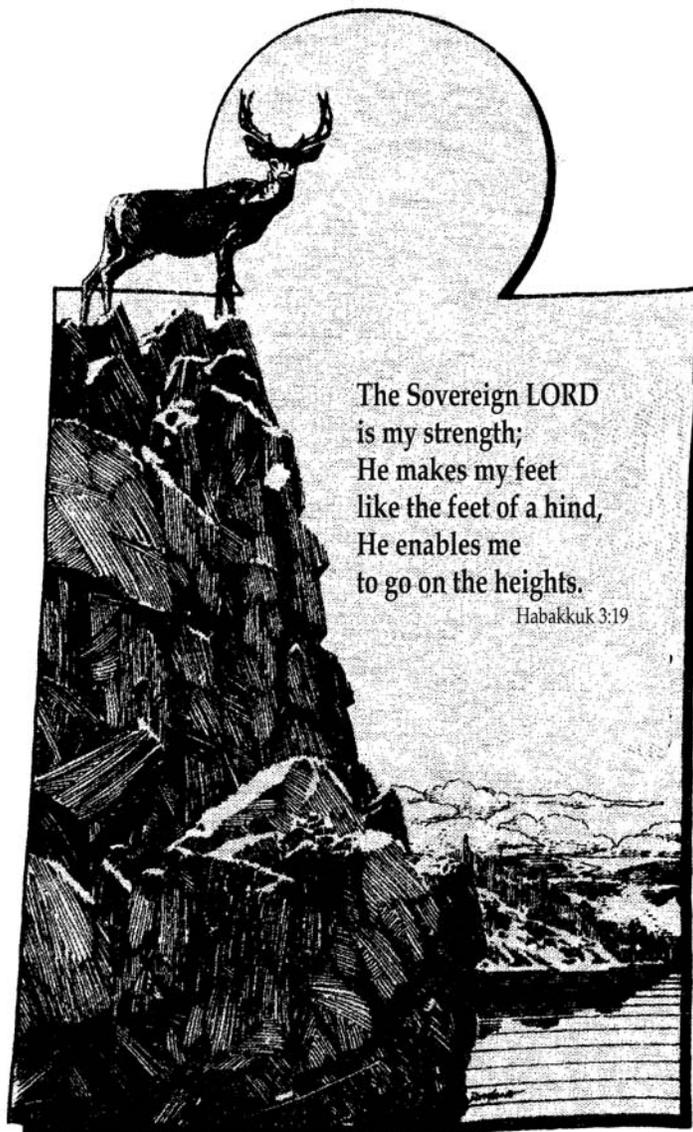


Going to the High Places

Part 1 of Chapter 1. *Invitation to the High Places*



The Sovereign LORD
is my strength;
He makes my feet
like the feet of a hind,
He enables me
to go on the heights.

Habakkuk 3:19



Restoration Ministries International

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

Restorationministries.org

Hinds' Feet in High Places

Part 1 of Chapter 1:

Invitation to the High Places

Our Father has extended to you a marvelous Covenant of life in Jesus! When you embrace that Covenant, you are offered the same invitation Much-Afraid received. The Shepherd invited her to leave the valley of her earthly identity to take a journey of transformation to the High Places.

Did she fully understand what sort of venture she was embarking on? No! But neither do many who call themselves "Christian". The concept of pilgrimage, that is, the sanctification process in which you are transformed into the likeness of Jesus, has been lost to much of the Church. Accordingly, it seems fewer are leaving the valley for the High Places.

Think of your departure from the valley as a shuttle launch at Cape Kennedy. The greatest amount of energy is needed not during the flight but at the initial separation from the launch pad. Your earthly identity has been intricately connected to your life in the valley. So many are like Much-Afraid, imprisoned by their valley relationships.

Yet, to acquire the nature of Jesus we must all leave the valley. As you prepare to depart, it's appropriate to ask others who are close to you to join you. The Shepherd's invitation is for them as well. If family and friends come with you the trip will be easier as you encourage each other.

If others refuse to come, you still need to press on! Don't linger in the valley — get to the High Places yourself! You can return later to help others after you have been changed!

We are numbering the paragraph indentations of the author to guide our discussion of the first part of chapter 1. Let's prepare to leave the valley of our earthly identity...

2. For several years...

Much-Afraid had been in the service of the Shepherd for quite awhile but had not yet left the Valley of Humiliation. She knew the Shepherd and sincerely yearned to please Him as a devoted worker. But as we will come to recognize, He wanted much more in their relationship than her activities on His behalf. *This is true for all of us.*

Much-Afraid counted among her friends two in particular, Mercy and Peace. We may surmise that Mercy and Peace had already been to the High Places. These two were surrounded by the same agitating villagers of Much-Trembling. But they were able to serve the Shepherd with joy because they served in the power of *Who He is.*

This transformation could never occur in the life of Much-Afraid if her heart remained mired in the oppressive atmosphere of Much-Trembling. Therefore she would also need to leave the tranquil little cottage and the valley of her earthly identity to which she was so attached if she would journey to the High Places.

