).*

**I am set free from the fear of death:** *Only as a human being could he [Jesus] die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying (Heb 2:14-15 NLT).*

## 20. STRONGHOLD OF INDEPENDENCE

### THE TRUTH: I AM MADE FOR GOD-DEPENDENCE

**I need to become fully God-dependent:** *My salvation and my honour depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge (Ps 62:7 NIV). We put no confidence in human effort. Instead we boast about what Christ Jesus has done for us (Php 3:3 NLT).*

**My own understanding is not to be trusted:** *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths (Pr 3:5-6 NIV).*

**Without God I am unfruitful and powerless:** *No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me (Jn 15:4 NIV). Apart from me you can do nothing (Jn 15:5 ESV).*

**I must lean on God:** *O Lord, you alone are my hope. I've trusted you, O Lord, from childhood. You have been with me from birth (Ps 71:5-6 NLT). We expected to die. But as a result, we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely on God, who raises the dead (2Cor 1:9 NLT).*

**I can always be sure of God's love for me, even when I sin:** *We know and rely on the love God has for us (1Jn 4:16 NIV).*

**It is Jesus who sustains me:** *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven [having completed the work the Father sent him to do] (Heb 1:3 NIV).*

**God sustains me when all is dark:** *If you are walking in darkness without a ray of light, trust in the Lord and rely on your God (Isa 50:10 NLT). God is my helper ... the upholder of my life (Ps 54:4 ESV).*

**God supports me:** *The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that he may strongly support those whose heart is completely his (2Ch 16:9 NASB).*

**Without the Spirit I am a slave to sin:** *I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh [my ego-centric human nature]. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out (Rm 7:18 NIV). The law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death (Rm 8:2 NIV). This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings that we do, yet he did not sin (Heb 4:15 NLT).*

## 21. STRONGHOLD OF HOPELESSNESS

### THE TRUTH: WITH GOD THERE IS HOPE FOR ALL

**I need to give my soul a good talking-to:** *Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again – my Saviour and my God! (Ps 42:5 NLT) Find rest O my soul in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I shall not be shaken (Ps 62:5-6 NIV).*

**My God is the God of hope:** *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Rm 15:13 ESV).*

**God will not abandon me:** *There [in the desert] you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place (Dt 1:31 NIV).*

**I can always have hope:** *I still dare to hope when I remember this: the faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning. The Lord is my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him (Lam 3:21-24 NLT).*

**God will always encourage me:** *God encourages those who are discouraged (2Cor 7:6 NLT). I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten (Joel 2:25 KJV). I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion (Php 1:6 ESV).*

**God restores me:** *After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace will ... restore, confirm, strengthen and establish you (1Pt 5:10 ESV). In all their affliction he was afflicted (Isa 63:9 ESV). He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds (Ps 147:3 ESV).*

**God is with me:** *I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterwards you will take me into glory. Who have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever (Ps 73:23-26 NIV).*

**My hope is certain:** *Beloved, we are God's children now, and we know that when he appears, we shall be like him (1Jn 3:2-3 ESV).*

**Godly sorrow touches God's heart:** *In his distress [Israel's most evil king] sought the favour of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly ... When he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea ... Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God (2Ch 33:13, 19 NIV).*

## 22. STRONGHOLD OF PERFECTIONISM

### THE TRUTH: GOD ALREADY SEES ME AS PERFECT

**The Spirit's frequent conviction of sin proves I am already perfect!** *By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy [those who know God is changing them] (Heb 10:14 NIV).*

**I have nothing to hide, nothing to prove and nothing to fear:** *For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery (Gal 5:1 ESV).*

**The law promotes perfectionism but cannot deliver it:** *These matters [religious legalism] which have ... the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement ... are of no value against fleshly indulgence [and a self-absorbed victim mentality] (Col 2:20-23 NASB).*

**I must judge every thought by the gospel of grace:** *We ... take every thought captive to obey Christ [to make sure it aligns with the gospel] (2Cor 10:5 ESV).*

**God's love is strong and resilient:** *Love covers a multitude of sins (1Pt 4:8 ESV). Love covers over all wrongs (Pr 10:12 NIV). God ... gives generously to all without finding fault (Jm 1:5 NIV).*

**Perfectionism is a heavy burden; humility and grace are light:** *Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart [to the core], and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Mt 11:28-30 NASB).*

**I have been perfectly forgiven:** *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins [past, present and future] (Col 1:14 NIV).*

**God actually justifies the wicked who trust in Jesus:** *To the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness (Rm 4:5 NIV).*

**Satan promotes perfectionism:** *You [Satan] were the signet [the model] of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty ... till unrighteousness was found in you (Ez 28:12-15 ESV).*

**The perfectionist route brings a curse:** *Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law [without failing in the smallest detail] (Gal 3:10 NIV).*

## 23. STRONGHOLD OF FEELING INCOMPETENT

### THE TRUTH: I AM EQUIPPED FOR MY ASSIGNED TASK

**I am indwelt by the Spirit** and can therefore see things from Jesus' viewpoint. *You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you ... for the promise is for you (Ac 1:8; 2:39 ESV). No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God ... We have the mind of Christ (1Cor 2:11, 16 ESV).*

**I do not lack any spiritual blessing:** *All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ (Eph 1:3 NLT).*

**I am qualified:** *Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant (2Cor 3:5-6 NLT).*

**I am essential:** *A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other ... God has put each part just where he wants it ... The eye can never say to the hand, 'I don't need you' (1Cor 12:7, 18, 21 NLT).*

**I have to be a realist:** *Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given you (Rm 12:3, 6 NLT).*

**I have unique potential** in line with my spiritual and natural gifts, passion, personality, and what gives me great joy. [Jesus said regarding his ascension] *it's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task (Mk 13:34 NIV). We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:10 NIV).*

**I am complete in Christ:** *In him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, and in him you have been made complete (Col 2:9-10 NASB).*

**I am saved to serve:** *We have been rescued from our enemies, so we can serve God without fear, in holiness ... forever (Lk 1:74-75 NLT).*

**Through me God's grace is uniquely expressed:** *Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms (1Pt 4:10 NIV).*

**I have God's mighty power:** *I pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead (Eph 1:19-20 NLT).*

## 24. STRONGHOLD OF FEELING UNCLEAN

### THE TRUTH: IN CHRIST I AM PURE & HOLY

**I have been made clean:** *You were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1Cor 6:11 NLT).*

**I remain clean:** *You ... are clean (Jn 13:10 NLT). You have already been ... purified by the message I have given you (Jn 15:3 NLT). Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean (Ac 10:15 NLT). Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow (Isa 1:18 NIV).*

**I am forgiven and holy:** *I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more (Isa 43:25 NIV). We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb 10:10 NIV).*

**Jesus is not ashamed of me:** *Jesus and the ones he makes holy have the same Father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters (Heb 2:11 NLT).*

**Jesus sympathises with me:** *This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses ... so let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most (Heb 4:15-16 NLT).*

**I can draw near to God:** *Let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean (Heb 10:22 NLT).*

**Jesus does not condemn me:** *Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you? ... Neither do I. Go and sin no more [go and leave your life of sin] (Jn 8:10-11 NLT; NIV).*

**I am acceptable:** *I urge you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship (Rm 12:1 NASB).*

**I am the Son's spotless bride:** *Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean ... He did this to present her to himself ... without ... any blemish ... or fault (Eph 5:25-27 NLT).*

**I am dressed for the wedding supper of the Lamb:** *He has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness (Isa 60:10 NIV).*

## 25. STRONGHOLD OF HAVING NO PURPOSE

### THE TRUTH: GOD HAS A PLAN FOR MY LIFE

**God has specific plans for me:** *I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope (Jer 29:11 NLT).*

**I have unique potential:** *You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made ... My frame [my potential] was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place ... All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be (Ps 139:13-16 NIV).*

**I was created for unique purposes:** *The Lord will work out his plans [his purposes] for my life (Ps 138:8 NLT). David ... served the purpose of God in his own generation [and so can I] (Ac 13:3 ESV). You will be told all that has been appointed for you to do (Ac 22:10 NASB).*

**God is even working out His purpose for me in my suffering:** *It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes ... I know ... that in faithfulness you have afflicted me (Ps 119:71-76 ESV).*

**I have always been part of God's purposes:** *God ... saved us and called us ... not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us [once for all] in Christ Jesus before the ages began (2Tm 1:9 ESV). Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us [as individuals] (Heb 12:1 NIV).*

**God is at work within me:** *For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him (Php 2:13 NLT).*

**I have been given gifts and faith to use them:** *Think of yourself ... in accordance with [your] measure of faith ... We have different gifts, according to the grace given us (Rm 12:3-6 NIV). Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms (1Pt 4:10 NIV).*

**There is purpose in everything I do for Jesus:** *Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain (1Cor 15:58 ESV).*

**There is eternal value in everything I do for Jesus:** *Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord ... remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward ... the Master you are serving is Christ (Col 3:23-24 NLT).*



## 26. STRONGHOLD OF THE FEAR OF FAILURE

### THE TRUTH: FAILURE LEADS TO GOD-DEPENDENCE

**I will fail, but need not despair;** I should rather let its fruit be greater dependence on God. I am a work-in-progress: *We all who ... contemplate the Lord's glory are being transformed into his image* (2Cor 3:18 NIV).

