

# SATAN'S STRONGHOLDS IN YOUR LIFE



Pastor, teacher, and author **Adrian Rogers** has introduced people all over the world to the love of Jesus Christ, and has impacted untold numbers of lives by presenting profound biblical truth with such simplicity that a 5-year-old can understand it, yet it still speaks to the heart of the 50-year-old.

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ADRIAN ROGERS

This booklet is taken from Adrian Rogers' message

How to Break Satan's Strongholds in Your Life
(#1213), available online at the link below.



# How to Break Satan's Strongholds in Your Life

People have all kinds of strongholds in their lives. I believe strongly that there are some people reading this booklet who have allowed Satan to build strongholds in their hearts, their minds, and their lives.

Not only are these satanic strongholds harming them and wrecking their spiritual lives, but *through them*, they are contaminating the lives of their families and their churches. All because the devil has found an unclean place in that person's heart and has built a stronghold there. He then uses it to war against God and against the work of God.



# Creating a Climate for the Devil

Paul admonishes us, "Neither give place to the devil...And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God..." (Ephesians 4:27 and 30a).

These verses ought to cause each of us to sit up and take notice that we, as children of God, can either give a place to the devil or grieve the Holy Spirit! Either one should be unthinkable in the heart and mind of a child of God.

One day I watched some men putting up purple martin birdhouses, and I asked them what they were doing.

One man said, "I'm putting up a purple martin birdhouse."

I said, "Tell me about it."

He responded, "Well, it has to be built a certain way with a certain sized hole. If a purple martin sees the house and likes it, he will come to live there, but you have to make him welcome. You have to create a climate for the purple martin before he will make a home there."

That's just what some Christians have done! They have created a climate for the devil. They have created certain conditions and laid out a welcome mat for the devil to feel at home. Essentially, they've said, "Satan, I believe this is the kind of a place that will suit you."

Remember this: Satan can never, ever take any ground in your life that you do not give him. Satan is

not greater than our Lord. He has no rights and no authority in your life. He is an absolute trespasser until you give him a place.

This is why Ephesians 4 warns us not to give place to the devil. But, once you have created a climate for the devil, he is going to go right to work in your life.

Suppose you had a piece of property with about fifty acres, and you sold me one acre in the middle of the property. You also gave me access across your property to get to my one acre.

Now, let's suppose I play loud music every night of the week, throw trash around, and do everything I can to desecrate your property. After a while you say, "I want you out of there. Move out."

### Satan can never, ever take any ground in your life that you do not give him.

But suppose I say, "I don't have to go, and you can't make me. You sold me this property, and I've got a legal right to it. If you don't like it, that's your problem. I am not moving."

You would not be able to move me out because you sold me a place there!

Some believers have done almost the same thing with Satan. They have given him a place in their lives, and they cannot dislodge him. Why? Because the place they have given Satan has become his stronghold.

The important thing to understand, then, is how Satan builds strongholds in the lives of God's people. What do we do that makes him feel at home? Let's look at the verses in the context surrounding Ephesians 4:27 and 30 for some answers.

#### LYING

What things create a climate for the devil? Look at Ephesians 4:25. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another." If your life is not based on absolute, total, impeccable truth, you are creating a climate where the devil will feel welcome.

In John 8:44 Jesus said this of the devil:

...He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

If you really want the devil to feel at home in your life, then you will live a lie, love a lie, and even believe a lie. Satan is the prince of darkness, and lying is from the realm of darkness.

God's kingdom, on the other hand, is built on truth. In John 14:6 Jesus said, "...I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." As Jesus was praying to the Father, He said, "...thy Word is truth." (John 17:17). And in 1 John 5:6 we read: "the Spirit is truth."

I want you to ask yourself this question: "Is there any area of dishonesty in my life, including white lies, that could be a dwelling place for the devil?" Did you know that you can lie by the tone of your voice or by just arching your eyebrows? Let me give you an illustration.

When I was in college, I pastored a little church 130 miles away called the First Baptist Church of Fellsmere, Florida. One night as I was driving back to college, I realized that one of my headlights was burned out. I knew it was out, but I was hoping to make it back to school. As I was driving, a highway patrolman stopped me. When I got out of the car, he said, "Son, do you know one of your headlights is out?"

I said, "One of my headlights is out?" He told me to get it fixed, and I said, "Yes, sir."

But when I got back in the car, the Holy Spirit tore me up: "Adrian, you lied."

"No, I didn't lie, Lord. I told the truth."

But the Holy Spirit's conviction was absolutely on target. I may have spoken the truth, but I told a lie by the tone of my voice, which implied that I had no idea about my headlight until the officer told me. That lie grieved the Holy Spirit, and I had to confess it to Him.