Do you know how much our Lord yearns for you to know Him *as He really is*? In order to fathom the nature of Jesus you have to leave behind your earthly identity and your religious comfort zone. God never instituted "religious practice". He ordained a *way of life*. Our focus is *conformity to Jesus*, Who describes Himself as "*the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*" (John 14:6).

Jesus is not only the way to the Father, He is the *Incarnate Way of life* for us. The men and women who first put their trust in Jesus were called "*The Way*" (see Acts 9:2). As you get closer to the High Places, your understanding that you are today's representative of "*The Way*" becomes all the more clear.

Along the way of your pilgrimage to the High Places you'll be transformed into His character as the Holy Spirit works in you. Being set apart *by Him* for *His purposes* as *His ambassador* in the world is the aspiration of Jesus in His prayer for all who would follow

Him: “Sanctify them **by the truth**; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify Myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will trust in Me through their message” (John 17:17-20).

Remember, to be sanctified is to be set apart for His purposes, that is, to have Kingdom aspirations. By your trust in Jesus you are united with every other believer, past, present and to come who will be lovingly set apart — sanctified by Jesus.

As an example: I know Sue much differently now after 46 years of marriage than I did on the day I said “I do” to her. We have been *changed* during our marriage pilgrimage. And in your relationship with Jesus you will face time and again opportunities to be changed by His Spirit into Christlikeness in your character. The changes come as a result of each individual choice you make along the way.

Sometimes those changes can be prompted by very unChristlike responses to attitudes and motivations you see in others! I remember that a year before I yielded my life to Jesus I met a man who absolutely radiated trust and joy in Jesus. He spoke of Him as though He knew Him intimately, and overflowed with testimonies of amazing answers to very specific prayer needs.

I envied that man! And that envy of his walk with Jesus stirred my heart to seek Him all the more in the kind of walk that saw Jesus responding with power. Years later I could embrace that brother with heartfelt joy that his trust had been a catalyst to spur me on!

- What “lovely little cottage” of personal comfort might you have to leave behind as Jesus calls you to journey to the High Places?
- Who do you know who walks in Peace and Mercy no matter what the circumstances, while your life is an inner shambles? Do you “envy” them enough to ask our

Father to reveal what’s keeping you from walking like that?

3. In the first place...

For several years Sue and I surveyed people who came to our retreat ministry about their early home life. We discovered that only one out of forty had been raised in a home where Jesus was *Lord*. While many had grown up in religious families that attended church, their religion was for the most part separate from their daily lives. Aside from grace at mealtimes, little of a spiritual nature permeated their home.

- How would you describe your own religious upbringing?

Much-Afraid was chained by her own crushing self-appraisal of her disabilities as well as the contemptuous pity of her relatives. Her outer appearance, however, merely reflected the inner afflictions that tormented her entire clan. In our book *Demolishing Strongholds* we show how God relegates families who fail to love Him to demonic strongholds for several generations until someone has the courage to break the bondage. The influence of these strongholds can represent the “valley” in which you grew up.

For instance, Sue and I grew up in the Valley of Rejection, in which our thoughts, decisions and actions were filtered through the lens of not being accepted. On page 37 of our book we list different family strongholds that we have encountered. The symptoms of the spirit of rejection in my family were addiction (alcoholism), compulsive behavior (immorality), and seeking acceptance. Sue’s family was plagued by unworthiness and withdrawal. On the surface our families looked different, but we were stung by the same demonic oppression. [The list of

strongholds is reproduced at the end of this article.]

The symptoms under each stronghold can operate like the relatives of Much-Afraid: Craven Fear, Gloomy, Self-Pity, and so on. They discourage you and beat you down — never wanting you to leave the Valley of your Strongholds. We've found that in most marriages both spouses have the same prevailing stronghold(s). The symptoms may be different, but it's as if the *strongholds* married each other. Perhaps that familiarity was a factor that attracted the couple to each other — "He/She *understands* me!"

A mass destruction of marriages is taking place in the Christian community. Can it be that many couples are tarrying in the Valley of their Strongholds as their love disintegrates around them? Couples who are determined to share a healthy marriage that *grows* in love and the character of Jesus must leave the valley *together*. If one spouse chooses to stay behind in their valley, their marriage covenant will never reflect *union in Jesus*.

Keep in mind that strongholds are *relationship destroyers*. Demonic agitation and influence chokes the intimacy you desire with your Lord and with others in your life.

Even after the strongholds have been demolished by the authority of Jesus, you still need to have your God-given needs met. Old behavioral ruts in your life path need to be filled in with godly responses so that you

Strongholds: Relationship Destroyers



don't again seek unrighteous ways to have your human needs met!

Our Father created Adam and Eve with seven specific needs, the same ones you have. These needs are what motivate you. When you meet these needs God's way you reap wonderful blessing. When you try to have them met *outside* of God's will, destruction rains down on you, especially in the area of your relationships.

Seven Human Needs

1. Dignity
2. Authority
3. Blessing and Provision
4. Security
5. Purpose and Meaning
6. Freedom and Boundary
7. Intimate Love and Companionship

Your seven needs are covered more fully at the end of this article.