**God will help me not to fail:** *In all these things [troubles, persecution and satanic opposition] we are more than conquerors through him who loved us* (Rm 8:37 ESV).

**God has made me competent:** *Our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant* (2Cor 3:5-6 NIV). *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men* (Mt 4:19 ESV).

**God will give me the victory:** *With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes* (Ps 60:12 ESV). *I cry out to God Most High ... who will fulfil his purpose for me* (Ps 57:2 NLT).

**All things are possible for me:** *In your strength I can crush an army; with my God I can scale any wall. He trains my hands for battle; he strengthens my arm to draw a bronze bow* (Ps 18:29, 34-35 NLT).

**God's plans for me will succeed:** *May he grant your heart's desires and make all your plans succeed. May we shout for joy when we hear of your victory* (Ps 20:4-5 NLT).

**I have not been given a spirit of fear:** *God did not give us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and of self-discipline* (2Tm 1:7 NLT).

**God is for me not against me:** *If God is for us [as He surely is], who can ever be against us? ... Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one – for God himself has given us right standing with himself* (Rm 8:31-33 NLT).

**Success comes through obedience:** *Don't for a minute let this Book of The Revelation be out of mind. Ponder and meditate on it day and night, making sure you practice everything written in it* (Jos 1:8 MSG).

**I can always share my heart with the Father:** *Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed* (Pr 16:3 NLT).

**God is with me and will strengthen me:** *Be strong, Zerubbabel ... Joshua ... all of you people of the land, declares the Lord. Work [to rebuild the temple], for I am with you* (Hag 2:4 ESV).

## 27. STRONGHOLD OF DEPRESSION

### THE TRUTH: JESUS WANTS TO LEAD ME OUT OF IT

In his book 'Healing for Damaged Emotions', David Seamands writes: 'A concrete specific feeling of guilt which can be related to a particular act or attitude is generally a true and reliable feeling of guilt. And the emotions that follow can be real guilt and real depression for a real transgression. However, a vague all-inclusive umbrella of systematic self-accusation, general overall feelings of anxiety and condemnation which cannot be pinpointed – these are generally signs of pseudo-guilt or just plain depression that has come from emotional sources.'

We are dealing with the latter here. Sin may lead to depression, but not all depression comes from sin. A stronghold of depression is most likely to be derived from emotional sources. There are obviously different levels of depression. What follows is offered as just one of a number of measures that will need to be taken to find freedom. If you suffer from depression, know this: Jesus does not condemn you. He did not come to judge you but to save you. He knows what has led to this problem. He came to heal you and to set you free. God's truth will renew your mind. God's love, grace and power coming to you from your church family will bring healing and enable you to overcome.

**When I feel depressed as Abraham did** I will receive the truth God reveals to me directly or through others: *Do not be afraid. I am your shield, your very great reward* (Gn 15:1 NIV). *Address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs* (Eph 5:19 ESV).

**When I feel depressed as David did** I will speak truth to my own heart: *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance* [his gracious, loving and affirming smile] (Ps 42:5 KJV).

**When I feel depressed as Jeremiah did** I will remember just how good God is: *I still dare to hope when I remember this: The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness ... I will hope in him* (Lam 3:21-24 NLT).

**When I feel depressed as Elijah did** I will trust God to take care of me: *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life ... I have had enough Lord. Take my life. All at once an angel ... touched him and said: Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you* (1Kgs 19:3-8 NIV).

**When I feel depressed as Jonah did** I will believe God continues to teach me and to discipline me in love: *He was angry and he prayed ... O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. And the Lord said: Do you do well to be angry?* (Jnh 4:1-4 ESV)

**When I feel depressed as Jesus did** when he considered the cross, I will confidently submit to God: *Jesus said: Now is my soul troubled (Jn 12:27 ESV). My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death ... Yet not as I will, but as you will (Mt 26:38-39 NIV).*

**Whenever I feel depressed as Paul did** I will seek to obey God's command to be brave and very courageous: *I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. We were harassed at every turn – conflicts on the outside, fears within (1Cor 2:3; 2Cor 7:5 NIV).*

**I will try not to isolate myself** or give in to weeping and self-pity: *Let us not neglect our meeting together ... but encourage one another (Heb 10:25 NLT). Confess your sins to one another and pray for each other so that you may be healed (Jm 5:16 NLT). Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ [to love one another] (Gal 6:2 ESV).*

**I will worship:** *Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation ... For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised (Ps 96:2-4 ESV).*

**I will rest confidently in the Holy Spirit:** *The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Rm 8:26 ESV). The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rm 8:16 ESV). To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (Rm 8:6 ESV).*

**I will rest in the Father's embrace:** *Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken ... he is my mighty rock ... Trust in him at all times ... pour out your hearts to him (Ps 62:5-8 NIV).*

**I will remember that the Father shepherds me:** *I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out ... I will rescue them ... I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep and ... make them lie down ... I will seek the lost and I will bring back the strayed. I will bind up the injured and I will strengthen the weak (Ez 34:11-12, 15-16 ESV).*

**I will remember that the Father never gives up on me:** *I am now going to allure her [my backslidden bride] ... into the desert and speak tenderly to her. There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the valley of trouble a door of hope. There she will sing as in the days of her youth (Hos 2:14-15 NIV).*

## 28. STRONGHOLD OF THE FEAR OF SATAN

### THE TRUTH: HE IS A CREATED & CONQUERED ENEMY

**Satan is a defeated foe:** *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work (1Jn 3:8 NIV). [Jesus shared our humanity] so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is the devil (Heb 2:14 NIV). Having disarmed the [satanic] powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross (Col 2: 15 NIV).*

**Satan cannot harm me:** *We know that anyone born of God does not [habitually] continue to sin; the One who was born of God [Jesus] keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him (1Jn 5:18 NIV).*

**I am safe within God's love:** *I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, angels nor demons, our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love (Rm 8:38 NLT).*

**Satan cannot snatch me from Jesus:** *My sheep ... follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them away from me (Jn 10:27-30 NLT).*

**Satan cannot take Christ out of me:** *For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3 ESV). I will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb 13:5 ESV).*

**Satan is only a created being; a fallen angel:** *Every precious stone was your covering ... on the day you were created ... You were an anointed guardian cherub ... blameless in your ways ... till unrighteousness was found in you (Ez 28:13-15 ESV). I saw a [faithful] angel ... seize that ancient serpent, who is Satan, and bind him (Rv 20:1-2 ESV).*

**Jesus has prayed and continues to pray for my protection:** *I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them [protect them] from the evil one (Jn 17:15 ESV). He is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf (Heb 7:25 NLT).*

**God fights for me:** *Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world [the devil] (1Jn 4:4 NASB). No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you (Isa 54:17 NIV). The Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one (2Th 3:3 ESV). No curse can touch Jacob; no magic [divination] has any power against Israel (Nm 23:23 NLT).*

**I can defeat him:** *The accuser of our brothers, who accuses them ... day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb*

*and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Rv 12:10-11 NIV). Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (Jm 4:7 ESV).*

**Satan has been robbed of his evidence against me:** *When a strong man [Satan], fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger [Jesus] attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armour in which the man trusted (Lk 11:21-22 NIV).*

**I can stand firm against him** and not be taken out of the battle: *Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God [his armour, not yours] so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes ... Stand firm then, with the belt of truth [God's truth in all its fullness; Jesus himself, who is the truth; your commitment to and knowledge of the whole counsel of God] buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness [Jesus' righteousness, not your own] in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness [to maintain your stand] that comes from the gospel of peace [having your nail-studded sandals firmly anchored into God's grace on which, and in which, you stand]. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation [once saved always saved] and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God [the specific scriptures needed to combat the specific lies of the enemy]. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests (Eph 6:10-18 NIV).*

**I must keep alert:** *Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Stand firm against him, and be strong in the faith (1Pt 5:6-9 NLT).*

**I must take every thought prisoner:** *We take captive [literally with a spear] every thought [every purpose and scheme of Satan] and make it obedient to Christ [judging it by His truth] (2Cor 10:5 NIV).*

**I must test everything against the Bible:** *The word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit ... joints and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires (Heb 4:12 NLT).*

**I have authority over Satan:** *I have given you authority over the power of the enemy and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you (Lk 10:19 NLT).*

## 29. STRONGHOLD OF BEING A PRISONER TO MY PAST

### THE TRUTH: MY PAST DOES NOT BELONG TO ME

**My past is no longer mine!** *All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world or life or death or the present or the future [but not the past] – all are yours, and you are of Christ (1Cor 3:21-22 NIV).*

**God does not remind me of my sin:** *I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more (Jer 31:34 NIV). One thing I do: forgetting [intentionally] what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize [my reward; not my salvation] for which God has called me heavenward (Php 3:13-14 NIV).*

**My past has been dealt with:** *Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed, you were made holy, you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Jesus (1Cor 6:9-11 NLT).*

