

Demolishing Mental Fortresses



Learning by Living (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as I continue with my theme for this week: "Learning by Living," a theme in which I am sharing with you vital, practical lessons that I have learned in serving the Lord and His people.

In my previous talks this week I have shared that the Lord calls each one of us with a holy calling. I have shared this out of Scripture and illustrated it from my own experience.

Yesterday I pointed out something that unfortunately has eluded many people. And that is that a Christian minister is called to be a servant. The very word "minister" means "servant."

Now I pointed out that there is a certain order of priority and service. First of all, we are servants of God's Word and then of God's people. And we dare not reverse that order, because if we do, we will ourselves find ourselves in confusion and we will permit God's people to become confused.

I took the example of Aaron, who was a servant of the Lord, but when the choice came, he obeyed the people of God rather than the Word of God and what a disaster resulted. We have to be firm and unswerving in our loyalty first and foremost to God and to His Word.

Today I am going to speak about battles that all Christians go through in their minds. Many of you are going through those battles right now. Some of you do not realize that it is a normal part of Christian experience. I hope I can show you out of Scripture and illustrate from my own experience how you can face these battles that go on in our minds.

I will start from a Scripture in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5, where Paul speaks about this very vividly, he says:

> "For though we walk in flesh, we do not war according to the flesh…"

Now Paul says we are living in physical bodies in a material world. But at the same time we are in a war, but the war is not being fought out in the physical or material realm. It is in a

different realm. The next verse he says,

> "...for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."

So he says, God has given us the appropriate weapons because the war is not in the physical or material realm. Our weapons are not physical or material, but they are what? Obviously the appropriate word there is spiritual. God has given us spiritual weapons that will destroy fortresses. So we are in some kind of a war where we are dealing with very strong fortresses that oppose us and oppose God. And then Paul goes on to be more specific about these fortresses in the next verse:

> "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

If you analyze the words in that verse, they all deal with the realm of the mind: speculations (other translations say reasonings or imaginations or arguments), and then he speaks about the knowledge of God, and then it speaks about taking every thought captive. Now all those words apply to the one and the same area, the area of the mind.

In other words, now this is vitally important, the battlefield is the mind: your mind, my mind. It is not unnatural, it is not something wrong that we find ourselves in this battle that sometimes really rages in our minds. Isn't that true? There are times when you almost wonder whether you are going to retain your senses. You think, "How could I as a Christian be under these pressures in my mind?" Well, the answer is: "It is part of the Christian life. It is not necessarily a sign you are doing anything wrong, taking the wrong course, it is just part of your total experience as a Christian.

Let me just point out three things which I have already said, but let me emphasize them. First of all, the war is not in the physical realm, but it is against unseen spiritual forces. Secondly, God has given us appropriate spiritual weapons to win this war. Thirdly, the battlefield is the mind, the mind of humanity and in specific terms, your mind and my mind.

Now, at a certain point in my Christian experience, I made a startling discovery—I discovered that I had an enemy of God in me. Even though I was a Christian, even though I was born again, serving God. I discovered that my enemy was my own mind. This is what Paul says in Romans 8:7:

> "The carnal mind, [that is the unregenerate mind that we are born with and that we live with until we are saved and born again], the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

You see I had a very highly educated mind. I had been at a university, I had become a professor and so on. But the trouble was that the mind that was being educated was an enemy of God. So I had inside me a very highly educated enemy of God.

So many people trust in education. But education will not change your mind. It will just educate your mind the way it is. If you have a carnal mind and you go to seminary for five years and who knows what else, you will emerge with a highly educated enemy of God inside of you. That is one of the problems with so many seminaries. You see, there has to be a complete change.

Now, the passage that I read from 2 Corinthians, Paul says, "God has given us the appropriate weapons." There are many weapons, but I would just suggest two that are basic: God's Word and prayer.

So in my own experience I had to learn to think completely differently. When I was converted, I was a converted philosopher. Well then I had an experience where for a year I had to trust to the Word of God to bring me physical healing. I had to live by the Word of God. Jesus says, "Man shall live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." I had to do that. At the end of that time not merely was I physically healed, but I had a completely different mind. I had learned to think differently. I had learned to think in terms of God's Word.

Now, in the course of doing that, I had many prayer battles. I had to fight my way through to the truth. I had to reject lies from the devil, doubt, discouragement, fear, and I had to do that in prayer. So using those two great weapons, the Word of God and prayer, I eventually won that battle in my mind. Today I am a totally different person mentally from what I was years ago. I am totally changed inwardly because I have won the battle in my mind with the weapons that God has given me.