If there is any area in your heart that is not based on absolute truth, you have made a home for the devil. If you are living a lie, telling a lie, loving a lie, or proliferating a lie; you have made the devil a home.

Just as surely as a purple martin bird likes a particular kind of birdhouse, the devil says, "I believe I can be comfortable here."

#### **ANGER**

Are you a person given to anger? Are you miffed about something right now? Did you know that you are like the devil when you are that way?

The devil has an affinity for anger. The Bible tells us in Revelation 12:12 and 17 that Satan is seething with anger. So, if you are an angry person, the devil will feel at home in your heart.

Ephesians 4:26 tells us, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." In a section on anger, you might find it odd that I would bring up this verse because it tells us to be angry. But it adds, "and sin not."

How can one be angry and sin not? It is called righteous anger—the kind of anger the Lord exhibited when He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers in the temple (see Matthew 21:12-13). The way to be angry and not to sin is to be angry at sin.

# You can tell a lot about a man's character by what makes him angry.

You can tell a lot about a man's character by what makes him angry. Some people don't get angry at sin, but you can find them wrapping a golf club around a tree. They get angry at the wrong thing.

Is there hostility and anger in your heart? Has somebody done you wrong, and you are still mad about it? Are you angry at your boss, coworker, neighbor, wife, children, parents, or somebody at church?

"Well, they deserve it," you say. Maybe so, but do you deserve it? That is, do you deserve what is going to happen to you when the devil turns your anger into a stronghold?

Whatever that person has done to you, are you going to make it worse by making your life a campground for the devil? It's foolish to do that.

#### **STEALING**

Ephesians 4:28 says, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

Not only is Satan a liar and filled with anger, but Satan is a thief. John 10:10a says, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy..." If there is thievery in your life, you can be sure Satan has gained some ground that you need to recapture.

Mark 5 tells of a demon-possessed man who was living in a graveyard, crying and cutting himself with stones. Think of what the devil had stolen from that man. The devil had stolen the man's sanity, liberty, family, joy, and health.

Now, I'm going to plow close to the corn when I make the next statement, so get ready. If you carry home from work so much as a pencil that doesn't belong to you, you have made a place for the devil. That may seem harsh, but look at what Luke 16:10 says, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."

A person who would steal a pencil has the potential to steal a \$150,000 payroll. If we are unfaithful in that which is least, Jesus said we are unfaithful in the big things, as well.

One day, the truth of that really dawned on me. I was prone to say, "Yes, if I'm capable of stealing

a little, then I'm capable of stealing a lot." But that isn't what Jesus said.

Jesus said that unfaithfulness in something small is the same as unfaithfulness in something large. To a holy God, thievery is thievery. The size of the theft makes no difference.

If a person assassinates someone else's character and steals their reputation by gossiping, then that person is a thief. People who don't tithe are thieves. You may think that's pretty strong, but it's the Word of God.

Malachi 3:8 says, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings."

I know this is from the Old Testament which was written for Jews under the Mosaic Law, and that we are under grace. But anybody who would let people under the Law do more than we do under grace is a disgrace to grace!

Jesus said, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:20).

Somebody might object by saying, "In the Old Testament one-tenth belonged to God, but in the New Testament it all belongs to God." That sounds pious, but the fact is that in the Old Testament everything belonged to God, as well. All of it has always belonged to God!

Many Christians have robbed God of His tithe and their love gifts. When we do that, we become like the devil, who tries to steal from God. When we steal from God, we make a foul nest for the devil. We say, "Come on in, devil. I'll give you a place."

#### **SPEECH**

Not only is the devil a thief, but he is filthy. If you are prone to have a filthy mouth, then you're making room for him. Paul tells us:

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Ephesians 4:29)

Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. (Ephesians 5:4)

Some people think that the phrase "nor jesting" refers to humor, so they conclude that we should not use humor. But that is not what Paul is talking about. This has nothing to do with humor. Rightly used, humor is a gift of God to renew, relax, and refresh us.

Instead, Paul is talking about speech which tears people down. There are certain kinds of language and stories that tear down, they do not build up. They destroy. They desecrate. Those who tell these kinds of stories do so because they have filthy hearts.

Jesus said:

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account

thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matthew 12:34-37)

Satan dwells inside a filthy heart. He will turn this foul mess into one of his strongholds.

#### **BITTERNESS**

If you are a bitter person, you have no joy in your heart. You can sit in church with a smile on your face and sing the songs; but if there is bitterness in your heart, you've got no joy, you've got no victory. If there is bitterness in your heart, you are ruining your life, contaminating the people around you, and poisoning the life of your church. You are giving a place to the devil.