**My past has no power:** *I am convinced that ... neither death nor life ... angels nor demons ... our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow [the past has been removed] – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love ... Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rm 8:38-39 NLT).*

**I am to grab hold of God's purposes for me:** *I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own (Php 3:12 NIV & ESV).*

**I am to sever soul ties:** *Listen, O daughter, consider and give ear: Forget your people and your father's house (Ps 45:10 NIV). A man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife (Gn 2:24 ESV).*

**I am to look forward, not back:** *Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing ... I will make a way in the wilderness, rivers in the desert (Isa 43:18-19 ESV).*

**I must not allow the past to make me a cripple:** *Strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees ... so that the [spiritually, emotionally and psychologically] lame may not be disabled [crippled], but rather healed (Heb 12:12-13 NIV).*

**I must forgive as Joseph did:** *He said to his brothers: You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people (Gn 50:19-20 NLT).*

## 30. STRONGHOLD OF IMMATURITY

### THE TRUTH: I MUST COOPERATE IN BEING CHANGED

**The mature leave childish ways behind:** *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres ... When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me (1Cor 13:4-7, 11 NIV).*

**The mature guard their hearts:** *The seeds that fell among the thorns represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly it is crowded out by the cares, riches and pleasures of this life (Lk 8:14 NLT).*

**The mature express God's wisdom:** *When I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world [but biblical wisdom] (1Cor 2:6 NLT).*

**The mature press on regardless:** *One thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on ... All of us who are mature should take such a view of things (Php 3:13-15 NIV).*

**The mature welcome instruction and correction:** *We tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, mature in their relationship to Christ (Col 1:28 NLT).*

**The mature are thorough, confident and content:** *Epaphras ... sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect [mature], fully confident that you are following the whole will of God (Col 4:12 NLT). I have learnt to be content whatever the circumstances (Php 4:11 NIV).*

**The mature preach the gospel to themselves daily:** *Anyone who [happily] lives on milk, being still an infant [in their understanding of the gospel and its application], is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness [justification]. But solid food is for the mature [those desperate to become like Jesus], who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil (Heb 5:13-14 NIV).*

**The mature embrace trials:** *Count it all joy ... when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect [mature] and complete (Jm 1:2-4 ESV).*

## 31. STRONGHOLD OF PRIDE

### THE TRUTH: GOD HATES ARROGANCE

**Pride caused Satan's fall:** *You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God ... I will make myself like the Most High. But you are brought down (Isa 14:13-15 NIV).*

**God honours the humble:** *This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word (Isa 66:2 NIV). I hate pride and arrogance (Pr 8:13 NLT).*

**Jesus was humble to the core:** *Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you ... for I am gentle and humble in heart (Mt 11:29 NLT). If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet (Jn 13:14-15 ESV).*

**Only the humble can be justified:** *The tax collector beat his chest in sorrow, saying, O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner. I tell you, this sinner ... returned home justified before God (Lk 18:13-14 NLT).*

**Pride prevents us from seeking God:** *In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God (Ps 10:4 NIV). God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (Jm 4:6 ESV). Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you (Jm 4:10 ESV).*

**God never despises the humble:** *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart ... you will not despise (Ps 51:17 ESV).*

**Pride hardens the heart and is idolatry:** *His heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened, so that he dealt proudly (Dan 5:20 ESV). Rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption [arrogance] is ... idolatry (1Sm 15:23 ESV).*

**Pride prevents us from receiving God's grace as a gift:** *Have patience with me and I will repay you everything [give me more time, Lord, and I will manage to live up to your standards] (Mt 18:26 NASB).*

**Pride deceives us:** *Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom ... Pride leads to conflict ... Pride goes before destruction (Pr 11:2; 13:10; 16:18 NLT). If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall! (1Cor 10:12 NLT)*

**God dwells with the humble:** *The Holy One says this: I live in a high and holy place but also with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts (Isa 57:15 NLT).*



## 32. STRONGHOLD OF SELFISHNESS

### THE TRUTH: JOY COMES THROUGH DYING TO SELF

**Selfishness is incompatible with discipleship:** *And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again (2Cor 5:15 NIV).*

**Christ's sacrifice motivates self-sacrifice:** *I urge you ... in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship (Rm 12:1 NIV).*

**Jesus never sought to please Himself:** *I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me (Jn 5:30 ESV). We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself (Rm 15:1-3 ESV).*

**Jesus entrusted Himself to God:** *He did not retaliate when he was insulted, nor threaten revenge when he suffered. He left his case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly (1Pt 2:23 NLT).*

**Paul never sought to please himself:** *Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense ... I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage (1Cor 10:31-33 ESV).*

**It is the devil who promotes selfishness:** *You won't die! ... God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil (Gn 3:4-5 NLT).*

**There is no selfishness in Jesus:** *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who ... made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant ... He humbled himself and became obedient to death (Php 2:5-8 NIV). My Father! If it is possible, let this cup ... be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine (Mt 26:39 NLT).*

**Unselfishness is essential to discipleship:** *If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me (Lk 9:23 NLT).*

**Pride and selfishness are companions:** *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves (Php 2:3 NIV).*

**There is no selfishness in love:** *Love is not ... rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged (1Cor 13:4-5 NLT).*

### 33. STRONGHOLD OF CHARACTER FLAWS

#### THE TRUTH: I SHOULD NOT TOLERATE THEM

**I can control my tongue:** *Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful ... do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live (Eph 4:29-30 NLT).*

**I can control the way I act:** *Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words and slander, as well as all types of malicious behaviour (Eph 4:31 NLT). Don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry (Eph 4:26 NLT).*

**The Holy Spirit empowers me to change:** *For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (2Tm 1:7 NIV). His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him (2Pt 1:3 NIV).*

**Character flaws oppose love:** *Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs (1Cor 13:4-7 NLT).*

**Character flaws oppose the Spirit's fruit:** *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:23 ESV).*

**I am no longer a slave to character flaws:** *[It was while we were dead in our many sins that we were] obeying the devil and following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature (Eph 2:1-3 NLT).*

**Diligence must replace tolerance and laziness:** *We do not want you to become lazy [re serving the people of God] (Heb 6:12 NIV). [Titus is told, regarding] lazy gluttons, [to] rebuke them sharply (Titus 1:12 NIV).*

**I am called to maturity:** *When I was a child, I thought like a child, I talked like a child, I reasoned like a child [I behaved like a child!]. When I became a man I put childish ways behind me [I threw them overboard] (1Cor 13:11 NIV).*

**To indulge character flaws is to oppose God's purpose for me:** *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son [who, by the Spirit's power, had no character flaws] (Rm 8:29 ESV).*

**Flaws are to be turned into blessings:** *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need (Eph 4:28 ESV).*

## 34. STRONGHOLD OF OVER-EATING

### THE TRUTH: IT CANNOT BRING LASTING COMFORT

**God does not judge or condemn me when I eat too much:** *As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust (Ps 103:13-14 NIV). As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you [in any and every circumstance] (Isa 66:13 ESV).*

**The Father longs to be my comforter:** *Listen to me, you who know righteousness ... I, I am he who comforts you (Isa 51:7, 12 ESV). Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction [in every kind of affliction, including eating problems and disorders] (2Cor 1:3-4 ESV). Let your unfailing love comfort me (Ps 119:76 NLT). You satisfy me more than the richest feast (Ps 63:5 NLT).*

**The Father, not food, should be my refuge:** *He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress (Ps 91:1, 14-16 NIV).*

**Over-eating makes me vulnerable:** *Everything is permissible for me but I will not be mastered by anything (1Cor 6:12 NIV). Like a city whose walls are broken down, is a person who lacks self-control (Pr 25:28 NIV). Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh (Gal 5:16 NASB).*

**Godly choices require discipline:** *All who compete in the games go into strict [agonizing] training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever (1Cor 9:25 NIV).*

**Eating too much uses more than my fair share:** *If you have food, share it with those who are hungry (Lk 3:11 NLT). There should be some equality. Right now you have plenty and can help those who are in need. Later, they will have plenty and can share with you (2Cor 8:13-14 NLT).*

**Eating too much could damage God's handiwork:** *Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit (2Cor 7:1 NIV). You are not your own, for you were bought with a price (1Cor 6:19-20 ESV). No one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it (Eph 5:29)*

**Eating too much can become idolatry:** *Beware! Guard against every kind of greed (Lk 12:15 NLT). Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater (Col 3:5 NLT).*

## 35. STRONGHOLD OF LUST & PORNOGRAPHY

### THE TRUTH: GOD EMPOWERS ME TO RESIST

**I am called to purity:** *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there (Gal 5:22-24 NLT). Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh (Gal 5:16 NASB). Consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ (Rm 6:11 ESV).*

**I choose how I use my body:** *Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness (Rm 6:13 ESV).*

**Yielding to temptation is sin**, but being tempted is not; we are all tempted. *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear ... when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1Cor 10:13 NIV).*

**What Jesus condemned was lustful fantasising** with someone other than one's spouse. *You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Mt 5:27-28 NIV).*

**I am in control of what I look at:** *David said: I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar (Ps 101:3 NLT). Job said: I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman (Job 31:1 NLT).*

**Pornography is idolatry:** *Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely ... think about these things (Php 4:8 NLT).*

**Sex within marriage is not shameful:** *The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed (Gn 2:25 ESV). The husband should fulfil his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should fulfil her husband's sexual needs (1Cor 7:3 NLT).*

**Sex within marriage is not a moral issue** provided it doesn't violate the conscience of either spouse: *The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith (1Th 1:5 NIV). Everything that does not come from faith is sin (Rm 14:23 NIV). God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin ... and live in holiness and honour – not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways (1Th 4:3-5, 7 NLT).*

## 36. STRONGHOLD OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE

### THE TRUTH: THROUGH CHRIST I CAN BE SET FREE

**I cannot bring about my own freedom without help:** *What I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do ... What I do is not the good I want to do; the evil I do not want to do – this I keep doing* (Rm 7:15, 19 NIV).