After I (Mike) renounced the stronghold of rejection I found that I had an immense need for dignity, security, and intimate love and companionship. Through Sue's love and the encouragement of our home fellowship these needs began to be met. I was 47 years old when I first experienced the dignity our Father has always desired for me. My motivations were transformed. Love took over where rejection had once oppressed me.

Sue adds: "I'd always hidden behind a friendly smile, but deep inside I was a shy, fearful person. I drove myself toward achievement because that was what I'd based my self-worth on. Rather than accept my worth in God's sight, I scrambled all the harder, even after finding forgiveness at the Cross. My freedom came when that agitating spirit of rejection was cast out by the authority of Jesus. Free from the bondage of fearing to tell others about Jesus, I could eagerly testify of His love and power even to strangers!"

- Are there any spiritual strongholds that are keeping you in your own particular

Valley? Stop now and go through the strongholds sheet in the back of this section. Are any of the symptoms *habitually present* in your life now? We stress *habitual*, not just occasional! Deal with your strongholds now. The instructions precede the list of strongholds. You'll never leave the valley if you cling to these demonic influences!

- Which of the seven needs do you think are the greatest motivators in *your* life? Share these with others close to you, especially those who are willing to go to the High Places with you. As you travel together they can help you meet these needs.
- Ask our Lord if you are trying to meet any of these needs in ways that are not His. If so, repent and ask Him to help you have your needs met *His* way.

4. Most earnestly...

If you stay in the valley too long after you come to Jesus, you begin to have doubts that your life can change even if you do hear the invitation to the High Places. Much-Afraid was plagued by this doubt:

"She feared that there could be no deliverance from these two crippling disfigurements and that they must continue to mar her service always."

Doubt keeps many from ever leaving the valley of their own strongholds. Oh, people "move around the valley," that is, from broken relationship to broken relationship and from congregation to congregation. The sad thing is that they themselves are not changed. They're still captive in the Valley of their Strongholds. And that nagging little inner voice keeps insisting, "That's just the way you are. You won't *ever* change!"

If you're beset by that deception, take it captive and bring it into the Light of Jesus. Remember this important passage pertaining to strongholds:

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 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. 10:4,5).

After your strongholds have been demolished in the Name of Jesus, you still have an ongoing personal responsibility: to *take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*. No one else can do this for you. If you chew on thoughts that you know are ungodly, you'll find the trip that much harder, as did Much-Afraid. It is impossible to entertain demonic voices and enjoy trusting fellowship with the Shepherd.

Jesus has promised that through His Spirit you can be transformed into the likeness of His character. Any area of your being that you believe can't change is hiding behind a lie! You are a new creation in Jesus, and that means that *every part* of you can be conformed to His image as you continue on your life journey!

Does this mean that you'll become infinitely perfect as He is? No, but yielding your mind, your will and your emotions to Him will bring about changes that others will notice. Then you can give Him the credit and praise for the transformations!

- What area of your life is Jesus bringing to mind that is a *besetting sin* or *area of hopelessness* that you fear can never change?
- What nagging little lies have created doubt in your heart that change can ever occur?

5. There was, however...

When we handed out the list of strongholds from *Demolishing Strongholds* to congregations, we found that most people in each body of believers had the same prevalent strongholds. Many had been influenced by that spirit even before they ever came to the congregation.

People are attracted to groups with the same prevailing strongholds. A stronghold operates like a “familiar spirit” to attract people and make them feel comfortable and accepted. No wonder they can’t (or don’t want to) get out of the Valley of their Strongholds!

Those who make a move to go to the High Places are surrounded like Much-Afraid with dissonant voices that try to deter them from pressing on in Christ. In your case, you may have heard comments like, “Aren’t you becoming a fanatic over this religious stuff?” or, “You’re going to lose friends if you live a “Christian” life by His Word!”

- Have you ever encountered opposition from others when you tried to walk in Jesus’ steps more closely?
- Are you in a faith community now that encourages one another to “stand up for Jesus” even when it’s unpopular? If you’re not, be careful of the influence of familiar spirits!

6. Like most of the other families...

Even if Much-Afraid agreed to leave the valley, she had to contend with her family members. We are told that:

“all the Fearings hated the Chief Shepherd... and naturally it was a great offense to them that one of their own family should have entered his service.”

Your opposition may be your own flesh-and-blood or those in your faith communi-

ty who are in bondage to the same strongholds. Maybe *both* are conspiring to keep you in the Valley of your Strongholds!

In our Sept/Oct 2001 newsletter, “*Making Level Paths for Our Families*”, we discuss three types of relationships. Only one type will help you get to the High Places. When you begin to follow Jesus to the High Places, your relationships move from “Activity-based” and “Positional-based” to “Value-based.” It’s worthwhile to review these, because Positional- and Activity-based relationships will try to hinder your journey.

Value-based Relationships

Your emotions are attached proportionally to those things you value the most. From the time of your conversion, the basis for your relationships must change if you are to *truly follow Jesus*. This new relational value system is revealed as Jesus describes to His audience His true family: “[Jesus] replied to him, ‘Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?’ **Pointing to His disciples, He said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers. For whoever *does what My Father in heaven wants* is My brother and sister and mother’**” (Matt. 12:48-50).

