

Journey Through The Cities Of Refuge

Lesson #23

Hebron: Spiritual Strongholds

July 1, 2026

Prior to entering the Promised Land, God gave specific commands to Moses and Israel to "devote" the seven nations of Canaan to "complete destruction."

Deut. 7:1-2 When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, Seven Nations Greater And Mightier Than Thou;

² And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them:

Just like the Israelites were promised a land flowing with milk and honey -
you, too, have a promised land - a life of abundance and blessing in Christ.

- Purpose in Life Intimacy with God Peace that passes all understanding
- Joy not based on circumstances Overflowing love for others
- Victory over sin Live in light of eternity

The Holy Spirit of God commands us under His power and His authority to DRIVE OUT the enemies which reside in our soul. They are not compatible with Godly holy living!

- These enemies will work through our flesh and our soul [mind, will, emotions].
- Each one is like a parasite: Attach itself to you and destroy your life
- The FLESH will be empowered because its goal is to be exalted and its desires and goals fulfilled.
- These enemies are active elements of your spiritual warfare.
- Their goal: Prevent your spiritual growth and maturity;
Hinder your experience of the Abundant Life

If these enemies remain, they will be "snares, traps, scourges and thorns" to the people of God!

- By faith, they would have to fight for it, inch by bloody inch.

Joshua 1:3 Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. [tread = darak = do warfare] [only claimed 10%]

Just as the Israelites faced opposition, you must confront and overcome the "Canaanites" that hinder you from possessing your full inheritance in Christ.

- Their defeat is ONLY possible as you surrender to the Holy Spirit and avail yourself of His power to overcome them.

II Corinthians 2:11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. Let us examine how they operate and function in us so we will not be ignorant of the enemy's devices. Know Our Enemy!

Identifying Your Internal Enemies

The 7 nations of Canaan represent:

- Specific strongholds that can take root in your heart and mind:

Elizabeth Elliot: Spiritual strongholds begin with a thought. One thought becomes a consideration which develops into an attitude, which leads then to action.

Action repeated becomes a habit, and a habit establishes a "power base for the enemy."

A spiritual stronghold is a mindset, belief system, or repetitive habit that dictates a person's behavior against the will of God. Believing a lie results in strongholds in our lives because it keeps us from the truth of our true identity in Christ. A stronghold, or fortress is a weapon of our enemy, Satan, that he uses to attack and destroy the believer.

Strongholds usually fall into specific categories of Thought and Behavior:

Mindsets and Emotional Strongholds

- Fear and Anxiety: Chronic worry, panic, or a refusal to trust God with the future.
- Rejection: A deep conviction that you are unlovable, unwanted, or permanently flawed.
- Bitterness and Unforgiveness:
Holding onto resentment, nursing old hurts, and wishing harm on others.
- Insecurity and Comparison:
Constantly measuring your worth by others, leading to jealousy or self-hatred.

Behavioral and Habitual Strongholds

- Addiction: Compulsive reliance on substances, pornography, gambling, or shopping for comfort.
- Control and Manipulation: The need to micromanage people and circumstances due to a lack of trust.
- People-Pleasing: Prioritizing human approval over divine truth, leading to fear of man.
- Sexual Immorality: Persistently engaging in sexual behaviors outside of Biblical boundaries.

Ideological and Religious Strongholds

- Legalism: Believing your performance, rules, and rituals earn God's love and salvation.
- Pride and Self-Righteousness: An inability to admit fault,
believing you are superior to others.
- Atheism or Humanism: A stubborn intellectual refusal to acknowledge God's authority.

A young boy in Scotland, Alan Redpath, had a man challenge him.

"Be careful. You don't have a saved soul but a wasted life."

Alan Redpath came to America, became pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago, Illinois.

Most of his preaching centered on: Be careful. You don't have a saved soul but a wasted life."

- "Once you're saved, the devil can't get you for eternity."
- But Satan can try to get you to waste your life here.

Question: Is my life counting for all that the Lord wants it to count for?

A saved soul with a useful life.

The spiritual warfare of the Christian is a holy calling, but also a divine undertaking accomplished in those who humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

God required a crossing of the Jordan River at flood stage to enter The Promised Land.

- BEFORE crossing, they were to consecrate, separate themselves to God's purpose.
- Are you willing to die to self, submit to God & enter God's rest?

They were to camp at Gilgal where they set up Memorial Stones.

- They learned the heart of the enemy had melted because of them and their God.
- God required circumcision before they could participate in Passover.

