

Chapter 6 – Extinguishing Those Fiery Darts

Read John 8:44. *“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

We have read this verse before but I want you to remember that Satan is a liar or even the father of lies. It may appear that he is attacking the body but his real target is the mind.

FIERY DARTS

Ephesians 6:16 tells us that we who are in Christ are going to face “all the fiery darts (or arrows) of the wicked one.” God’s desire is that we are able to fend off all the flaming arrows that the devil sends our way. The Romans used fiery arrows in battle, they were a double threat. The arrow could kill you but so could the fire.

In the spiritual, flaming arrows refer to the bombardment of the mind with thoughts, impressions, and impulses that are contrary to God’s purposes. These thoughts might be thoughts to do evil. They might be angry thoughts, sinful thoughts, or temptations to sin.

These verses tell of some of the sins of King David. Read the verse and match the verse to the sin. Some of the verses have more than one sin.

Fear	1 Samuel 21:1 and 10
Doubt	Psalms 13
Lust	2 Samuel 11:2-4
Jealousy	2 Samuel 11:2-4
Greed or covetousness	2 Samuel 11:2-4
Loneliness	Psalms 13
Rejection	Psalms 13
Guilt	Psalms 51:1-4
Unforgiveness	1 Samuel 25:10-13
Anger	1 Samuel 25:10-13
Discouragement	1 Samuel 30:3-6
Pride	1 Chronicles 21:1-3

THE DEVIL’S ACCESS

The battleground with Satan is in our minds. A thought starts in our minds. A thought itself is not sin. David saw Bathsheba bathing. He could have gone back inside but he didn’t. He pursued her.

The devil does not send the same thoughts to every person. Each sin is tailor-made to our specific weakness.

The devil often aims thoughts at things we value as being good or right. For example, King David could have stopped with appreciating Bathsheba's beauty but he turned it to lust. He aims his darts at your appreciation for beauty, the value you place on knowledge and competency, or the longing you have for approval, value, and love.

But here's how the devil twists these good things for his evil purposes. He points out everything that seems ugly or lacking in appeal and plays on the person's desire for beauty. The devil focuses on the ways in which the person isn't as knowledgeable or competent as he or she desires to be. The devil points out all the ways in which people are treating him or her in unloving, disapproving, devaluating, and degrading ways.

The devil points out the lack of love in the person's life because the person places very high value on love and approval. The devil never points out the abundant blessings of God in your life. The devil always points out what is missing, lacking, or negative.

THE DEVIL'S STRATEGY

How do the fiery darts of the devil operate in our minds?

First, the devil sends a single thought. The more you entertain a thought aimed at a need you feel, the more that thought looms in your mind until it crowds out all other thoughts. This thought can become a "toehold".

Second, if you entertain thoughts repeatedly—over days, weeks, or months—the thoughts take root in you and become normal to you. The longer we keep the thoughts in our mind, we start making mental plans to act on them. We allow the sin to become a "foothold."

The more we develop plans for acting on a sinful idea or temptation, the more we find that the foothold has become a "stronghold." We come to the place where we feel compelled to try out the idea in our behavior. Just as it says in 1 Corinthians 10:13, it is not a new temptation in the world and all through this process God has given us a way out. If we don't take it, the sin will get a "stronghold".

TOEHOLDS, FOOTHOLDS, AND STRONGHOLDS

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3–6. *"3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage battle according to the flesh, 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete."*

In order to turn Satan away, we cannot use the weapons of man. It is a spiritual battle. We must use the full armor of God. Satan battles with manipulation, deceit and numerous other weapons.

He attacks our weaknesses to get in. Then he's going to come back again and again to that weakness.

Most people who are willing to admit that they have yielded to temptation can identify one or two areas in which they are weak.

A stronghold involves a recurring, compulsive thought pattern. The devil often follows this pattern:
You can have this.

You should have this.

You must have this.

There's something wrong with you if you don't do everything you can to get this.

Here's how you can have this.

Now, go get this.

BRINGING OUR THOUGHTS INTO SUBMISSION TO CHRIST

Reread 2 Cor. 10:4–5. “Arguments” refer to speculations (NASB) false doctrines and false beliefs that sound like truth, but are not.