Followers of Jesus place remarkable value, even unto death, on their ongoing relationship with our Father. Since Jesus is the Firstborn among those who have been adopted into our Father’s family, He is your role-model for living out our Father’s values. Since His Word urges you to “find out what pleases Him”, your love relationship with Him will compel you to *do what He wants*. Isn’t this the intensity of love and obedience our Lord requires of us? “*Love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul and with **all** your mind*” (Matt. 22:37).

To experience value-based relationships you have to make significant relational choices. As a result of choosing to love and obey our Lord, you’ll be attracted to others who place comparable value on their relationship with Him. Because of the *value* you place on your love relationship with our Father and your desire to please Him, when

you find others of like love, these relationships grow into the sweetest fellowship.

Value-based relationships in Christ are the strongest and most enduring. They also bring the greatest glory to our Father. If you are a parent, these are the type of relationships your children need to see *you* sharing in. Value-based relationships strengthen and encourage you to reach out to unbelievers with something a whole lot different than the values the world offers!

Positional-based Relationships

Unlike value-based relationships that call you to make conscious choices, people are “plopped” into positional relationships. For instance, all of us were born into a particular family. You weren’t given a chance to choose your relatives or the circumstances of where or when you were born. This reality has important bearing on your spiritual walk. People who fail to examine and *biblically question* the doctrine of the denomination in which they were raised make their religious expression *positional* rather than value-based.

Family members who use the phrase “Blood is thicker than water” are reaffirming their positional relationship. As an example: A mother can cause unnecessary tension in her son’s marriage by emphasizing *her* position in his life rather than by “decreasing” so that the value relationship he has with the wife he has chosen can increase. This is an important change in relationship: “*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh*” (Gen. 2:24).

A father whose spiritual life reveals no emotional determination for the things of God is modeling for his children a positional relationship that will make it harder for them to understand the intimate Fatherhood of God.

Where positional-based family relationships are strong, it’s often difficult both to choose to follow Jesus *and* to establish value-based relationships with others who are following Him. Your positional relationships

often perceive value-based relationships as a threat to the stronghold-influenced order and controls already being practiced within your family. As they see you attempting to flee the prison, they may voice concern that you’re “joining a cult” or “forgetting your roots.”

Activity-based Relationships

Relationships that form because of common activities are the most pervasive throughout Christendom. Church services, Bible studies, Sunday schools that focus on content dissemination rather than developing strong relationships among the participants, are all activity-based. The activity, not the relational fellowship, is the primary reason for meeting.

Heavy focus on the activity insidiously blocks out your ability to establish value-based relationships. Activity-based programs are so prevalent in the church because they are the most efficient to manage. Few leaders are needed to direct the activities of the many. Yet the many suffer by never maturing as the *family* of brothers and sisters that Jesus identified as His.

- Evaluate your current spiritual relationships. Are there people you *value* in the way Jesus described as brother, sister, mother?
- What activities would you be willing to relinquish in order to develop value-based relationships with those He puts in your path to be spiritual family? In other words, if you found others willing to go to the High Places, would you be willing to forfeit everything to join them on the journey?

7. Poor Much-Afraid...

We are told:

“Her relatives always terrified her, and she had never learned to resist or ignore

**Co-dependent Relationships
driven by strongholds,
and look like gears meshed together.**



their threats, so she simply sat cowering before them.”

In our book *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation* we discuss the strangulating co-dependency that strongholds produce. This is especially true in positional and activity-based relationships. Prisoner-like entanglement befalls those who fail to confront the people who are negatively affecting their thoughts, emotions, and actions.

If you are overcome by debilitating apprehension or fear when you *know* you need to confront someone who habitually causes you apprehension, you are *co-dependent*. You do everything you can to ensure that nothing will set off the instigator you so fear. If others are involved in your relational situation, you may even try to convince them to stifle their confrontation of the instigator. So *everyone* has to dance around a person who may or may not be oblivious to the apprehension he/she is causing in the lives of a number of people!

***Wherever apprehension exists,
love cannot grow!***

The longer that discomfort and avoidance are practiced, the more deeply entrenched fear and non-confrontation become. Co-dependency is agitated by strongholds that are keeping everyone from facing the confrontation that’s needed. Remember, they operate to destroy relationships.

In order to get to the High Places, everyone sooner or later finds they have to confront the instigators of apprehension in their family and faith community. You may be facing this now. As with Much-Afraid, your love and desire for Jesus must be *greater than* your fear to confront.

- Who in your life inspires fear or apprehension in you?
- Are you the person who *fears confrontation*? Are you caught in the middle between the “instigator” and the “others affected by the tension”? You need to be *extreme* in your desire to get out of the valley! You’re stuck in the middle, and both sides will fight to keep you from leaving. It may sound cruel, but turn them over to Jesus for help, and then walk on!