Circumcision: Testimony that the land was to be possessed in the weakness of the flesh, through suffering. It symbolized the weakness and almost death of everything that man can be, in order that the possession of the land should be given to them unmistakably in the sovereign grace of God. [Redpath]

Joshua met the captain of the host of the Lord who will lead and give the victory.

Powerful Truth: There would be no victories in the Promised Land

if they did not commit to obedience from the moment they crossed the Jordan.

- Consecrate myself; separate myself to God's purpose; Die to self; set up memorial; Circumcision of my heart; celebrate Passover; Allow God to lead

Paul's Message: GOD'S GRACE will sanctify you, give you victory in the abundant life, cause you to be a vessel of honor, give you rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ and exalt you to rule and reign with Him in His Millennial Kingdom.

II Timothy 2:1, 3-6 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

³You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. ⁴No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. ⁵And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops.

II Tim. 2:15 Study [be diligent; zealous] to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

II Tim. 2:19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," and "Let everyone who names the name of Christ Depart From Iniquity."

Depart: 868 aphistémi: to shun, flee from; to withdraw oneself from: to fall away from
The verb appears fourteen times and consistently describes an act of stepping away—
from a place, a person, a commitment, or from evil itself.

This text couples divine sovereignty: "The Lord knows those who are His" with
human responsibility to renounce iniquity.

Iniquity:# 93 adikia: every form of moral deviation that violates the just character of God.
It is not merely the absence of righteousness but an active distortion of what is right,
a hostility toward truth that provokes divine wrath

Biblehub.org The believer's union with Christ empowers a definitive break from iniquity,
though vigilance remains essential.

The requirement to depart from iniquity
is an expectation for every person who claims to follow Christ.

Question: When's the last time you departed from what's not right?

Have you ever been watching something on TV, listening to the radio, or reading and you think,
I wish they didn't talk like that. The plot of the show does not line up with God's Word.

II Tim. 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver,
but also of wood and clay, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

II Tim. 2:21 Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these *things* [which are dishonorable—
disobedient, sinful], he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified [set apart for a special purpose
and], useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

Problem: Believers who aren't clean are not fit for the master's use.

The Apostle Paul concludes in verse 21 by emphasizing that anyone who cleanses themselves
from what is dishonorable will become an instrument for noble or honorable use.

Truth: A believer's practical purity directly dictates
their readiness and usefulness to "the Master" for good works.

Cleansing: Consecration, Circumcision of the heart, Absolute Surrender to Power of Holy Spirit

Paul warns that the period prior to Christ's return will be characterized by a decline in moral
values and a rise in self-centeredness. He lists 19 negative traits running rampant in the world.

II Tim. 3:1-5 This know also that in the last days perilous time shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud,
blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection,
truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God
having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof from such turn away. [depart]

As we go through a few of these, take inventory your own heart. Enemies in our soul.

God says, I want to use you. I don't want you to have a saved soul with a wasted life.

I want to use you, but you must be fit, ready for the master's use.

1. Lovers of Themselves [only use in New Testament]

Strong's Greek 5367 denotes an orientation of heart that places the self at the center of affection, priority, and decision-making.

"Lovers of themselves" is placed at the forefront of a list of vices, indicating its foundational role in the corruption of human character. It signifies a corrupted kind of love that elevates the individual to the center of their own universe, pushing out humility, empathy, and service. Self-love is the cesspool out of which oozes every other perversion of the human heart, for ultimately everyone and everything else becomes expendable in the pursuit of its insatiable lust. This self-love is not the healthy self-respect or self-care that is encouraged in other parts of Scripture, but rather a narcissistic and self-centered attitude that places one's own desires and interests above those of God and others.

Self-Absorption: Constantly filtering life through the question, "How does this affect me?"

Entitlement: Expecting the world—and the people in it—to revolve around their happiness.

Lack of Self-Control: Because serving one's own desires often requires instant gratification, they struggle with discipline and delayed gratification.

Transactional Relationships: Valuing people primarily for what they can provide emotionally, socially, or financially.

Self-love can be seen as a form of idolatry, where the self is exalted above God.

For believers, the warning against being "lovers of themselves" serves as a call to self-examination and repentance. Christians are encouraged to cultivate humility, selflessness, and a servant-hearted attitude, following the example of Jesus Christ, who "did not come to be served, but to serve" [Matt. 20:28]. This involves prioritizing the needs of others, engaging in acts of charity and kindness and maintaining a God-centered life.

2. Covetous: A sin that's never satisfied. #5366 philarguros

Paul lists "covetous" among the vices that will characterize people in the last days, placing the term beside arrogance, disobedience, and lack of holiness.