**I can always find grace and mercy in time of need:** *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need* (Heb 4:16 ESV).

**I already have all I need to be free:** *His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness* (2Pt 1:3 NIV).

**Substance abuse dehumanizes me:** *Don't gaze at the wine, seeing how red it is, how it sparkles in the cup, how smoothly it goes down. For in the end it bites like a poisonous snake ... You will see hallucinations, and you will say crazy things. You will stagger like a sailor tossed at sea ... you will say, 'They hit me, but I didn't feel it. I didn't even know it when they beat me up'* (Pr 23:31-35 NLT)

**Substance abuse can be overcome:** *Since we have these promises dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit* (2Cor 7:1 NIV).

**Drunkenness is sinful:** *The deeds of the flesh are evident ... drunkenness ... I have forewarned you ... those who practice such things [habitually and resolutely] will not inherit the kingdom of God* (Gal 5:19-21 NASB).

**Drunkenness leads to other sins:** *Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life [and the lives of others]. Instead let the Holy Spirit fill and control you* (Eph 5:18 NLT).

**Every addiction needs to be broken:** *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything* (1Cor 6:12 ESV). *You were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body* (1Cor 6:20 ESV).

**Drunkenness turns me into an animal:** *Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise* (Pr 20:1 ESV).

**Drunkenness can lead to financial ruin:** *Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters ... for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty* (Pr 23:20-21 ESV).

## 37. STRONGHOLD OF MANIPULATION & CONTROL IN FAMILIES

### THE TRUTH: SUCH ARE TOOLS OF SATAN

**Jesus refused to be intimidated by His parents:** *Why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere! He replied, Why did you need to search? Didn't you realize that I must be in my Father's house?* (Lk 2:48-49 NLT)

**Jesus refused to be controlled by His family:** *When [they] heard [he wasn't taking time to eat] they went to take charge of him* (Mk 3:20-21 NIV). *Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside they sent someone in to call him ... Who are my mother and my brothers? Jesus asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother* (Mk 3:31-35 NIV).

**Jesus gently rebuked His mother for her interference:** *Dear woman, why do you involve me [why are you trying to organize me]? My time [to act in this situation] has not yet come* (Jn 2:4 NIV).

**God's people outrank unbelieving relatives:** *When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' Then ... to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home [even though Mary had a number of unbelieving children]* (Jn 19:26-27 ESV).

**I need to break free from parental control:** *For this reason a man will leave [abandon] his father and mother and be united with his wife [who must then take first place in his affections]* (Gn 2:24 NIV). *Listen, O daughter [about to be married] ... forget ... your father's house [your husband must now take first place in your affections]* (Ps 45:10, 16 NIV).

**Manipulation and domination were the first consequences of the fall into sin:** *God said to the woman: Your desire shall [now] be for your husband [to manipulate and control him], and he shall [now try to] rule over you [dominating you by brute force]* (Gn 3:16 ESV).

**Parents do not own their children:** *All souls are mine* (Ez 18:4 ESV). (Parents' companionship, friendship and emotional needs should be met by God and their peers, not by their children, unless offered freely.) *Fathers do not provoke [embitter, exasperate, irritate, harass, or be hard on] your children; lest they become discouraged, sullen and morose, and feel inferior and frustrated; do not break their spirit* (Col 3:21 Amp).

## 38. STRONGHOLD OF MANIPULATION & CONTROL IN CHURCHES

### THE TRUTH: SUCH ARE TOOLS OF SATAN

**Believers are free to make their own decisions:** *He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives ... to set at liberty the oppressed (Lk 4:18-19 ESV) ... [to ensure] the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rm 8:21 NIV). You have been called to live in freedom (Gal 5:13 NLT).*

**God only appoints servant leaders:** *Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you ... Don't lord it over the people (1Pt 5:2-3 NLT). Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Eph 5:21 NLT).*

**The discipling process is two-way and involves all believers:** *Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another (Pr 27:17 NASB).*

**Only the proud seek honour:** *Some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following (Ac 20:30 NLT).*

**Godly authority releases and promotes others:** *You know that in this world kings are tyrants, and officials lord it over the people beneath them. But among you it should be quite different (Mt 20:25-26 NLT).*

**Legalism uses manipulation:** *You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep following its rules? Such ... are mere human teachings ... They provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires (Col 2:20-23 NLT).*

**Manipulation can be a cover for false teaching:** *They are the kind who, having a form of godliness but denying its power, worm their way into homes and gain control ... these men oppose the truth – men of depraved minds (2Tm 3:6-8 NIV).*

**Valid opinions can differ:** *One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind (Rm 14:5 ESV).*

**Only follow leaders** who are becoming more like Jesus and who are teaching and modelling biblical truth. *Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2Cor 11:14 ESV).*

**Only obey leaders** who use persuasion not orders and who obey God themselves. *I plead with Euodia and ... Synche to agree with one another in the Lord (Php 4:2). As if God were making his appeal through us (2Cor 5:20 NIV). We must obey God rather than men (Ac 5:29).*

## 39. STRONGHOLD OF ENTITLEMENT

### THE TRUTH: GOD OWES ME NOTHING

**God does not owe me salvation:** *All of us ... like the rest ... were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions ... For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this [salvation is] not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph 2:3-4, 8-9 NIV).*

**I can never earn God's acceptance through good works:** *We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds [to justify ourselves], they are nothing but filthy rags (Isa 64:6 NLT). I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. If keeping the law could make us right with God, there was no need for Christ to die (Gal 2:21 NLT).*

**God does not owe me wealth:** *So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content (1Tm 6:8 NLT). [We are] poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything (2Cor 6:10 NIV). Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? (Rm 11:35 NIV)*

**God does not owe me healing:** *Indeed he [Epaphroditus] was ill and almost died. But God had mercy on him [healing him], and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow (Php 2:27 NIV).*

**God does not promise that others will approve of me:** *For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe (1Cor 4:9 NIV).*

**God does not owe me a life free from pain:** *Since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes ... he quickly falls away (Mt 13:21 NIV). Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows (Jn 16:33 NLT).*

**God may use suffering to instruct me:** *You have always put a wall of protection around him ... But reach out and take away everything he has, and he will curse you to your face! (Job 1:9-11 NLT). Job never did!*

**God does not owe me a trouble free life:** *The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns ... hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it (Mt 13:22 NIV).*

**Wilful sin has consequences:** *Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will ... reap corruption (Gal 6:7-8 NASB).*



## 40. STRONGHOLD OF UNFORGIVENESS

### THE TRUTH: FORGIVING OTHERS & MYSELF FREES ME

**We should never withhold forgiveness from others or from ourselves:**

*Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me [whether he is sorry or not]? Up to seven times? I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times (Mt 18:21-22 NIV).*

**Unforgiveness causes me spiritual torment:** *In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart (Mt 18:34-35 NIV).*

**Forgiveness begins with compassion and must be unconditional:** *The lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt (Mt 18:27 NASB). He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities ... As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us (Ps 103:10, 12 NIV).*

**Unforgiveness gives Satan a foothold in me:** *What I have forgiven ... I have forgiven in the sight of Christ ... in order that Satan might not outwit us; for we are not unaware of his schemes (2Cor 2:10-11 NIV).*

**Unforgiveness ruins intimacy with God:** *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ... If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mt 6:12, 14-15 NIV).* Relating to God as Judge I am forgiven, but relating to him as Father my unforgiveness of others and myself spoils my intimacy with him.