8. The unhappy interview...

On the outskirts of the village, both as dawn broke or at day’s end, Much-Afraid habitually met with the Shepherd. These meetings were important to her relationship with Him while she lived in the valley. But they were nowhere close to the life with the Shepherd she could have if she went to the High Places.

You may be a person who attends church regularly and even spends time in His Word and in prayer. Just know: If you’re going to remain in the valley, you’ll remain a slave to others and to the tyranny of religious programs.

Take a personal inventory of what you

may need to leave behind in order to press on with Jesus. This may mean that even the religious activities that have seemed good for a season need to be set aside so that you can be stretched in *character* in a new way. Jesus offended the religious establishment by *personalizing* His relationship with the Father. You, too, may need leave your comfort zone of religious activities in order to discover what Jesus may have for you that will conform another area of your character into His.

The reevaluation of your priorities is part of your identification with our Lord in this exhortation: “*And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come*” (Heb. 13:12-14).

[You may find it helpful to read our Sept/Oct 2002 newsletter, “*Life Outside the Steeple*”, to help you count the cost of your journey.]

- Do you need to make some changes in your life in order to be intentional about going to the High Places?
- What are the activities in your life that have been helpful to your character growth for a season but now need to be reevaluated and perhaps deleted at this point?

10. The quiet evening light...

Sue: One night shortly after returning to the US from our research time spent in Israel I was awakened by Mike. He had just dreamed he was on a dark, dangerous mountain of desolation called Mount Horeb. Horeb is where God dealt with the prophet Elijah. In the dream God told Mike, “For four years I’ve desolated you to remove that

which isn’t like My Son Jesus. Now press on sharing this message, ‘Free the captives.’ Wake your wife up and tell her about this.”

As Mike recounted his dream, I was dumfounded. *I* had just dreamed I was on a mountain! My mountain was a very high, half-moon plateau. My heels were against the back edge, and I understood that behind me in blackness lay jagged rocks and steep cliffs. *Danger* screamed from down there. Ahead of me, the light was growing ever brighter on the horizon.

Then Jesus spoke: “You can’t go back to what once was. Only pain and death lay there. Press on into the light! You may look from side to side to see who is going with you, but don’t look back. Press on!”

How very similar these dreams were! We were still smarting from past years of wounding and didn’t even have the courage to share what our research in Israel had revealed. For the past four years we had been desolated by God through betrayals and false accusations. But as a result of our dreams we could see that our Lord had been using these refining fires to prepare us for His new purpose for our lives — to share the Hebraic foundations as a way of life.

Our Father was so merciful in so many ways! Had we known that our testing was going to last four years, we might have fainted with fear or given up. But to know that His fires were achieving purposes that would serve His loving will, now THAT made it worth it all! So if *you* are facing fiery troubles and disappointments, look ahead to the “mountains which bound your valley”, as did Much-Afraid, and know that Jesus is faithful to hold you secure.

In Peter’s second epistle he describes a pilgrimage of faith that takes you all the way to agape love:

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess

*these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is near-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be **all the more eager** to make your calling and election sure. For if you **do these things**, you will never fall, and you will **receive a rich welcome** into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-11).*

In the middle of the pilgrimage Peter indicates that after self-control, you must go through perseverance before you can obtain godliness. We know firsthand that perseverance comes during times of fiery refinement so that God can prepare you for further purposes when areas of character dross have been scorched away. To use another analogy, you undergo a time of perseverance when our Father prunes you of branches that will hinder your fruitfulness in the future.

During our eleven years at the retreat center we discovered a common hindrance that deterred married couples from pressing on together all the way into Christlike love. In the vast majority of marriages the wife recognized they were in fiery circumstances but her husband was oblivious. When confronted with her pain, he went backward to seek more knowledge about the situation while she wanted to press ahead to get through the fire. On occasion we'd encounter a husband who had embraced the perseverance but his wife was just looking to escape. But in either case, until *both* you and your spouse embrace the fiery times together, you can't press onward.

You'll find in your faith walk that you may make several round trips to the High Places and return to the Valley. The purpose of the trip to the High Places is always *to be changed* before you go back to the Valley. As Peter wrote regarding the pilgrimage, "*If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Quiet your spirit before our Lord and weigh some thoughts before Him:

1. You can't listen to the deceiving voices of spiritual strongholds in either yourself or in your marriage and make it to the High Places.
2. After you've dealt with your strongholds, think through your true needs, and survey your relationships to see who wants to go with you. As you journey together, your old behavioral ruts can be filled in by your comrades as they share truth with you from the Spirit.
3. You can't cherish positional or activity-based relationships more than you cherish Jesus if you hope to make it to the High Places. You can invite your positional and activity-based friends to accompany you, but you can't cling to their motivations on your journey. Like Much-Afraid, you may find you have to go by yourself or as a couple to be equipped in full devotion to Jesus. Then when you *return* to these relationships, you'll be able to offer them true help.

11. Through the quiet...; 12. "What shall I do?" ...

If your Christian life has been spent in the Valley of your Strongholds for a long time, you'll need special determination to leave that valley. You are faced with a choice of following Jesus wholeheartedly or holding on to familiar human relationships that aren't seeking to love and obey Him. Your normal inclination and rationale can overwhelm you with concern over the effect your decision will have on others. Yet, our Lord is *looking for you* to come to Him!

