

Mental Slavery (Part 2)

In Mental Slavery: Part 1, we discussed the freedoms of faith and the boundaries of fear. Today, we will discuss strongholds of the mind, and what they do to our lives.

There are two key words that we will elaborate on, and they are habit and habitat.

Habit: *a settled or regular tendency or practice, esp. one that is hard to give up. (Reference: Google)*

Habitat: *the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism. (Reference: Google)*

As you can see, the word “habitat” is derived from the word “habit” even though the words are rarely linked together in a sentence. The truth is that we all have habits. Habits are either freedoms of the mind or strongholds of the soul. For example, if you consistently praise the Lord every day, and you can't rest until you have praised Him, you are exercising your freedom to praise Him. There is nothing holding you back from giving Him what is due to Him. Your flesh is not in control; therefore, you are not bound by your feelings. You are being led by God, and your flesh has to follow. But if you have a habit of falling asleep before or during prayer everyday, then you are operating under a stronghold because your flesh is ruling your mind. *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5).*

There is a reason God told us not to be led by our flesh. Our flesh is a temporary enclosure; a resident for our spirit man. Our flesh is our earth suit. If you went out of space and you weren't wearing a space suit, you would die because your body was not designed to live in space. If you were walking about the earth without an earth suit, your existence here would be illegal because you are walking as a spirit man in a natural habitat. Our flesh was taught to mind the things of the world. Our flesh is evil, and it desires only the things of the world. The flesh cannot comprehend heavenly things; therefore, it limits its perception to the realm of the earth and is triggered by what it sees, tastes, touches, hears or smells. The flesh cannot comprehend the Word of God nor does it understand any benefit in serving the Lord. After all, when we pass away, we leave our flesh behind. So what benefit is it to our flesh to serve the Lord when it will return to dust? Our flesh will continue to desire worldly things, and that's why we have to be born again. Because of sin, the flesh will surely die, and without Christ, we would have been condemned to hell because of the sin within us. We must die to the flesh in order to live in the Spirit.

But we have habits and we have plans for our lives. We have developed ideas as to what we want to do with our lives, and these ideas are based on the very foundation our habits stand on: our beliefs. A large majority of people get born again, but many don't understand the importance of a changed mind. Once we are born again, our habits don't die. Once we are born again, all of our beliefs don't change. Just as our bodies are baptized in water, our minds have to be baptized and soaked in the Word of God; otherwise, we continue to wear the appearance of a new living creature, but the stench of the dead man will emit from our lives. *“And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst*

the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles” (Mark 2:22). Not only must we give our lives to the Lord, but we have to give our minds to the Lord.

As discussed earlier, Google defines habitat as: *the natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism.* One of the words that stick out in the definition is the word “natural.” Just as habits are strongholds of the soul limited to the realm of the earth; a habitat is a limited space for living creatures in the realm of the earth. Fish were designed to live in water; therefore, they cannot live on land. This means that water is their habitat. Dogs cannot live in water. They were created to live on land; therefore, they would drown if placed in a body of water for a prolonged period of time. Land is a dog's habitat. Because our minds are linked to our spirit man, our thinking should never be limited to the realm of the earth, but when it is, we are operating in a stronghold, or better yet, limited thinking.

Think back to the time when America had slaves. Each slave was charged to work their master's land, and they could not wander outside of that territory; otherwise, they risked being labeled as a runaway. Runaway slaves were often branded, flogged and even killed. Such is the state of a person whose mind is enslaved. Their thoughts are limited, and they are policed by fear. They surround themselves with people who are like them, and if they ever attempt to think outside the box, they are often reeled back in by intimidation, jealousy and ridicule. Worry has become a part of their thinking patterns, and doubt has become one with their thoughts. They can't see past what they know, and what they know has been severely molested by their fears. They become slaves who are mastered by sin, and controlled by fear. Their lives reflect a void; one that is vital to their survival, and that void is the Word of God. Their spirit man hungers for the Bread of Life, and they die of thirst in the wildernesses that fear has run them into. Their lives become repetitive cycles of non-productivity, and they find themselves doing and saying the same things all over again. The Word of God is the key to their freedom, and it is within their reach; nevertheless, they refuse to reach for the Key because they are comfortable in their bondage and they fear what's on the other side of freedom. Go into a poverty-stricken area, and you will see many prisoners who are free in body, but their minds are in captivity. Go into many third-world countries and you will find ungodly beliefs that hinder many of the people from advancing past their neighbors. Go into many ghettos and you will find thinking fads that mark each generation, and keep many of the residents from ever elevating. Many souls are in mental slavery, but many slaves don't know they're slaves because they've been in captivity all of their lives. A slave's thoughts are limited to the fields they work in, but a free man explores what he does not know until he knows it. A free man can go out and court the woman of his choice, but a slave must only breed with whatever woman his master gives him to breed with. That's why people of certain mindsets only date others from within their realm of thinking. A man can only reach a woman who can relate to him, even if she's passing through that mindset and heading towards a renewed mind. By giving herself to him, she limits her communications to that of which he understands.