**Unforgiveness ruins relationships:** *Love is patient, love is kind ... it keeps no record of wrongs ... it always protects, always trusts (1Cor 13:4-7).*

**Unforgiveness defiles:** *See to it that ... no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled (Heb 12:15 ESV). He who [thinks] has been forgiven little loves little (Lk 7:47).*

**We must forgive because we have been forgiven:** *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Eph 4:32). Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing (Lk 23:34 NLT).*

**We must show mercy because we have been shown mercy:** *Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful (Lk 6:36). Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy (Mt 5:7).*

## 41. STRONGHOLD OF CONDEMNING CRITICISM

### THE TRUTH: IT IS THE DEVIL'S WORK

**Don't judge a believer or a non-believer:** *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand (Rm 14:4 NIV). Who are you to judge your neighbour? (Jm 4:12 ESV) What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? (1Cor 5:12 NIV) Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. The standard you use in judging is the standard by which you will be judged (Mt 7:1-2 NLT).*

**Don't try to be another person's conscience:** *When he [the Holy Spirit] comes, he will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgement (Jn 16:8 ESV). If we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged [disciplined] by God (1Cor 11:31 NLT).*

**Show mercy to all:** *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful (Lk 6:36 ESV). Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy (Mt 5:7 ESV).*

**Be transparent:** *We never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask ... we were gentle among you like a mother caring for her children ... We dealt with you as a father (1Th 2:5, 7, 11 NIV).*

**Treat the wayward with kindness:** *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness (Gal 6:1 ESV). Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way ... into Christ (Eph 4:15 ESV).*

**Don't retaliate or avenge yourself:** *When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate ... he made no threats ... he entrusted himself to him who judges justly (1Pt 2:23 NIV). Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them (Eph 4:29 NLT). It is mine to avenge; I will repay (Dt 32:35 NIV).*

**Be for others, not against them:** *We will shout for joy when you are victorious and will lift up our banners in the name of our God (Ps 20:5 NIV). Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves (Php 2:3 NLT).*

**The weak need help, not criticism:** *To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak (1Cor 9:22 ESV). Encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all (1Th 5:14 ESV).*

## 42. STRONGHOLD OF POVERTY

### THE TRUTH: GOD WILL MEET ALL MY NEEDS

**God wants to prosper me:** *Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers (3 Jn 1:2 NASB). There should be no poor among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you ... he will richly bless you (Dt 15:4 NIV).*

**God wants my city to prosper:** *Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you ... Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper (Jer 29:7 NIV). Send now prosperity, O Lord, we beseech you, and give to us success! (Ps 118:25 Amp)*

**God wants me to be able to lend:** *You will lend money to many nations but will never need to borrow (Dt 15:6 NLT).*

**God wants me to be kind and generous:** *Do not be hard-hearted or tight fisted towards your poor brother. Rather be open-handed and freely lend him whatever he needs (Dt 15:7-8 NIV).*

**God wants my generosity to be unconditional:** *Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return (Lk 6:35 ESV).*

**God enables me to produce wealth:** *You may say to yourself, My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me. But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth (Dt 8:17-18 NIV). Those unwilling to work should not get to eat (2Th 3:10 NLT). He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need (Eph 4:28 NIV).*

**God wants my joy to be complete:** *The Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful (Dt 16:15 ESV).*

**God will not allow me to suffer want because of my generosity:** *My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Php 4:19 ESV).*

**God will look after me:** *Don't be concerned about what to eat or drink. Don't worry about such things ... Seek the kingdom of God above all else, and he will give you everything you need (Lk 12:29, 31 NLT).*

**God blesses generosity:** *You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion (2Cor 9:11 NIV). You will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share (2Cor 9:8 NLT).*

## 43. STRONGHOLD OF GREED

### THE TRUTH: GREED IS A COUNTERFEIT GOD

**Greed can be hidden:** *My people ... listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain (Ez 33:31 NIV).*

**Greed is a heart issue:** *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Mt 6:20-21 ESV). No servant can serve two masters ... God and money (Lk 16:13 ESV).*

**Greed opposes generosity:** *Give to anyone who asks; and when things are taken away from you, don't try to get them back (Lk 6:30 NLT).*

**Trust in God combats greed:** *Who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have comes from you, and we give you only what you first gave us! (1Ch 29:14 NLT)*

**Contentment combats greed:** *Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own (Lk 12:15 NLT). Don't love money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, 'I will never fail you. I will never abandon you (Heb 13:5 NLT). If we have enough food and clothing, let us be content (1Tm 6:8 NLT).*

**God meets the needs of the generous:** *Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely (Ps 112:5 NIV). You [who sow generously] will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion (2Cor 9:11 NIV).*

**God will judge the greedy:** *You have hoarded wealth [in a time of need]. Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you ... You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence (Jm 5:1-6 NIV).*

**Greed threatens family life:** *Whoever is greedy ... troubles his own household (Pr 15:27 ESV). A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the Lord will be enriched (Pr 28:25 ESV).*

**Money is deceitful:** *Wealth is treacherous, and the arrogant [and greedy] are never at rest. They ... are never satisfied (Hab 2:5 NLT).*

**Greed has no place in God's kingdom:** *No immoral, impure or greedy person ... has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ (Eph 5:5 NIV). People who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil (1Tm 6:9-10 NLT).*

## 44. STRONGHOLD OF REBELLION AGAINST GOD-APPOINTED AUTHORITY

### THE TRUTH: REBELLION IS AS SINFUL AS WITCHCRAFT

Today, church leaders and apostolic team members, often face hostile criticism and opposition to their authority. They are easy targets and often seen as standing in someone else's way; particularly by those who have personal agendas. Rebellion against their authority, and indeed against all kinds of authority figures, may, however, be rooted in traumatic experiences. Where there has been manipulation and control, or the abuse and exploitation of the vulnerable by authority figures, a stronghold of rebellion can easily become established. Whether this be the case, or the cause found in wounded pride or the thwarting of one's own dreams and plans, such a stronghold needs to be demolished. Their presence within the work of the kingdom of God has brought about many disastrous divisions and church closures.

**God will oppose those who oppose His chosen leaders:** *Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses ... Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also? ... [God said] Why ... were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?* (Nm 12:1-2, 8 ESV)

**Democracy is not the biblical model:** *Korah ... Dathan and Abiram ... rose up before Moses ... with 250 chiefs ... All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the Lord? ... The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron: Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them* (Nm 16:1-3, 20-21 ESV).

**Envy often lies behind rebellion:** *[Dathan and Abiram] were jealous of Moses and Aaron* (Ps 106:16 ESV).

**Rebellion is rooted in pride:** *Rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry* (1Sm 15:23 ESV).

**Rebellion precedes ruin:** *Oh, why didn't I listen to my teachers? Why didn't I pay attention to my instructors? I have come to the brink of utter ruin, and must face public disgrace* (Pr 5:13-14 NTL).

**God expects us to submit to our leaders:** *If any one does not obey our instructions ... take special note of him. Do not associate with him, in order that he may feel ashamed. Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother* (2Th 3:14-15 NIV). *Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you* (Php 2:12 NLT).

**Being persuaded that decisions are the right ones, brings joy:** *Obey your leaders and submit to their authority [allow yourself to be persuaded by*

them] ... *Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you* (Heb 13:17 NIV).

**The enemy promotes leadership rivalry:** *Even some men from your own group [local elders] will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following* (Ac 20:30 NLT).

**Extend grace to God's chosen leaders and think the best of them:** *Respect those who labour among you, who are over you in the Lord and admonish you ... esteem them very highly in love because of their work* (1Th 5:12-13 ESV).

**Obey the Holy Spirit when He prompts you to submit to others:** *Be subject to such as these [those who devote themselves to serving God's people] and to every fellow worker and labourer* (1Cor 16:15-16 ESV).

**Uncomplaining submission extends to the secular world:** *Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God* (Rm 13:1 ESV).

**God chooses and anoints His leaders:** *The Lord said to Samuel ... I have rejected [Saul] from being king ... and I have provided for myself a king among [Jesse's] sons. [Samuel] anointed [David] ... and the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him from that day forward* (1Sm 16:1, 13 ESV).

**God alone should remove one of His chosen leaders:** Persecuted by Saul, David had two opportunities to kill him, but said: *The Lord forbid that I should lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord* (1Sm 24:6 NIV). *Who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?* (1Sm 26:9-11 ESV)

**God-appointed leaders do not need to secure their own position:** David did not establish himself as king. God opened the way and put it into the heart of the people to anoint him king first 'over the house of Judah' (2Sm 2:4) then 'over Israel' (2Sm 5:3).

**God-appointed leaders provoke personal loyalty:** *We are yours, O David! We are with you, O son of Jesse! Success, success to you, and success to those who help you, for your God will help you. All these ... fighting men ... came to Hebron fully determined to make David king* (1Ch 12:18, 38 NIV). *[Jonathan's] armour-bearer said to him, Do all that is in your heart ... I am with you heart and soul* (1Sm 14:7 ESV). *They gave themselves first to the Lord and then ... to us* (2Cor 8:5 ESV).