He can't permit your loyalty to people to compete with your devotion to Him: "*Anyone who loves his father or mother **more than Me** is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter **more than Me** is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not **take up his cross and follow Me** is not worthy of Me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever*

loses his life for My sake will find it" (Matt. 10:37-39). True life in Jesus can only be found outside the valley when you choose to journey to the High Places.

Our Lord knows the way out of the valley. He voiced it to the Israelites: "Draw near to Me!" Only in Jesus can you find that which your soul is truly seeking. *"This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: 'In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it'"* (Isa. 30:15). The Israelites refused to come to Him in peace to find resolve for their Lord, and only Him. Following their own inclinations instead, they chose self-destruction.

Stop to peer inside yourself. Do you look heavenward to see the joy set before you? Or, do you weigh what you might lose if you take the journey of transformation? What you *fear to lose* will be your prison. *"Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe"* (Pro. 29:25).

Our Lord continues to warn His people, *"I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in My sight and chose what displeases Me"* (Isa. 66:4). In the end everyone finds out that it's far better to accept His invitation no matter what the cost.

I've often told people, "Whatever you 'sweat', whether it's loss of something or fear to obey what He's telling you, He'll make you "sweat" that very thing until your heart turns to Him in trust." The emotional intensity of your "sweating" indicates the magnitude of the distrust you're carrying!

- Ask yourself honestly, "Is there any person, any activity or any possession that I value more than my love for Jesus?" If so, are you willing to ask Jesus to do whatever is necessary to change that?
- Do you "sweat" about anything at this

point in your life? Financial worry, job loss, relational separation, whatever? Are you willing to turn this over to Jesus so that He can show you His will and purpose as you trust Him?

13. "Don't be afraid"...

So much of your pilgrimage depends on your willingness to *trust Jesus*. He is well aware of your pitiful circumstances and hears your tremulous cries. But He yearns for you to *bear much fruit* for His Father's glory, and some deep pruning has to occur in you if that's to happen!

Jesus made this clear when He said, *"I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful"* (John 15:1,2). Jesus concludes His teaching about the vine with these words of purpose, *"This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples"* (15:8).

As Peter reports, the world's values and ways become increasingly detestable to you as you follow Jesus. Your old companions in sin think it's strange (and that *you're* strange!) that you don't want to join them in the debauchery that once satisfied you. They might even remark to others that "you've gone off the deep end in this religious stuff."

You'll discover, though, that your remorse for those former activities and your shame over your former relationships will be transformed: You'll learn to grieve over the bondage your old companions are in, and yearn for them to know Jesus. That's one of the fruits that will blossom when you reach the High Places!

- Do you still feel shame over something from your past that you need to bring to Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing? Confess that to Him and receive the cleansing work He's promised!

(See 1 John 1:9.)

- Recall the people from your past with whom you engaged in “debauchery” of any sort. Who does the Spirit quicken to your heart to pray for to encounter Jesus?

15. As she spoke...

Quietness of spirit and confident trust in Jesus permit your spirit to focus on what you *really long for*. What a relief that our walk with Jesus isn't a set of rules or principles! As Paul wrote, you don't base your salvation on edicts of “Do not touch” or “Do not taste”. Instead, as you focus on Jesus, you can savor the anticipation of walking more closely with Him. The joy set before you can overcome your perceived loss of whatever used to thrill your heart.

Sue: At one time in my life I was fearful that if I yielded all that I was to Jesus, He'd haul me kicking and screaming off to Africa to serve Him! But His wonderful mercy has its severe aspects as well. He allowed me to wrestle over wanting to control my own life until I was pierced with grief over my decisions and actions. At last, all I could do in my awareness of my own sinful heart was to cry out, “Please Jesus, I don't want control of my life any more! If You want me, please take me!” And He graciously and lovingly responded.

We haven't made it to Africa yet, but His odyssey has led us to move 19 times in 46 years of marriage. And I wouldn't have it any other way, for His grace has been sufficient. He has taught me (and I'm still learning!) to trust Him to work in and through Mike as the spiritual head of our household. My part is to share what I hear from Him, and to cast off grumbling and complaining about circumstances. Our Lord is Sovereign, and He is well able to answer your heart's desire when your will aligns with His!

Much-Afraid voiced her own desire, “Oh, if only I could escape the Valley of

Humiliation altogether and go to the High Places...” You might also express this in your own heart's longing: “Oh, if only I could leave behind who I am and become more like Jesus!” And those are words He's been waiting to hear.

- A wise person once said, “You're not ready to *go* anywhere or *do* anything for the Lord until you're ready to go *anywhere* and do *anything* for the Lord.” Are there any reservations in your heart about going *anywhere* or doing *anything* for Jesus?
- What would be the result in your household if you turned your groaning into praise, your complaining into gratefulness? Are you willing to do that in your heart?