If there is bitterness in your heart, you are ruining your life, contaminating the people around you, and poisoning the life of your church.

Did you know the devil is bitter? He has a bitter vendetta against God's holy people and is pursuing them—trying every way he can to hurt them. Revelation 12:12b says, "Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come

# down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

When you let a root of bitterness grow in your heart against someone, you are like the devil. You want to get revenge. But, what does God's Word say?

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:30-32)

This passage tells us that bitterness often leads to slander. Do you know that the word *devil* means "slanderer"? Revelation 12:10 calls Satan "**the accuser of our brethren.**" If you are a slanderer, a gossiper, or if you speak evil of any kind, then you are literally doing the devil's work!

I heard of an old couple where the wife had good eyes, but she could hardly hear. The husband could hear, but he could hardly see. So she'd drive the car and he'd do the talking.

Once, they were traveling from Memphis to Nashville, and they stopped to get gas. The service station attendant came out and said, "Fill 'er up?"

The man said, "Yes."

His wife said, "What did he say?"

"He asked me, 'Fill 'er up?' and I said yes."

After a while the attendant said, "You have a nice car. What kind is it?"

The man answered, "It's a Chrysler."

The wife asked, "What did he say?"

"He wanted to know what kind of car it is. I told him it is a Chrysler."

Then the attendant asked, "Are you going far?" The man said, "Yeah, we're going to Nashville."

The wife asked, "What did he say?"

"He said he wants to know where we're going, and I told him we are going to Nashville."

The attendant asked, "Where are you from?" "Memphis."

"What did he say?"

"Wanted to know where we're from. I told him we're from Memphis."

The attendant said, "Memphis? I used to know a woman there. Beyond a shadow of a doubt she was the meanest, hardest, bitterest, coldest woman I've ever known in all my life."

The wife said, "What did he say?"

The husband responded, "He thinks he knows your sister."

Let me show you how the devil works. First, he creates bitterness. Somebody does you wrong; you feel wounded and feel that you have a right to be bitter. After a while that bitterness turns to wrath (see Ephesians 4:31).

The Greek word for *wrath* has the idea of something that burns on the inside. It is like smoldering rags in an attic or closet. If you don't deal with your bitterness, then you start a slow burn. Have you ever felt it? I've felt it. It's what the Bible calls *wrath*.

The next word in this passage in Ephesians is anger. After a while those smoldering rags burst into flames, and it shows up as anger. But the devil is not finished yet. That anger turns to clamor, which means "to speak loudly." Have you ever watched a person go from bitterness to a slow burn and then explode in anger? They get hostile. When you talk

to them, they get louder and louder and red in the face. That is clamor.

Then what happens next? The clamor turns to *evil speaking*. You're on a roll and start saying something, and the devil says, "Yeah, tell him this, too. And tell him that." The evil words start to spew forth. You say things you don't mean.

When we are out of control, we say things like: "I hate you!" "You'll never amount to anything!" "I wish we had never gotten married!" or "I wish you were dead." Later we would give a million dollars if we could take them back. But the devil is there, and he is saying, "Yes, that's right. Tell them this, too."

It feels good for a while, but what started out as bitterness ends up in *malice*. Before you know it, you have a desire to hurt somebody. Perhaps you want to cut the money off, or walk out and make someone suffer.

By the time we're done with all of this, the devil has done quite a job on us! We have opened the door and allowed the devil to build a stronghold in our lives. I say *allow* because the devil can take no place except what we give him.

Did you know that you can break the heart of God? When we give a place to the devil, the Holy Spirit is heartbroken. That's because we allow this temple of ours, bought with the precious blood of Jesus, to become a nest for Satan. We open the door, and the dear Spirit of God is weeping while Satan is laughing, making a mockery of the things of God.



# **Breaking Satan's Stronghold**

If we are going to dislodge the devil and break down his strongholds, we need to take three steps to get him out.

#### REPENTANCE

First, there must be repentance. Ephesians 4:22-24 says:

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

The words put off mean "to be done with it." We are to deal with the stronghold by confessing and forsaking it. There is no other way to handle sin.

What you gave to Satan, you must take back. You are not going to get that place back until you repent. But you can never take it back until you take away his legal authority in your life.

Every area of unconfessed sin in your life is legal ground for Satan. Until you confess that sin and ask God to cleanse it, the devil has every right to build a stronghold in your heart.

God will not accept an alibi or excuse for sin. You may say, "Well, I've got my rights." You don't have any more rights than a dead man! You are crucified with Christ. You belong to Him.

You have no right to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. You have no right to give a place to the devil in your heart. You are not your own, you are bought with a price (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

You are to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are His. Repentance is not just being broken over your sin; it is being broken *from* your sin.