**God-appointed leaders know they serve for the benefit of God's people:** *Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs, stonemasons and carpenters to build a palace for him. And [by that] David knew [realised] that the Lord had established him as king over Israel*

*and that his kingdom had been highly exalted for the sake of his people Israel (1Ch 14:1-2 NIV).*

**God-appointed leaders are to be honoured however young:** *Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith and your purity (1Tm 4:12 NLT).*

**God-appointed leaders set an example:** *Watch me, he [Gideon] told them. Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon' (Jdg 7:17-18 NIV).*

**God-appointed leaders respond with humility when challenged:** *When facing a leadership challenge, Moses left God to resolve the issue. Now the man Moses was very meek, more humble than all people who were on the face of the earth (Nm 12:3 ESV).*

**God-appointed leaders include others in decision making:** *David consulted with all his officials, including the generals and captains of his army. Then he addressed the entire assembly of Israel ... If you approve and if it is the will of the Lord our God, let us send messages to all the Israelites throughout the land, including the priests and Levites ... Let us invite them to come and join us (1Ch 13:1-2 NLT).*

## 45. STRONGHOLD OF MALICIOUS GOSSIP

### THE TRUTH: IT DESTROYS RELATIONSHIPS

**Gossip destroys trust:** *A gossip betrays a confidence, but a trustworthy [person] keeps a secret (Pr 11:13 NIV). A perverse [person] stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends (Pr 16:28 NIV).*

**Gossip prolongs dissension:** *A gossip goes around telling secrets, so don't hang around with chatterers (Pr 20:19 NLT). Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops (Pr 26:20 NLT).*

**Gossip contaminates the heart:** *The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts (Pr 26:22 NIV).*

**Gossip is the co-worker of slander:** *Put ... aside anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech (Col 3:8 NASB).*

**Gossip gives expression to many of the things God hates:** *There are six things the Lord hates – no, seven things he detests: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill the innocent, a heart that plots evil, feet that race to do wrong, a false witness who pours out lies, a person who sows discord in a family (Pr 6:16-19 NLT).*

**Words that build up triumph over words that destroy:** *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good (Rm 12:21 ESV).*

**Words of grace benefit all:** *Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them (Eph 4:29 NLT).*

**Be slow to believe accusations, especially against leaders:** *Do not admit a charge against an elder [even in your mind] except on the evidence of two or three witnesses (1Tm 5:19 ESV).*

**God expects me to be loyal:** *Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves (Rm 12:10 NIV). In humility consider others better than yourselves (Php 2:3 NIV).*

**Only with the Spirit's help can the tongue be tamed:** *The tongue is a small thing that makes grand speeches. But a tiny spark can set a great forest on fire ... and the tongue is a flame of fire. It is a whole world of wickedness, corrupting your entire body. It can set your whole life on fire, for it is set on fire by hell itself. People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison (Jm 3:5-8 NLT).*



## 46. STRONGHOLD OF HEAVINESS OF SPIRIT

### THE TRUTH: I HAVE BEEN GIVEN A SPIRIT OF JOY

**I will rejoice in my King:** *Let Israel be glad in his Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King! Let them praise his name with dancing, making melody to him with tambourine and lyre! (Ps 149:2-4 ESV)*

**Jesus has removed my spirit of heaviness:** *The Lord has anointed me ... to comfort all who mourn ... to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair (Isa 61:1-3 NIV).*

**I am commanded to rejoice:** *Shout for joy to God, all the earth; sing the glory of his name; give him glorious praise! (Ps 66:1-2, 6 ESV). Do not rejoice ... that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven (Lk 10:20 ESV).*

**Joy is found in God's presence:** *You will fill me with the joy of your presence (Ac 2:28 NLT). In your presence is fullness of joy (Ps 16:11 NASB). The joy of the Lord is your strength [his joy and delight in you] (Neh 8:10 NIV).*

**God's protection brings me joy:** *Let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exalt in you (Ps 5:11 ESV).*

**I will rejoice in God's love:** *I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul ... you have set my feet in a broad place (Ps 31:7-8 ESV).*

**I have the joy of Jesus:** *Your God has set you [Jesus] above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy (Heb 1:9 NIV). Jesus prayed that I may have the full measure of his joy (Jn 17:13). He said: I have told you these things so that you may be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow (Jn 15:11 NLT).*

**I can always be joyful!** *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! (Php 4:4 NIV)*

**Heaven awaits me!** *Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away (Rv 21:3-4 NIV).*

## 47. STRONGHOLD OF SELF-PITY

### THE TRUTH: IT GIVES THE DEVIL A SECURE FOOTHOLD

**I live in love:** *Nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love ... Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rm 8:38-39 NLT).*

**I live in blessing:** *The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me ... He has sent me to comfort the broken-hearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord's favour has come ... To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair (Isa 61:1-3 NLT).*

**I live in friendship:** *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever – the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:16 NIV). I will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb 13:5 ESV).*

**I live in comfort:** *God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others when they are troubled (2Cor 1:3-4 NLT).*

**I live in protection:** *Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one (Jn 17:11, 15 NIV).*

**With the commandment, God gives us the power to obey it:** *Do all things without grumbling or disputing (Php 2:14 ESV). Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice (Php 4:4 ESV).*

**I live in goodness:** *We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them (Rm 8:28 NLT).*

**I must be disciplined in my thinking:** *Whatever is true ... noble ... right ... pure ... lovely ... admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things (Php 4:8 NIV).*

**I must put Jesus at the centre:** *Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Col 3:17 NIV). Keep your eyes on Jesus who endured the cross, disregarding its shame ... then you won't become weary and give up (Heb 12:1-3 NLT).*

## 48. STRONGHOLD OF SELF-REJECTION

### THE TRUTH: HOW CAN I REJECT WHAT GOD ACCEPTS?

**I am precious to God; His hand is on me:** *O Lord, you have searched me and you know me ... you are familiar with all my ways (Ps 139:1, 3 NIV). How precious concerning me are your thoughts, O God (Ps 139:17 NIV). You hem me in – behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me (Ps 139:5 NIV).*

**God is at work in me:** *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me [any unresolved pain, satanic bondage, idolatry, or hidden sin] and lead me in the way everlasting (Ps 139:23-24 NIV).*

**The Trinity lives in me:** [Jesus said:] *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you for ever ... If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him (Jn 14:16, 23 ESV).*

**To love myself is the right thing to do:** *You shall love your neighbour as yourself (Mt 22:39 ESV). Husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies ... No one hates his own body but he feeds and cares for it (Eph 5:28-29 NLT). Self-harm breaks God's heart.*

**If Jesus accepts me as I am, so should I:** *Notorious sinners often came to listen to Jesus teach (Lk 15:1 NLT) [Jesus was pleased to be known as] the friend of tax collectors and sinners (Mt 11:19 ESV).*

**If Jesus will never give up on me, neither should I:** *A bruised reed [the weak, helpless and broken] he will not break, and a smouldering wick [those considered worthless] he will not snuff out (Mt 12:20 NIV).*

**The Holy Spirit will help me:** *The Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness (Rm 8:26 NLT). The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Rm 8:16 NIV). Letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace (Rm 8:6 NLT).*

**How can I reject myself when Jesus suffered the rejection of His Father for my sake?** *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Mt 27:46 ESV) 'Papa?' Jesus cried, frantically searching the sky. 'Papa? Where are you? Don't leave me!' And for the first time – and the last time – when he spoke, nothing happened; just a horrible, endless silence. God didn't answer. He turned away from his Boy (Sally Lloyd-Jones). *God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2Cor 5:21 NIV).**

## 49. THE STRONGHOLD OF THE FEAR OF MAN THE TRUTH: GOD ALONE NEEDS TO BE FEARED

**God must always come first:** *I'll tell you whom to fear. Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you into hell. Yes, he's the one to fear (Lk 12:5 NLT).*

**God's constant affirmation is all I need:** *How can you [legalistic Jews] believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? (Jn 5:41-44 NIV)*

**Trust in God banishes the fear of man:** *My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help. This I know: God is on my side! I praise God for what he has promised ... I trust in God, so why should I be afraid? What can mere mortals do to me? (Ps 56:9-11 NLT)*

**Trust in human acceptance is dangerous:** *Many people did believe in him ... including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. They loved human praise more than the praise of God (Jn 12:42-43 NLT).*

**God is my Comforter:** *Listen to me ... you who cherish my law in your hearts. Do not be afraid of people's scorn, nor fear their insults ... I am the one who comforts you (Isa 51:7, 12 NLT).*

**The Lord strengthens me:** *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps 27:1 ESV)*

**I am a child of God:** *A true Jew is one whose heart is right with God ... A person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people (Rm 2:29 NLT). We are not trying to please men but God ... We were not looking for praise from ... you or anyone else (1Th 2:4-6 NIV).*

**I live for His 'well done', no one else's:** *We live by faith, not by sight. ... We make it our goal to please him ... For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ (2Cor 5:7-10 NIV).*

**My first allegiance is to Jesus:** *If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed. Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant (Gal 1:9-10 NLT).*

**I now live to please God, not man:** *We pray ... that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work (Col 1:10 NIV).*

## 50. STRONGHOLD OF THE FEAR OF DEATH

### THE TRUTH: DEATH IS A DEFEATED FOE

**I fully possess eternal life right now:** *I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die (Jn 11:25-26 NIV).*

**Death provokes the anger of Jesus:** *When Jesus saw Mary weeping ... a deep anger welled up within him and he was deeply troubled (Jn 11:33 NLT). 'Death is the object of his inextinguishable fury, and behind death, him who has the power of death: the evil one' (BB Warfield).*

**In reality I have already been delivered from the fear of dying:** *Since ... the children share in flesh and blood, he himself ... partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery (Heb 2:15 ESV).*

**In reality death is a past event for me:** *Very truly I tell you; whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged, but has crossed over from death to life (Jn 5:24 NIV).*

**In reality I share Christ's victory over death:** *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you (1Cor 15:56-58 NIV).*

**I need not be afraid:** *Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house ... I am going to prepare a place for you (Jn 14:1 NLT). Every day of my life was recorded in your book before one of them came to be (Ps 139:16 NLT).*

**Jesus reigns supreme over death:** *Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One. I died, but look – I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave (Rv 1:18 NLT). When you pass through the waters, I will be with you (Isa 42:2 NIV).*

**No punishment awaits me:** *Truly I tell you, today [the day you die] you will be with me in paradise (Lk 23:43 NIV). No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who [simply but truly] love him (1Cor 2:9 NIV).*

**I will be preserved faultless:** *[Jesus] is able to keep us from falling and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy (Jude 1:24 NLT). He will ... keep you firm to the end, so that you will be faultless on the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Cor 1:18 GNT).*

## CHAPTER TWO : THE EMPATHY OF JESUS

**Jesus understands** and sympathises with me when I am overwhelmed by negative emotions; He feels what I feel without condemning me. *We do not have a high priest who is unable to understand and sympathise and have a fellow feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but one who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning* (Heb 4:15 Amp).

