

## Pursuing Partnership: Moving Mountains of Strongholds

*Stronghold #11 – Confusion and Gymnastics*

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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!*

### Confusion and Gymnastics



#### **The Enemy Loves Distortion**

*“God is not a God of disorder but of peace...”* But Satan loves chaos. Therefore, he tries to confuse Christians as they interpret the Bible by introducing contorted gymnastics. He confounds Christians, causing poor interpretations and inconsistent practices that do not reflect the character of God.

God’s Word continues to speak to all generations and nations. Because God’s character does not bend with culture, God’s Word is *“useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The enemy hates when Christians understand God’s Word and *“rightly divide the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15). When we rightly divide God’s Word, a consistency should flow in the way we interpret and apply the biblical text. Listen to some common gymnastics implying that God changes his standards based on culture.

- “No men stepped up, that’s why God chose Deborah as judge.” (See Judges 4-5.) Consistency says, God approved of Deborah; God did NOT violate his standards to win a war!
- “Too few men were Christians, so that’s why Lydia started a church in her home.” (See Acts 16.) Consistency says, God is pleased when men or women make disciples and start house churches!
- “Women can preach, but they cannot stand behind the pulpit.” Consistency says, there is no pulpit in the Bible!
- “Women can never teach men biblical content. So, women can only instruct boys until age 14.” Consistency says, Jesus never put an age limit on disciple-making.

The ideas above reveal subtle (or blunt) uses of gymnastics – adding, twisting, maneuvering texts to arrive at our *pre-set* conclusions. This does not exhibit sound exegesis.

Consider another biblical passage. Many Christians say women shouldn’t preach in church, and they may quote 1 Cor. 14:35, “*It is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.*” Yet, in their church gatherings, women sing, give testimonies, make announcements, teach Sunday School classes, etc.

So... does God consider a woman’s voice “disgraceful” in the assembly or not? If women’s voices are disgraceful, then women should say NOTHING, teach NOTHING, and have NO CONVERSATIONS with anyone in the local church setting. The text clearly calls female speech “disgraceful.” Yet people misapply and say, “*That’s not what it means. It means women shouldn’t preach, teach, or hold the office as a pastor or elder. Of course they can talk or teach women!*” But where does this verse mention ANY of those things? Indeed, Paul must be forgetful because only three chapters earlier, he instructed women how to be modest WHEN they prayed and prophesied (1 Cor. 11:5-6). Do not let the enemy confuse and win. [Check out the New Testament research](#) indicating that Paul was strongly correcting an exact Corinthian phrase, not promoting a universal limitation of women!

### **High View of God and High View of Scripture**

To not fall victim to Satan’s gymnastics, we must maintain a high view of *God* and a high view of *Scripture*. A.W. Tozer stated, “*The low view of God entertained... among Christians is the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere among us.*”

If we hold a high view of God and a high view of Scripture, then we can know that biblical consistency is not only possible, consistency matches God’s character. This view protects against enemy attack and helps us develop a solid theology around men and women, rather than have an ideology guided by human tradition that leads to mis-interpretation.

### **Universal and Culture-Specific Truth**

One way we can guard from inconsistency in following Scriptures is to realize the Bible contains two distinct kinds of truth – “*universal truth*” and “*culture-specific truth.*” It takes godly wisdom to differentiate. *Universal truth* is true in every generation and situation. It does not change. *Culture-Specific truth* is true in certain places and times. It can vary based on its context. For example:

A certain man in a U.S. partnering church became irate because we equip women as church planters in Asia. Chad flew to their city and spoke with their team. He explained how the Apostle

Paul multiplied godly laborers and how God used women start and bless house churches. Yet, the influential man causing the conflict kept repeating his fixed interpretation.

At the end of the meeting, Chad added. *“Brothers, I am offended. No one greeted me with a kiss. You only shook my hands. Paul says, ‘Greet each other with a holy kiss.’ Scripture was disobeyed.”* They all looked at Chad, and Chad began to laugh. *“Thank you, for NO kiss! That’s my point. ‘Greet with a kiss’ is a local custom – not a universal truth. You have to figure out if a biblical command is universal or cultural, or you could promote false teaching.”*

The enemy wants Christians to twist, flip, and ultimately disobey God’s holy standards. May we battle well against this powerful enemy of God’s truth.

**Pray Christians will understand and apply the Bible as God intended. May the stronghold of CONFUSION cease as people study the Word and as the Holy Spirit guides us into clear, unwavering truth.**