# Repentance is not just being broken over your sin; it is being broken *from* your sin.

#### RESISTANCE

After you repent, you've still got to clean house. You have to go in there with a power of attorney, which is the name of Jesus, and take that land back.

But, let me warn you that the devil is not going to just walk out quietly. You are going to have to run him out.

The Bible says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7). If you don't resist the devil, he is not going anywhere.

You have to say to the devil, "I have repented of the sin. The debt is canceled. It's all done. You have no more legal authority in my life. I have given you a place, but I take it back in the name and the authority of Jesus. This body of mine is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God. You are trespassing on my Father's property, and in the name of Jesus be gone." Do this, and he will flee from you.

If you try to resist the devil with unconfessed sin in your heart, he will laugh in your face. He will make a mockery of you. There must be repentance, and then there can be resistance.

If you try to resist the devil with unconfessed sin in your heart, he will laugh in your face.

#### **RENEWAL**

Ephesians 4:23-24 says:

And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Don't you love the phrase "**true holiness**"? God forgive us for syrupy pretense which is not holiness at all.

It is not enough to put off the old man! You must put on the new man. We must be renewed in spirit and heart. We must exchange the darkness

in which we have lived for the light of God. Read what His Word says about this:

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8-10)

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:14-20)



## A Choice To Make

We all face a choice. We can either grieve the Spirit of God and be filled with the devil, or we can put the devil out and be filled with the Spirit of God. There is no place for the devil when we are filled with the Holy Spirit!

When the Bible says, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18b), what does this mean? To be filled with the Spirit of God means that there is not one room in the temple of our bodies and hearts where He is not welcome. There is not one closet He doesn't have the key to—whether it is our sex life, business life, political life, church life, or social life.

We must be filled with the Holy Spirit in the big and little things of life: in our money, our exercise, our sleep, our eating, in our lying down, and our waking up. We must give Him the keys to everything.

When I am filled with the Spirit, there is no more room for Satan. If there is room for Satan, the Spirit is grieved, and I am not filled with Him.

Repentance, resistance, and renewal are the steps to breaking Satan's strongholds in your life. Don't try to repent until you are honest and face your sin. Don't try to resist until you have repented. And don't try to be filled with the Holy Spirit and be renewed until you have chosen against Satan and yielded to God's blessed Holy Spirit.



# A Closing Plea

My friend, have you given your life to the Lord? Do you have the assurance that if you were to die right now, you would go straight to heaven? If not, please let me tell you how you can be saved, on the authority of the Word of God.

#### ADMIT YOUR SIN

First, you must understand and admit that you are a sinner. The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Sin is an offense against God that carries a serious penalty. "For the wages of sin is death [eternal separation from the love and mercy of God] but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

#### ABANDON YOUR EFFORTS

Second, you must abandon any efforts to save yourself. If we could save ourselves, Jesus' death would have been unnecessary! Even "getting religion" cannot get you to heaven. The Bible says it is "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His [God's] mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). Salvation is by God's grace, "not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

#### ACKNOWLEDGE CHRIST'S PAYMENT

Third, you must believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for your sins. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). That means He died in your place. Your sin debt has been paid by the blood of Jesus Christ, which "cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

#### ACCEPT CHRIST AS YOUR SAVIOR

Fourth, you must put your faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone for your salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). Salvation is God's gift to you! "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Pray this simple prayer from your heart:

Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that You love me and want to save me. I know I can't save myself. Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God, who died on the cross to pay for my sins. I believe God raised You from the dead. I now turn from my sin and, by faith, receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sins and save me, Lord Jesus. In Your name I pray, Amen.

If you have prayed this prayer today, please contact us at the address on the back of this booklet and let us know. Then go find a Christ-honoring, Bible-believing church near you. Go to the pastor of that church and tell him what God has done for you. He'll rejoice with you, and so will we!

#### **ADDITIONAL BOOKLETS**

#### BY ADRIAN ROGERS

K101	Praying With Power
K102	Pardon With Punishment
K104	Countdown in the Holy Land
K105	How to Weather the Storms of Life
K106	Unmasking the New Age
K107	God's Way to Health, Wealth & Wisdom
K108	The Music of Marriage
K109	Pro-Choice Is No Choice
K110	When Everything Goes Wrong
K111	How to Break Satan's Strongholds in Your Life
K112	Survival for the Home
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K130	The Secret to a Satisfied Life
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K140	How to Know the Bible Is the Word of God
K141	Why the Cross?
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K143	Unwrapping Your Spiritual Gift GUIDEBOOK
K144	It Takes a Family GUIDEBOOK
K145	Christ of Every Crisis

K146 Psalm 23: The Secret of Satisfaction

K147 How to Fortify Your Faith

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