**Jesus welcomes** me into His presence no matter what I have done or how I am feeling. *Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need* (Heb 4:16 NASB).

**Jesus was conceived** out of wedlock through the Holy Spirit. *Joseph, her [Mary's] fiancé, being a just man, decided to break the engagement quietly, so as not to disgrace her publicly* (Mt 1:19 NLT). Many neighbours would have despised, shunned and rejected Mary.

**Jesus as a tiny child** was threatened with death. *An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream ... Escape to Egypt ... Herod is going to search for the child to kill him* (Mt 2:13 NIV).

**Jesus as an adult** had a death-threat hanging over Him. *The Pharisees called a meeting and discussed plans for killing Jesus* (Mt 12:14 NLT). [The chief priests and elders] *plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him* (Mt 26:4 NIV).

**Jesus was not honoured** by those closest to Him. *Jesus said to them, Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honour* (Mt 13:57 NIV). *Even his brothers didn't believe in him* (Jn 7:5 NLT). *When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. He's out of his mind, they said* (Mk 3:21 NLT).

**Jesus wasn't as handsome** as many believe. *He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him* (Isa 53:2 NIV). *Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart* (1Sm 16:7 NASB).

**Jesus was treated with contempt.** *He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hid their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not* (Isa 53:3 NIV).

**Jesus suffered life-crippling rejection,** but it did not deter Him in any way. *He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him* (Jn 1:10-11 NLT).

**Jesus suffered injustice;** all His human rights were ignored. *For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust so that he might bring us to God* (1Pt 3:18 NASB).

**Jesus suffered mental turmoil.** He wept and pleaded with God to be spared the cross. *While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears, to the one who could rescue him from death. And God heard his prayers [though, for your sake and mine, God could not grant his request] (Heb 5:7 NLT).*

**Jesus became so dispirited He wanted to die.** *My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow, deeply grieved to the point of death (Mt 26:38 NIV). My heart is like wax; it is melted within me (Ps 22:14 NASB). Save me, O God, for the waters have threatened my life ... a flood overflows me. I am weary with my crying ... Those who hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head (Ps 69:1-4 NASB).*

**Jesus experienced fear;** greater than any other person could ever face. He looked into the cup of God's wrath and it literally frightened Him to death. *When they reached a place called Gethsemane ... horror and anguish overwhelmed him, and he said to them, My heart is ready to break with grief; stop here and stay awake. Then he went on a little farther, threw himself on the ground, and prayed ... Abba Father ... all things are possible to you; take this cup away from me. Yet not my will but yours. And being in agony he was praying very fervently; and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground (Lk 22:44 NASB; Mk 14:32-37 REB).* Imagine how the Father's heart must have been at breaking point listening to this cry from his only Son!

**Jesus was let down** by His closest friends. [At his arrest] *all the disciples deserted him and fled (Mt 26:56 NLT).*

**Jesus suffered humiliation.** *They spat in his face and beat him with their fists; and others slapped him (Mt 26:67 NASB).*

**Jesus suffered ridicule.** *The men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him and beating him (Lk 22:63 NASB).*

**Jesus was the subject of jealousy.** [Pilate knew] *it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him (Mk 15:10 NIV).*

**Jesus' heart was broken.** *Reproach has broken my heart, and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters but I found none (Ps 69:20 NASB).*

**Jesus was tempted to doubt** God's love for Him. *Those who passed by hurled insults at him ... In the same way the ... elders mocked him ... He trusts*

*in God let him deliver him now, if he takes pleasure in him (Mt 27:39-43 NASB).*

**Jesus bore God's wrath** in full measure for everyone's sins. *He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him (Isa 53:5 NIV). He [Jesus Christ – the Righteous one] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world (1Jn 2:2 NIV).*

**Jesus longs to heal me completely**, but may choose not to. Our physical, mental and emotional healing are in the hands of our Sovereign God. He does not owe us perfect health, but we should pray for healing. *With his wounds we are healed [literally 'there is healing for us in his wounds'] (Isa 53:5 ESV). However, he may choose to give us grace to endure so we can empathise with others.*

**Jesus was not crushed by the devil**, but by His Father, so I must never doubt God's love for me. *The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all ... It was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer (Isa 53:6, 10 NIV).*

**Jesus asked why:** Why is this happening to Me? So we can ask God the same question. *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day but you do not answer (Ps 22:1-2 NIV). Imagine how difficult it must have been for the Father to turn his back on his Son! It was our sin that brought this about.*

**Jesus was abandoned by His Father** so that I would never have to be. *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? (Mk 15:34 NLT) For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh [our fallen, ego-centric human nature], God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned [and judged] sin in sinful man; being made sin for us (Rm 8:3 NIV).*

**Jesus, it seems, experienced all our pain;** the actual emotional, psychological and physical pain of our sins, infirmities, sorrows and diseases. *When evening came, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfil what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases (Mt 8:16-17 NASB). It was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God for his own sins! (Isa 53:4 NLT)*



## CHAPTER THREE : PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOURSELF EVERY DAY

Many encourage us to preach the gospel to ourselves every day. This is because (1) Satan accuses us 24/7, and (2) we are prone to try, at least in part, to commend and save ourselves by good works and Christian service. We find it hard to believe that God loves and accepts us just as we are. We feel we must somehow earn his love and approval. Primarily using the book of Acts, let's remind ourselves that it was indeed the Father's purpose to save us.

**I was predestined to be saved:** *As many as were appointed to eternal life believed* [those whose names were already inscribed in the Book of Life] (Ac 13:48 ESV).

**I belonged to God before I believed:** [Jesus commanded Paul to continue to preach the gospel in Corinth, saying ... ] *I have many in this city who are my people* [but they don't know it yet!] (Ac 18:10 ESV)

**I was created for a relationship with the Father:** *He made from one man every nation of mankind ... that they should seek God and perhaps feel their way towards him and find him* (Ac 17:26-27 ESV).

**I have been called:** *The promise* [of the Holy Spirit] *is for ... everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself* (Ac 2:39 ESV).

**God opened my heart to the gospel:** *The Lord opened* [Lydia's] *heart* [to pay attention to and] *to respond to Paul's message* (Ac 16:14 ESV).

**I know I am a sinner and can do nothing to save myself:** *God commands all people everywhere to repent* (Ac 17:30 NIV).

**I was given grace to believe:** *Apollos ... was a great help to those who by grace had believed* (Ac 18:27 NIV).

**Faith came to me through hearing the gospel:** *The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word* [and believed] (Ac 10:44 ESV). *Faith comes from hearing the* [gospel] *message* (Rm 10:17 NIV).

**I responded with godly sorrow over my sin:** *When they heard this they were cut to the heart ... 'What shall we do?'* (Ac 2:37 NIV).

**I was indwelt by the Spirit when I believed:** *God has made this Jesus ... both Lord and Christ.* [Believing Peter's words they said ... ] *What shall we do? ... Repent and be baptised ... and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit* (Ac 2:36-39 NIV). *No one can say: 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit* (1Cor 12:3 NIV).

**I have repented and been baptised:** *Repent and be baptised ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins [thereby publically confessing him as your Lord] (Ac 2:38 NIV).*

**I have committed myself to God's family:** *He warned them and pleaded with them, Save yourselves from this corrupt generation ... and about 3000 were added to their number that day (Ac 2:40-41 NIV).*

**I have been saved by the name of Jesus:** *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved [from hell] (Ac 4:12 NIV).*

**I am seeking to obey Him, though I do so imperfectly:** *We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, who God has given to those who obey him (Ac 5:32 NIV). [I have been called to] the obedience that comes through faith (Rm 1:5 NIV).*

**I am totally secure in God's grace:** *Paul and Barnabas ... urged them to continue in the grace of God [not to slip back into legalism and seeking to establish their own righteousness by works] (Ac 13:43 NIV).*

**I am trusting in Jesus alone to save me;** trusting in his perfect and sinless life; in his perfect obedience; in his total fulfilment of God's law; in his perfect faith; in his total obedience to the Father on my behalf (Ac 2:22; 10:38; Rm 5:10); in the power of his blood (Ac 2:23; Rm 5:9); in his victorious resurrection (Ac 2:24; Rm 4:25); in his victory over Satan and every demonic power (Ac 13:10-11; 16:18; Heb 2:14); in his identity as God's Son and the promised Messiah (Ac 2:36; Jn 1:1-3); in his fulfilment of more than 350 OT prophecies (Ac 3:18; 8:34-35); in his exaltation to God's right hand (Ac 2:33); and in his glorious return (Ac 1:11).

