

## Pursuing Partnership: Moving Mountains of Strongholds

Stronghold #10 – Invisibility

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*In this series of blogs, Leslie and Chad identify spiritual strongholds that need to be unearthed and removed so that godly men and women can partner well together for the completion of the Great Commission. Pray with us into these mountains, and by faith may these tectonic plates move in Jesus' name!*

### Invisibility



### Shine Everywhere or Shrink

Jesus called forward a demonically bent and crippled woman to the front of the synagogue. The crowd was shocked! There, he called her *“daughter of Abraham”* and publicly restored her. The leaders were indignant! The woman was set free. The leaders were humiliated. The crowd was delighted! May we be like Jesus and call women forward, bless them with identity, and release them to praise God publicly.

God created men and women to “fill the earth” and shine as a city on a hill within every sphere of society. The enemy hates the idea of godly workers boldly spreading out. He prefers that they do the exact opposite... shrink back in the shadows. In Satan’s war against God, the enemy wants women to have zero influence, to disappear and remain invisible.

### Out of Sight...

Cultures throughout the world have devalued women and sought to keep them hidden. Pick a culture, any culture:

- In the ancient Greek culture, *“the ‘unknown woman’ was considered the ideal woman.”*
- In 1st century Roman culture, women had no individual name; she took the feminine form of her dad’s name.

- The Jewish Talmud stated, *“The birth of a daughter is a loss,”* and Jewish women gained social value only if they sent their sons to the synagogue.
- Hinduism teaches in the Rig Veda, *“There cannot be any friendship with a woman. Her heart is more cruel than ‘heyna.’”*
- Modern women of Iran and the Gulf States drape themselves in hot black burqas, veiling their faces *“for their honor.”* A woman of Afghanistan shared that her greatest dream was to *“feel the wind blowing through my hair.”*
- In Pakistan, women are considered *“the honor.”* And, *“we protect our honor by keeping them at home.”*

Women throughout the world are hidden within house walls, prisoners of their families. Though education has changed the landscape in recent decades, we all sigh with sadness at the realities that billions of women and girls still endure. Yet...

### Has the Church influenced culture, or has culture influenced the Church?

A highly-educated Indian woman who worked in the national government proclaimed in despair:  
*“When I come home, I am nobody! And I am silenced in my church! I would have given my life to serve the church, but I am not allowed to speak.”*

I (Leslie) attended a global conference in Indonesia without Chad. I was riding the bus back to the airport. A man from Colorado asked about our ministry. After I shared a bit, he responded, *“So, what are your husband’s spiritual gifts that enable him to do this?”*

I felt what so many women feel like outside and inside the Church – **invisible**.

And Satan LOVES it! An “invisible” woman may be seen physically, but she is overlooked or considered unnecessary in matters of significance.

Sometimes when teaching, we share how God created the woman from the man’s “side” as his equal strength – *ezer k’negedu*. Then we illustrate God’s intent in the creation of woman:

- Not from man’s head – that she would rule over him.
- Not from man’s foot – that he might rule over her.
- Not from man’s chest – that he might hide in back.
- Not from man’s back – so that she cannot be seen.
- From his side! Close to his heart. Aimed in the same direction, and equally visible.

### Structural Barriers – Lack of Models

Throughout the global Church, there remain comparatively few examples showing women in leadership. Those that do serve in leadership often receive no affirmation. This “lack of model” is an invisibility framework. It causes both men and women to ignore or not honor God’s daughters.

Men, who rarely see the example of godly female leaders, easily assume that women do not want to serve in certain positions. One pastor shared, *“Women don’t want to be elders. They never ask. They wouldn’t want that responsibility.”* We responded, *“Have you asked them? Maybe they don’t know the position is open for them because they never see women serving in that capacity.”* (See [scholarship](#) regarding the neuter pronoun “tis.”)

Women, seldom seeing other women leaders, quickly understand that service through leading and teaching/speaking may not be an option available for them in the church. An American woman said, *“Sundays are the saddest days of my life. I feel unneeded and of little value when I walk into church.”*

An Indian church planter who now equips and releases both women and men as church planters and leaders stated:

*“God literally opened our eyes to this. If we want to impact the world around us, we need to use every possible resource. And the cashless resource that is available in the kingdom of God is the laborers. That’s what Jesus expressed. [Women are] more than 50% of God’s Army! We need to give our sisters... opportunity like we give the men, opportunity to serve the Lord.”*

To strike a deathblow to this stronghold of **invisibility**, it will require faith and courage:

- Men must be willing to invite godly, spiritually-gifted women to rise to the task and fill positions of leadership, so God’s laborers might lead based on their giftedness.
- Women must be willing to step up and become the example for others to see, so that more women will think of themselves serving in a similar fashion.
- The Church must publicly honor both women and men who engage in God’s mission. Highlighting their ministry contributions works to shatter Satan’s plan of invisibility.

**May we move out and fill the earth, fulfilling God’s intention with both male and female shining brightly in God’s kingdom.**