Consider the Ten Commandments: They begin and end with virtually the same commandment.

1st Commandment: Ex. 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

10th Commandment: Ex. 20:17 You shall not covet [that is, selfishly desire and attempt to acquire] your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." [AMP]

➤ Coveting can easily lead to other sins, such as theft, idolatry, and adultery.

Col. 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

➤ Mortify = put to death [deprive of power] the earthly things lurking within you

➤ Evil concupiscence = strong, inward desire to sin;

intense craving for worldly pleasures, material goods, or self-gratification

Luke 12:15 Take heed, and beware of covetousness:

for a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

Covetousness is idolatry because it elevates worldly desires above God.

Truth: When you excessively desire the possessions or circumstances of others, you are seeking the satisfaction and security that should come from God alone, placing created things above the Creator.

Covetousness Chokes Off Spiritual Life: Parable of the Soils Mark 4:1-20

⁷And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

Explanation: Mark 4:18-19 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, ¹⁹ And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

➤ Distractions Deceptions Desires

Truth: Worldly anxieties and material distractions can slowly suffocate spiritual growth.

This prevents them from bearing the fruit of a transformed and righteous life.

Crowded heart: Even if a person is exposed to good spiritual truth, their life will remain spiritually unproductive if they allow worldly anxieties and material pursuits to take priority

Num. 33:55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be* irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell.

Key: This is such a frightful warning that we should all be on our guard every time we hear the Word to receive it with faith and not choke it with covetousness.

I Thess. 2:13 And we also thank God continually for this, that when you received the word of God [concerning salvation] which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of [mere] men, but as it truly is, the word of God, which is effectually at work in you who believe [exercising its inherent, supernatural power in those of faith].

Antidote for Covetousness I Timothy 6

⁶"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Covetousness: leads to spiritual ruin and moral compromise
kills contentment, joy, and peace.

I Tim. 6:11-12a But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,

➤ a command to live out your faith proactively rather than passively

Covetousness is exactly the opposite of faith. It's the loss of contentment in Christ, so that we start to crave other things to satisfy the longings of our heart.

The battle against covetousness is a battle against unbelief, and a battle for faith.

Ps. 119:36-37 Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness.

³⁷ Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things *and* revive me in Your way.

3. Pride Is An Abomination To The LORD.

Two key characteristics of pride are independence and rebellion.

- God does not simply dislike a prideful attitude; He detests it.
- Pride repulses and offends God.

Prov. 16:5a Everyone proud in heart *is* an abomination to the Lord;

- To be an abomination is to be defiled or tainted
- One cannot be both proud and holy, for the pride that springs from a carnal heart will make the whole vessel unclean.

There is more subtle form of pride that is less easy to identify. It hides beneath a thin veneer of pretended humility. Christians with a low self-image seem especially prone to this kind of vanity. Its symptoms surface in such comments as: "I'm really no good."

"I just want to stay in the background." "I don't think I'll ever accomplish much for the Lord."

On the surface they appear to be expressions of humility. But analyze them for a moment.

The dominant subject still is "I." Genuine humility doesn't need to announce itself.

In many cases, self-deprecation is a form of inverted pride.

DeHaan: God hates all forms of pride - *the hidden kind as well as the showy kind.*

If we think we're somebody, we must acknowledge our complete dependence on God.

If we think we're nobody, we must accept with thankfulness the gifts He has given us.

Then we must serve God with humbleness of heart and give Him all the glory.

- False humility is true pride.

4. Unthankful.

Being unthankful is viewed as a serious spiritual flaw and the root of many other sins.

Scripture warns that a thankless heart leads to arrogance and a hardened spirit.

The Biblical Antidote: A Grateful Heart

I Thess. 5:18. In everything give thanks,

for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Biblehub.org Such uses press the comprehensive claims of discipleship on every sphere of life—
thought, attitude, and action.

- The secret of [contentment](#) isn't found in circumstances.
- There is contentment in recognizing it is Christ who strengthens us for whatever we might face. [[Phil. 4:11-13](#)]

The pursuit Christlikeness is the primary purpose God has for us in sanctification.

If God works all things together for the good of those who love Him [Rom. 8:28] and

that good is that we would be more like Christ [verse 29],

then we can expect that He even uses hardship in our lives to help shape us to be more like Him.

Because He works for that purpose in our lives, we can be filled with gratitude, knowing that there is purpose even in the difficulties we can't understand.

Romans 5:3-5 Paul explains that we can exult or rejoice even in suffering because of what the suffering produces in us. Suffering brings perseverance; perseverance develops proven or tested character; character that has been tested develops hope; and God's kind of hope never disappoints.

