

Family Legacy Institute

Tools For Families Building Godly Legacies

Developing A Biblical Sexual Worldview Chapter III

Captive Thoughts and Mind Management

A Bible Study for Mature Christ-followers

~by Dr. John P. Splinter

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5 ~ NIV).

This is a potent text dealing with the Christian mind. Let’s unpack it bit by bit.

“We demolish...” The operative theory in the Communist Party during the Cold War, was that Communism intended to take over the world one small country at a time. It was like taking a large sausage away, one small slice at a time. If they took enough small slices, there wouldn’t be much left to fight about. The rationale behind this philosophy was that they knew that if they tried to take the whole sausage in one fell swoop, there would be a huge fight.

That’s a snap-shot of Satan’s approach in each of our lives, often seen most clearly in the realm of human sexuality. He takes small, almost meaningless slices at a time. A slightly prolonged look here – a private fantasy there – a slight, inappropriate touch here – an innuendo there. By contrast, scripture uses the word “demolish.” Another translation of the word is “pull down” or “tear down.” The word implies a sudden and violent act that ruins and destroys. That is to say, as we consider sinning, it is most profitable for the would-be sinner to consider the entire act of sin at its most grievous end ~ ponder the effect, the loss of the entire sausage, not just the slice.

- It’s 15 years in prison, not just stealing a little money from your boss.
- It’s a \$1,900 fine, not just the thrill of going 120 m.p.h. for a few seconds.
- It’s risking addiction to porn, not just a few moments spent with *Playboy*.
- It’s the destruction of a marriage and alienation of the kids, not just a little affair.

Martin Luther captured the essence of this when he said, “Be a sinner and sin boldly! Let your sins be strong!” Was Luther inviting Christians to sin? Not at all. Rather, he was challenging sinners to a level of internal honesty that is lost in slicing-small-pieces sin management.

Luther completed his thought regarding “sinning boldly,” by saying, “But let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world.” We can never

experience the power of Christ in us, as long as we retain the right to sin in small slices. Adult integrity requires “whole sausage” thinking. If we have the courage to do this, it’s far easier to go about “demolishing” the sin that otherwise craftily finds us, surrounds us, and binds us.

...arguments and every pretension... “Arguments” and “pretensions” are descriptive words. Both imply a *shading* or *manipulation* of truth, like a slippery politician trying to entice voters to believe that his complete lack of integrity is somehow related to their best interest.

The Apostle Paul was an academic guy. He’d studied under one of the leading minds of his day, a Jewish scholar named Gamaliel. In today’s world he’d have been the equivalent of an academic department chair at a leading university. In this moment Paul is making his case for God’s truth as applied in the human mind. In so doing, Paul draws a line in the sand, essentially saying, “On one side we have arguments and pretensions ~ on the other side we have truth, found in Christ.”

Arguments and pretensions are what rebellious human beings use when trying to defend their sin in the presence of a Holy God. In God’s eyes we’re all like children, caught with our hands in the cookie jar, with crumbs on our faces, trying to create our version of why this particular disobedience was appropriate. As such, arguments and pretensions are activities of the mind. This is the principle focus of this verse. It has to do with what we do with our minds.

...that sets itself up against the knowledge of God..., Here’s a child with crumbs on his face....