16. No sooner...

Our Lord has been waiting to hear the longing of *your* heart. Can you hear His voice responding to you as He did to Much-Afraid: “I have waited a long time to hear you make the suggestion...”?

Part of His wait has involved your own willingness to move on with Him, and your receptivity to His invitation as the Spirit has moved in you.

Your longing for Jesus gives you the “ears to hear” His invitation that He has long held out to you. Before this point in your life, the clamor of worldly desires — wealth, recognition, lust — and agitating demonic clatter have deafened your heart. But now you're ready!

The Shepherd refers to His “Father's Kingdom, the Realm of Love.” You might think that the references to the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus makes in the Gospels are that eternal home which we're all awaiting. But look again! How often does He exclaim that the Kingdom of Heaven is among us

now! The King is proclaiming His Kingdom in the present, so that all who are indwelt by His Spirit can grow in the Christlike character of the King!

The Kingdom of Love isn't just what you'll experience when you pass from this life or even when He returns. It's the NOW in which His love is transforming your character into His as you walk His pathway and make choices that either reflect Him or grieve Him. The Lord Jesus stressed that reality for His disciples when they asked Him to "teach us how to pray." In that prayer you are petitioning our Father to establish here on earth the Kingdom in which His will is carried out: "*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matt. 6:9,10).

We need to be careful that as we journey to the High Places that we are not looking outside ourselves to see the work of God. The Kingdom of Love will be established within us as we journey, "*the kingdom of God is within you*" (Luke 17:21b). This is the wonderful feature of the path to the High Places. It begins with trusting the Shepherd and accepting His invitation. The success of the journey is found in the love that is produced in us, "*For in Christ Jesus ... The only thing that counts is trust expressing itself through love*" (Gal. 5:6). The Greek word for "love" in this verse is *agape*. It is the sacrificial, Holy Spirit-empowered love that desires nothing in return.

Not only is the *King* of the Kingdom the same "yesterday, today and forever." So is His Kingdom! It's unshakable because it's built upon the solid rock of the King Himself! That's why He never stops loving you, even if your decisions grieve Him. He faithfully works through His Spirit in you to reveal that your sinful choices lead to pain and grief for your life. Then He graciously reminds you that your humble repentance pours out His forgiveness on you to cleanse you. Hallelujah!

- During your quiet time graze in the Gospels

and discover just how often Jesus speaks of His Kingdom. Find out for yourself what the phrase, "the Kingdom of Heaven", means to *you*.

The following passage is an excerpt from our book *Demolishing Strongholds* to help you in your journey to the High Places. There is much more to be discovered when you delve into the book. You can view it and download it for free from our website: <<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/DemolishingRevision.pdf>>.

Our life is a **pilgrimage** —

a journey during which changing circumstances force us to adapt.

Our ability to make those adaptations in the power of the Holy Spirit will determine the level of joy and peace we find in our relationship with God and with others.

Our victory of walking in the fullness of Christ will not be achieved until we meet the needs God has created in us, in the manner that He prescribes.

God Made Us With Seven Needs

A study of the first two chapters of Genesis reveals that from the beginning God created in mankind **seven distinct needs**. These needs provide continuing opportunities for His people to pursue a wholehearted and intimate relationship with Him as they depend on Him to meet their needs. As we seek to meet these needs **within God's framework** as revealed in His Word, we provide the spiritual environment for an ever-increasing **conformity to the image of Christ**.

As we yield our **self-sufficiency** to Him and focus instead on **God-dependency** for all our needs, we will develop spiritual eyes to see His provisions and spiritual ears to hear Him say, ***"This is the way. Walk in it"*** (Isaiah 30:21). When we strive to meet these needs in a way that **seems** right to our mind, will, and emotions but is not God's way, we will suffer consequences.

The Seven Needs

Dignity

1. God Created Us with a Need for Dignity

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, in Our likeness,' ...So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created Him; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:26,27).

Authority

2. God Created Us with a Need for Authority

"And let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Gen. 1:26).

Blessing and Provision

3. God Created Us with a Need for Blessing and Provision

"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food'" (Gen. 1:28,29).

Security

4. God Created Us with a Need for Security

"Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there He put the man He had formed. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:8,9).

Purpose and Meaning

5. God Created Us with a Need for Purpose and Meaning

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ...Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name" (Gen. 2:15,19).

Freedom and Boundary

6. God Created Us with a Need for Freedom and Boundary

"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you

must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die'" (Gen. 2:16,17).

Intimate Love and Companionship

7. God Created Us to Experience Intimate Love and Companionship

"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Genesis 2:18). "For Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he

was sleeping, He took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib He had taken out of the man, and He brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called "woman", for she was taken out of man.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame" (Gen. 2:20-25).

Demolishing the Strongholds in Your Life

On the next page is a list of strongholds we have encountered in our years of ministry. For a fuller explanation of the operation of strongholds, especially as they work through generations in a family, see our book *Demolishing Strongholds*. As long as your strongholds remain, you can never experience God's love or truth. The strongholds will always block these. You may *hear*, but you'll *never experience*. That's an important difference. As one person described the Hebraic foundations, "They are practical, experiential, and revelational." We all need to walk out these truths for our Father's glory.