➤ If God can use suffering and trials to help us mature, then those experiences are worth it. II Cor. 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,

is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory,

Rom. 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Question: What does it take to dislodge you from giving thanks?

5. Unholy: Be ye holy as I am holy.

In the first section of I Peter 1, Peter emphasized walking in hope, but in verse 13 his emphasis is walking in holiness. The two go together, for "every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure" [I John 3:3].

I Pet. 1:15-16 but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

While holiness is a matter of belonging, it naturally requires and produces purity. Because God is holy—He is entirely distinct from sin—anyone or anything coming into His presence must be made pure. Therefore, pursuing holiness inherently involves living a life of purity.

➤ This is not a list of rigid rules, but an invitation to a transformed lifestyle where your actions, thoughts, and words actively reflect the nature of the Creator.

➤ Holiness is as an active transformation driven by grace, anticipation, and love.

Peter lays out how we can live in the light of God's command to be holy as He is holy.

1. Holiness begins in your mind: Discipline your mind:

I Pet. 1:13 "So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world."

I Pet. 1:14 Live as obedient children,

"Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires"

Exercise self-control and stay alert both mentally and spiritually. This mental discipline requires a concentrated focus on trusting in the Lord to get us to our final destination, where we will experience the fullness of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

A holy lifestyle requires intentional rejection of former, sinful habits.

This change of behavior begins on the inside with our attitude and mind-set.

When our inner thought life, our purpose, and our character are changed into the image of Christ, our outward selves and outworking behavior will alter naturally.

This process is the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification:

II Cor. 3:18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into His glorious image.

As part of his teaching on cultivating holiness, Peter instructs believers

I Pet. 1:17 And remember that the heavenly Father to whom you pray has no favorites.

He will judge or reward you according to what you do.

So you must live in reverent fear of him during your time here as "temporary residents."

- Living as strangers here on earth hammers home the idea that our earthly lives with all their challenges and struggles are only temporary.
- Even in our pain, we can live with hope as citizens of a future heavenly reality. *Reverent fear* refers to humble, respectful awe of God, which motivates us to live obedient, holy lives.

I Pet. 4 The motivation for holiness comes from the sufferings of Christ and His imminent return to judge all people.

The means toward holiness includes suffering in this wicked world.

The means toward holiness includes struggling against human lusts.

The means toward holiness includes separating from the world's way of life

Rev. 5:10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

Filthy Garments:

1. Joshua, the High priest, was barred from ministering to the Lord because he had on "filthy garments." [Zech. 3:3-4]
2. The Old Testament stresses that in order for the priests to stand before the Lord, they had to have on "holy" garments. [Ex. 28:1, 36-38]
3. These garments meant the priest reflected God's holiness. Without this garment of holiness, the priest was forbidden to come into God's presence [Lev. 21:6-8]
4. Filthy garments were associated with defilement and revealed that the priest no longer reflected holiness. The garment revealed the inward condition of the heart.
5. At that point, they not only had to be ceremonially cleansed, but also morally cleansed. [Ex. 30:19-21]
6. In the same manner, we must be "partakers of Christ's holiness" in order to come into His presence and see Him.
7. The priests in filthy garments is a perfect picture of a "carnal believer" who has on "blackened" garments but is nevertheless trying to stand before the Lord. [Lev. 16:23-24, 32]
8. Just as the priests could defile their garments, we too, can become defiled by unfaithfulness, disobedience and moral unfitness.

Father, forgive me.

How did I ever get comfortable with not being ready for your use?

How did I get comfortable with not being clean?

DL Moody closed almost every service by saying,

"Don't walk out these doors if you're not clean. Because if you're not clean, you're going nowhere with God. If you're not clean, the devil's got you right where he wants you.

A saved soul, but a wasted life.

When you are born again, the battle has just begun. You have not come to the finish line—you have only come to the starting block. You have entered upon the land in which you will have to fight, wrestle, weep and pray. You have entered spiritual warfare.

He that has redeemed you will not fail you nor forsake you. However, you have a part to play.

Phil. 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Press on: #1377 diókó = energetic pursuit; chasing holiness, intense, single-minded movement.

Pursuit—Holiness, peace, love, and the upward call require deliberate, sustained effort.

II Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I MAY present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.

Chaste: #53 - hagnos = This is the root from which hagnosmos [#38], the word SANCTIFIED, comes from. Holiness or *hagiasmos* in the Greek has been defined by Wescott as

"the preparation for the presence of God."

Rev. 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.