In that passage in 2 Corinthians which speaks about the war in the mind, Paul uses one particular phrase I want to focus on for a moment. He speaks about "fortresses" or "strongholds." Another translation says, "strongholds in our minds." What are those strongholds? Now I have given much thought to this and I would suggest to you that we could basically express them in three English words, each with which happens to begin with the letters "pr." The first one is pride and that is the greatest stronghold of all in the

unregenerate human mind, is pride, self-exalting pride. And out of pride proceed prejudice and preconception and those are really the main fortresses.

You know what the definition of prejudice is? It is having your mind made up before you've heard the facts. The typical statement is expressed in these words: Don't confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up! That is prejudice.

Preconception is thinking you know something that you don't know, thinking you have got an accurate picture of something which you haven't got, you see.

Now the different reasons for pride, prejudice and preconception are so many, we cannot get into them in detail but let me just suggest some:

National Pride—basically nearly all races and nations have got a certain amount of national pride. You see, I was born British and believe me the British are proud people. And it takes a long while for a Britisher to acknowledge he has a problem with pride. Take another nation, Germany. Why was Hitler able to gain domination over the German people and even over multitudes of German Christians? What was his fortress? It was nationalistic pride, the super faulk, dos heron faulk.

But don't just stop there because another major fortress is denominational affiliation. "I am a Baptist, so don't tell me anything that does not agree with Baptist doctrine even if it is in the Bible." Now I am not making fun of Baptists, it could be said the same of Presbyterians, Methodists, Pentecostals. Or you could go a little deeper, you could talk about Protestant or Catholic. Now I will tell you frankly what I believe. I believe some of the things that Protestants believe are right, but some are wrong. You say, "Praise the Lord," because you are Catholic but I want to tell you I think the same is true of Catholics. Some of the things that they believe are very right and some are wrong. If you are going to hold on to everything that has got a certain label whether it is Protestant or Catholic or Presbyterian or Pentecostal or what, you have got a stronghold in your mind.

Now let me tell you a way to check. If you get indignant when I speak about your particular stronghold, then you know that is a stronghold. Do you understand? If you are getting a little irritated with me now, you'd better check on where that stronghold is. Do you see what these fortresses do? They block the entrance of God's Word. So it does not do what God intends it to do. The psalmist said in Psalm 119:130:

> "The entrance of your word [God's Word], gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."

Do you want light and understanding? Or do you want to continue in semi-darkness and ignorance and prejudice? You have to make up your mind. But if you want light and understanding, then you have to come against those fortresses in your own mind with the truth of the Word of God and with the power of prayer. You have got to demolish them. You have got to humble yourself. You have got to let the Word of God do its work in you—change you, adjust you, remake you, refashion you. You need a lot of going over. You say, "Well, how does he know that about me?" Because it is true of all of us.

So I want to commend to you the truth of the fact that we are in a spiritual war in our minds and God has given us the weapons for victory.

Radio Program

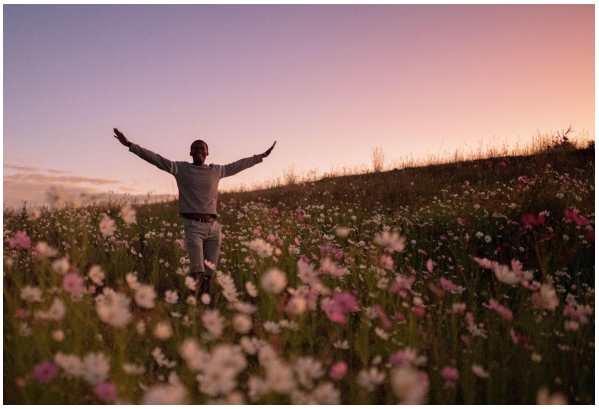
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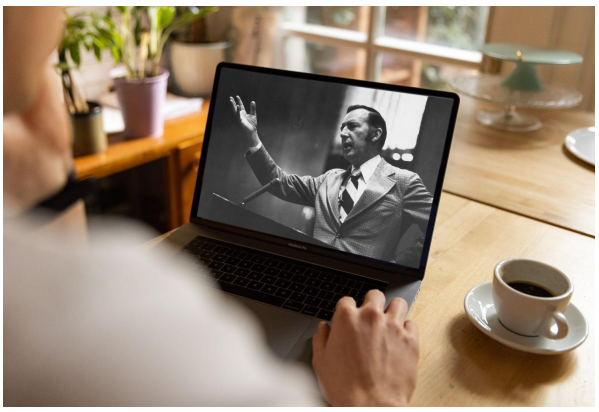
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