“Every high thing” refers to lofty philosophies that sound wonderful, but are not productive or effective in building a person's relationship with God. We have “every high thing” or “every lofty thing” at work in us if we believe our ideas and beliefs replace the commands of God.” (Stanley)

Paul says in verse 5 that we are to bring every thought “into captivity to the obedience of Christ.” We are to control our thoughts rather than have our thoughts control us. The devil knows exactly how to get you to think the wrong things so that you will do the wrong things. The devil also knows what Christ thought, felt, and did. His goal, therefore, is to get you to think and feel in a way that is different from what Christ thought and felt.

We can become “obsessed” with the thoughts and we are no longer free to think the thoughts of God. These thoughts are dangerous to a person's spiritual health. Most of these obsessions are not godly.

YOUR POWER OVER YOUR THOUGHTS

Do you have to entertain the devil's ideas? No.

Do you have to allow his ideas to lodge in your mind and dwell on them? No!

“The challenge of God's Word is that you are to take control of your thoughts and bring them into captivity—to subject them to obedience, to bring them in line with what God's Word teaches you and Christ Jesus exemplifies for you.” (Stanley)

Person who have a stronghold in their life will have to make a concerted, intentional, difficult, and sometimes prolonged attempt to change the way they think or respond to life.

“If you recognize that you have a stronghold in your life, cry out to God to deliver you and release you from it. Ask the Lord to forgive you for the hours you’ve wasted in compulsive, obsessive thinking and sinful behavior. Ask Him to free you from discouragement, despair, and depression. Ask Him to set you free from worry and anxiety. If you trust Him to set you free, He’ll do it!”
(Stanley)

DON'T MISS THE CMD

CMD - a critical moment of decision.
Read Genesis 3:1 and Genesis 2:16–17.

Genesis 3:1 – *“Now the serpent was more cunning than any animal of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “Has God really said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”*

Genesis 2:16 *The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

Where was God’s focus in Genesis 2? They could eat freely of every tree but one. God focused on what Adam and Eve could do.

Where was the devil’s focus?
They could not eat of one particular tree. The devil focused on what they were not to do.

Read Genesis 3:2–3. *2 The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”*

Eve has had her CMD (critical moment of decision). In these verses Eve is misquoting what God said. Read Genesis 2:16-17 again. Did God say that they could not touch it? No!

Did God say the tree was bad to eat because it was in the middle of the Garden? No, it was bad to eat from it because it was the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil.

Why did God say that they couldn’t eat from it? To protect them and not deprive them. Satan twisted things.

There’s no sin in being naïve, innocent, or gullible.

There’s no place in God’s Word where He tells us that we must do our utmost to be knowledgeable and fit into the greater society and culture. The exact opposite is true.

God calls us to be innocent. He calls us to live in purity. He calls us to have no association with or knowledge of evil. He calls us to be separate from a sinful society and culture, and to avoid walking

on a broad road that leads to destruction. Matthew 18:3 says, *“Truly I say to you, unless you change and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* We are to come as a child.

Jesus tells us that we are to enter through the narrow gate. Matthew 7:13 says, *“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.”*

Read Genesis 3:4–5. *“4 The serpent said to the woman, ‘You certainly will not die! 5 For God knows that on the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.’”* Satan is hurling an arrow of doubt at Eve.

Read Genesis 3:6. *When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate.* Satan’s foothold became a stronghold, and the fall of man was quick.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1–4. *“ Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they brought destruction on the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed in Jerusalem. 2 Now at evening time David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king’s house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. 3 So David sent servants and inquired about the woman. And someone said, ‘Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’ 4 Then David sent messengers and had her brought, and when she came to him, he slept with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.*

As soon as David saw the woman, he had a CMD—a critical moment of decision. He should have turned his eyes and kept walking. David knew the law of God. Which one? Thou shalt not covet.

Satan could not force David and he can’t force you as a believer to think about something at length or to act on a fantasy or a wrong thought. He can only tempt us. You have the power to turn your eyes away, to walk away, to refuse to listen, to turn your attention to something else. You have the power to say no to a thought from the devil. You have the power to say no to sin.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 10:13c (NLT) that *“When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.”* God will give us a way out or escape the temptation.

Imagine what David was thinking in regards to why or why not. For each question, there was a godly answer or response, one that David knew in his mind and heart, but he refused to act upon. Don’t miss the CMD when the devil launches his fiery missiles into your heart and mind. Immediately act on God’s truth and declare, *“I will not entertain this idea.”*

Read Philippians 4:8 (NLT). *“Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.”* We are suppose to dwell on whatever is true, noble, just, pure, lovely, of good report, or praiseworthy.

“To take captive every thought to Christ Jesus is to quench the fiery darts that the enemy launches into your mind.” (Stanley)