**I have been purified by faith in Jesus:** *I am sending you [to the Gentiles] that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me (Ac 26:18 ESV). By one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy (Heb 10:14 NIV).*

**I am forgiven:** all my sins, past, present and future, are under the blood. *God exalted [Jesus] to his own right hand that he might give [the gifts of] repentance and forgiveness (Ac 5:31 NIV). He has appeared once for all ... to put away sin (Heb 9:26 ESV). We considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon him ... and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa 53:5-6 NIV).*

Billy Graham used the following hymn by Charlotte Elliott at most of his evangelistic rallies. She was convinced she had to achieve a high level of personal holiness before she could be counted worthy enough to respond to Jesus' invitation to come to him. The pastors to whom she poured out her

soul advised her to try harder. This kept her in a state of misery until one day a gracious and godly man told her there was only one way to come to Jesus and that was just as she was. Her soul was suddenly flooded with light and relief and she composed her most famous work. I love this hymn and keep coming back to it.

*Just as I am, without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me,  
and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, though tossed about with many a conflict, many a doubt;  
fightings and fears within, without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; sight, riches, healing of the mind;  
yea, all I need in thee to find; O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, thou wilt receive, wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,  
because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

*Just as I am, thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down.  
Now, to be thine, yea thine alone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.*

'Whoever, once truly believes that Jesus was raised from the dead, and confesses that Jesus is Lord, will go to heaven when they die, no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith' (R T Kendall).

'God's way is not a path of continual success, but of multiple failures to make us more and more dependent on God' (Sarah Young).

**The very moment I received Jesus as Saviour and Lord**, my spirit was transferred permanently from earth to heaven: *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things; for you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory (Col 3:1-4 NIV).*

**Nothing need stop me from having heaven's perspective:** *You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked ... following the prince of the power of the air ... and were by nature children of wrath ... But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us ... made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:1-6 ESV).*

**Knowing God's grace motivates me** to put myself into another person's shoes, feeling for them and gaining insight into their experiences: *Let your gentleness [your forbearance, empathy, moderation, readiness to forgive and*

fairmindedness] *be evident to all* [both in the church and in the world] (Php 4:4 NIV).

## CHAPTER FOUR : UNGODLY LEADERSHIP

*Diotrephes loves to be the leader* [loves to be first; loves to be pre-eminent] (3Jn 9-11 NLT). What is said of the love of money could be said of the love of leadership. *The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows* (1Tm 6:10 NIV).

The love of leadership is a root. It will be hidden; not at all obvious until the leader is challenged. It will then manifest itself as it did in Diotrephes. He isolated himself from the apostolic oversight of John. He accused and criticised John and his team and would have nothing to do with them. He rejected accountability and submission to those over him in the Lord.

He became a shameless shepherd who loved himself, and only cared for himself (Jude 12). He refused to welcome apostolic teachers who travelled between churches. He made sure none of his people helped them. If they disobeyed him in this, he put them out of the church. This smacks of heavy-handed control.

He lorded it over God's flock. Why? Because he loved leadership itself. He loved to have the pre-eminence. This same word is used of Jesus. *He is the image of the invisible God ... so that in everything, he might have the supremacy* (Col 1:15-18 NIV). 'The motives governing the conduct of Diotrephes were neither theological, nor social, nor ecclesiastical, but moral. The root of the problem was sin' (John Stott). He was greedy for position, status, power and privilege.

Some people, obsessively eager for leadership, have indeed wandered from the faith and pierced themselves and their families with many griefs and sorrows. I have witnessed this myself. It can cause family breakdown. It can lead to children turning their backs on God. We are commanded to love God, to love our neighbour and to love God's people. We do this by serving them and by dying to self and selfish ambition. When we love to lead rather than loving those we lead, we are headed for disaster.

How 'loving to lead' reveals itself can be seen from what Jesus said about the Pharisees (Mt 23:1-39). The list is a terrible indictment. Only with God's help, the input of others and, by keeping our hearts cleansed from sin, can we avoid being like them. What characterizes many of those who 'love to lead' in a self-serving manner? What tendencies do they have?

**An independent spirit:** They reject the counsel of apostolic team members; of those over them in the Lord, and of those for whom they carry responsibilities. They try to avoid accountability. If questioned about the way they handle finances or behave in various situations, they become angry and defensive rather than transparent and honest.

**A critical spirit:** They tend to make false accusations against those who call them to account and point the finger at their perceived weaknesses. They do this to divert attention away from themselves.

**A rebellious spirit:** They refuse to submit to the authority of those over them and insist on doing things their way. When leaders demonstrate such an attitude, they endanger those under their care.

**A self-righteous spirit:** They insist that their ways are best, and believe they are better leaders than others. They are taken up with externals. They believe their rule-keeping gives them the moral high ground.

**Heavy-shepherding:** They weigh down their own people with legalistic burdens, while offering them no assistance. They order their own people to treat with disdain and rejection those who oppose them.

**Performing to be admired:** They make a show of everything they do; seeking the praises of people. The Lord is more concerned about what we do in private than in public.

**Opposing grace:** Because they put the emphasis on behaviour and obeying rules – often in contradiction to NT teaching – they tend to see an emphasis on grace as giving people a licence to sin. They tend to interpret earthquakes, etc., as God's direct judgement on sin, contrary to Jesus' teaching in Lk 13:1-5.

**Welcoming only those like themselves:** They tend to evaluate others solely on the basis of works and outward 'clean-living'. They reject and push away those they deem less-than-worthy.

**Being selective:** They don't teach the whole counsel of God. They major on legalistic passages, while ignoring the clear example Jesus set us. There are none so blind as those who think they see clearly.

**Negligence:** They tend to neglect true righteousness, mercy and faithfulness. They take the easy way of legalism in terms of what they teach. Telling people what to do is so much easier than seeking to explain, reason, teach and persuade; much less demanding than standing in the shoes of the suffering and deprived and seeing things from their perspective.

**Self-centredness:** They tend to be greedy for financial benefit and excessively self-indulgent. This is often accompanied with the false notion of entitlement; that God owes us wealth and health.

**Self-deception:** They have the reputation of being holy without its reality; they tend to be hypocritical; not open to the admonition of others. They can be blind to this, not having the spiritual maturity to distinguish right from wrong. They examine externals and ignore heart conditions.

**Pride:** They don't have the attitude of 'Lord, have mercy on me a sinner!' They look down on others thinking they are superior. They fail to see that because God opposes the proud, he stands against them.

**A condemning spirit:** They don't really love the flock or the lost; but, being fault-finding, they tend to label people who slip up as worthless failures and write them off.

Do you or I see any of these tendencies in ourselves? If so, we need to seek out a trusted and esteemed brother or sister in the Lord and come clean. We need to establish accountability, being sure that our God is gracious, merciful and forgiving. He is the God of the second, third, and on-and-on chance; the God of new beginnings.

## ABBREVIATIONS

### OT (Old Testament)

Genesis (Gn)  
Exodus (Ex)  
Leviticus (Lv)  
Numbers (Nm)  
Deuteronomy (Dt)  
Joshua (Jos)  
Judges (Jdg)  
Ruth (Ruth)  
1 Samuel (1Sm)  
2 Samuel (2Sm)  
1 Kings (1Kgs)  
2 Kings (2Kgs)  
1 Chronicles (1Ch)  
2 Chronicles (2Ch)  
Ezra (Ezra)  
Nehemiah (Neh)  
Esther (Est)  
Job (Job)  
Psalms (Ps)  
Proverbs (Pr)  
Ecclesiastes (Ecc)  
Song of Solomon (So)  
Isaiah (Isa)  
Jeremiah (Jer)  
Lamentations (Lam)  
Ezekiel (Ez)  
Daniel (Dan)  
Hosea (Hos)  
Joel (Joel)  
Amos (Amos)  
Obadiah (Ob)  
Jonah (Jnh)  
Micah (Mic)

Nahum (Na)  
Habakkuk (Hab)  
Zephaniah (Zph)  
Haggai (Hag)  
Zechariah (Zch)  
Malachi (Mal)  
NT (New Testament)  
Matthew (Mt)  
Mark (Mk)  
Luke (Lk)  
John (Jn)  
Acts (Ac)  
Romans (Rm)  
1 Corinthians (1Cor)  
2 Corinthians (2Cor)  
Galatians (Gal)  
Ephesians (Eph)  
Philippians (Php)  
Colossians (Col)  
1 Thessalonians (1Th)  
2 Thessalonians (2Th)  
1 Timothy (1Tm)  
2 Timothy (2Tm)  
Titus (Titus)  
Philemon (Phm)  
Hebrews (Heb)  
James (Jm)  
1 Peter (1Pt)  
2 Peter (2Pt)  
1 John (1Jn)  
2 John (2Jn)  
3 John (3Jn)  
Jude (Jude)  
Revelation (Rv)