How can one know if their minds are in captivity? It's simple: When fear is at the wheel of your life, a stronghold is the vehicle its driving. What's stopping you from believing God for a better life for yourself and your family? What limitations have you placed around yourself? Ask yourself this: How do I view my future? Search your beliefs and locate where you see yourself in the future. If your thoughts of the future are less than God's will for you, you are bound by fear and lack of knowledge. Just like fear, lack of knowledge is a strongman that has caused many to fall. *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children"* (Hosea 4:6). Anytime a person is controlled by their limited perceptions or limited knowledge, they become a puppet to misunderstanding and fear.

Just as we can act as our own strongmen, demons act as strongmen as well. How do demonic spirits act as strongmen? The Bible calls the devil the prince of this world; therefore, the system of this world is controlled by the enemy. We are surrounded by demonic campaigns and people. The people set up to lead this system are devil-filled souls who have no fear of God. They pass laws that override God's Word, and they attempt to cancel out the Word of God with their laws. Our television sets are open doors for the demonic, most channels tailoring to a certain mindset or slave class. Our radios are open lines for devils to communicate with us and our children by playing music that ministers against the Word of God. The school systems are rejecting any and everything that bears the name of Jesus; nevertheless, they open their doors to pagan beliefs and teach these beliefs to our children. Our workplaces are environments where every type of devil imaginable comes in to give or receive a product or service. We are surrounded by evil; therefore, it is easy for us to learn the ways of the heathen, but God warns us against this. *"Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them"* (Jeremiah 10:2). Because we are surrounded by evil, we find ourselves with a choice: Stand out and be noticed by a people who hate the Lord, or fit in and live comfortably in the sin they've learned to love. Many believers choose the latter because it is easier and more comfortable to fit in than it is to stand out. When a believer follows the system of this world, he loses his conviction because he begins to deny the voice of the Lord. He silences the voice from within because it opposes his fears. He follows after his flesh because he does not understand that his flesh is led by death. He then begins to stand with the world and justifies his stance by wearing his Christian badge; nevertheless, he is not a believer; he has turned back and is of the world, for the world and against the Lord. *"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"* (James 4:4).

How can one come out of mental slavery? Please review the five tips below.

1. Challenge your fears. If you fear it, engage in it until you fear it no more. Fear is a form of reverence, and you should NEVER reverence anything or anyone but God.

2. Call sin out by name and renounce it. Whatever sin you find in you needs to be called out and laid upon the altar of God. Sin often encroaches in the hearts of believers, and slips by unnoticed for years, sometimes even a lifetime. Anytime you find yourself thinking a certain way or speaking a certain way, and your thoughts/words are sinful, you need to take those thoughts/ words to the Lord and repent of them. Leave them at the altar.

3. Don't surround yourself with like-minded people; surround yourself with people who you'd like to one day relate to. Make sure you go into these relationships and pray against envy, jealousy and judgment because these things often rise up in people when they come into the midst of people they don't understand.

4. Never get comfortable in a mindset. Always seek to know more and always seek to elevate.

5. Pray and ask the Lord to change your mind. Out of the heart, thoughts proceed; therefore, you need a new heart. Now, when you ask for a new heart, you don't have to worry that God will misunderstand and think you are speaking of the organ in your chest that you've come to identify as your heart. Your heart, spiritually speaking, is the place from which your beliefs are stored. Your mind is the place in which new thoughts audition for a role in your heart. That's why we are commanded to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. We are also commanded to guard our hearts. Our hearts must be guarded because lies often get past our imaginations and stand at the door of our hearts, waiting to be believed in. Once you believe something, you give it permission to live in your heart. Wrongful thinking ushers in more wrongful thinking.

People of God, come out of mental slavery. God called us to be free, and we must learn to walk in the freedom in the realm of the earth so we can be better ministers of the Lord. Our lives do minister to unbelievers, but what is your life ministering to the world right now? If it does not reflect the God you serve, you are not serving Him the way you should.