

Pursuing Partnership: Moving Mountains of Strongholds

Stronghold #4 – Slithering Deception and Doubt

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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!

Slithering Deception and Doubt



Serpent's Twist

Satan wants us to doubt God's character and God's word regarding men and women. It's an ancient question, *"Did God really say...?"* With those words, the deception began. The enemy's first question to the unified, innocent, and perfect couple planted seeds of doubt about God.

We must fight Satan's deception through the truth of God's Word. Through God's powerful Word, God created the world. Through the incarnation of the Word made flesh, God came down and walked with humanity. From the beginning, Satan has sought to cast doubt on God's Word with his slithering deception.

The serpent also caused them to question God's character. "*Did God really say... you will not certainly die... For God knows...you will be like God.*" Even though they had walked with God, and even though they were made in God's image, this deception caused them to question what good thing God might be withholding from them. The deception turned their focus away from God and toward themselves. God had directed the couple to spread outward as God's fruitful image bearers, with God's global mandate as their supreme agenda. God's glory would fill the earth through this overcoming, dominion-sharing team. But their powerful global mandate became an inward, self-focused examination.

You may remember that St. Augustine and later Martin Luther developed the concept of "*Incurvatus in Se*" which means "curved inward on oneself." This deceitful "inward reflecting look" describes the origin of sin! The first man and woman turned away from God and away from God's mission. By the enemy's deception, the couple gazed toward their own soul, their own desires...and with their disobedience, sin entered the world.

Deceptive Darts

Satan continues to throw darts of deceit about the Bible and God's character, especially surrounding the topic of male and female. For example:

- **God "made men superior."** Some claim God that could not possibly have created "men and women as equal strengths/partners" in Genesis 1-2. After all, God created a man first, so men must be the "in-charge/leaders" of women. They claim men and women are equal, but man must be the leader (or as Muslims say "one degree above"). This understanding does not rightly characterize God and how He chose to design people. It also displays a Western worldview of linear thought rather than the Hebrew concept of parallelism (created first = created last). Satan has confused millions with this line of deceptive reasoning.
- **The Bible is untrustworthy because it says, "women are property."** Some claim that the Bible cannot be trusted because women are "not equal" in the Bible, and the Bible considers "women as property." Not only is this *wrong thinking*, but it misses the powerful alliance God created in Genesis 1-2 between men and women before the Fall. The Bible is certainly trust-worthy, women are not property, and Satan caused the whole confusion!
- **It's not just "male and female."** Some claim (and even so-called Christians are falling for this) that there are more than two genders, and thinking otherwise is unloving or "hating." This deception completely misses Creator God's clear reality of humanity created as male and female. Most who argue for transgender rights today are not fighting for the rights of people with Klinefelter Syndrome (XXY). Again, Satan is stirring up chaos on the male/female issue.

The Weapon of... "*It Is Written...*"

God's Word is solid and true. We can trust it. We can stand on it. We must study it well to show ourselves approved. The enemy knows that if we never listen to God's Word, we essentially fight without a sword. The enemy also knows that if we abandon the Bible, or deny it, or only agree with certain parts of it, we lose much ammunition in battle. Yet, Jesus showed us how to quote Scripture when in direct contact with Satan! "*It is written...*" Jesus said three times, and the victory belonged to Jesus (Matthew 4).

Like Jesus, we can overcome the stronghold of doubting God's Word through, *"It is written..."* This simple phrase remains a powerful weapon available to us today whenever we engage the stronghold of enemy deception. When we encounter direct demonic resistance related to men and women partnering in the Gospel, we should respond with *"It is written..."* then speak the truth of God's Word. We must be sure our understanding of any individual passage lines up to God's character as revealed in all of Scripture and with his ideal design he created in Genesis 1-2 – male and female as *ezer k'negedu* (equal/compatible strengths). *"It is written..."* clarifies God's character and mission and lights the path forward for men and women living under a cloud of deception.

Pray believers will recognize and pluck out any seeds of doubt sown by the enemy and walk boldly in the light of God's Word, trusting in God's character, God's design of women and men, and God's strategy of men and women running fast and far together. May the mountains of DECEPTION and DOUBT be moved, in Jesus' name!