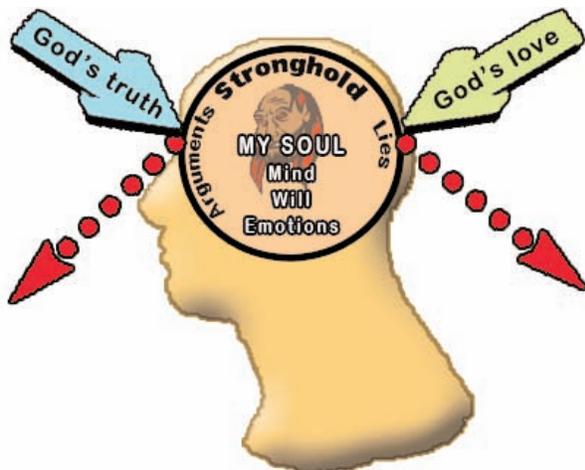
The **boldface** words on the next page represent the demonic strongholds. The words beneath each boldface are the symptoms that indicate their presence in your

life. Go through the list and place a number from 0 to 10 next to each symptom that manifests itself *habitually* in your life. The number gives you an idea of how deeply engrained the symptom is. If the stronghold has come down through generations of your family, you may find its influence can be very strong.

Your spouse or close friend can place an evaluative number next to yours to verify what they see in you. Having someone else close to you to review your responses is helpful because you need to guard yourself against your own deceit. If you look at a stronghold and hear *rationalizing* going on in your mind, you probably have that particular stronghold, and the stronghold of deceit is trying to dissuade you.

After you have recognized the symptoms that identify a stronghold, renounce it in Jesus' Name and confess any sins that you have committed that relate to its influence. **Pray, using the authority of the Name of the Lord Jesus and the power of His shed blood to demolish these strongholds and renounce their influence in your life.**

Remember, after the strongholds are demolished, you still have the responsibility to take your thoughts captive. Paraphrasing Paul, "You can't listen to the demonic voices and hear the voice of Jesus too."



OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF DEMONIC STRONGHOLDS

DECEIT

- Lying
- Fantasies
- Delusions
- Rationalizations
- Wrong doctrine/ misuse of Scripture
- Flattery
- Syncretism (beliefs added to Bible)

CONFUSION (DOUBT & UNBELIEF)

- Suspicious
- Apprehensive
- Indecisive/Double-minded
- Skeptical
- Unsettled
- Easily distracted
- Lack of commitment
- No Love of Truth
- Distorted Judgment

INDEPENDENCE & DIVORCE

- Insensitive
- Lonely/Aloof
- Self-determined
- Devil's advocate
- Withdrawn
- Excuse making
- Lack of trust
- Willful
- "Martyr" complex

CONTROL

- Manipulative
- Striving
- Lacking trust
- Devil's advocate
- Insensitive
- Desiring recognition
- Violent
- Seductive empowerment
- Cursing
- Emotional outbursts
- Schemes, Intrigues

WITCHCRAFT/FAMILIAR SPIRIT

- Blasphemy
- Preoccupied with evil
- Psychic experiences
- Rebellious
- Devalues life
- Identifies with sinful nature
- Fixated on future

BITTERNESS

- Resentment
- Racism
- Unforgiveness
- Anger/Hatred
- Begudging
- Violence
- Revenge
- Chronic Grumbling
- Presumption

REJECTION

- Addictive behavior
- Compulsions
- Seeks acceptance
- Unworthiness
- Withdrawal
- Shallow Relationships
- Loneliness

STUPOR & PRAYERLESSNESS

- Distanced From God
- "Cold" Love
- Hardened heart
- Distracted
- Spiritual Blindness
- Laziness
- Deceived Self-appraisal
- Unresponsive

SEXUAL IMPURITY

- Lust
- Sensual enticement
- Denial/Rationalization
- Masturbation
- Fornication
- Adultery
- Frigidity
- Homosexuality
- Pornography
- Fantasy

INFIRMITY/DESTROYING

- Physical Manifestations
- Unconfessed Sin
- Abuses Body
- Devalues Life
- Chronic Grumbling
- Thoughts of Suicide
- Drawn to Danger
- Abortion

HEAVINESS

- Depression
- Despair
- Self-pity
- Loneliness
- Unconfessed sin
- Suicidal thoughts

PRIDE

- Ungrateful
- Self-righteous
- Self-centered
- Insensitive
- Materialistic
- Seeks Positions
- Stubborn
- Mocking
- Vain
- Spiritual Adultery
- Impatient

REBELLION

- Self-willed
- Stubborn/Insolent
- Pouting
- Strife
- Factions
- Divisive
- Anger Leads to Argument
- Independent
- Unteachable
- Ungodly Influence
- Lawless

IDOLATRY/WORLDDLINESS

- Worldly values
- Frustrated
- Hopeless
- Greedy/Selfish
- Financial problems
- Wrong Goals/Decisions
- Living a lie
- Apathetic
- Pleasure in wickedness
- Syncretistic

JEALOUSY

- Spiteful
- Gossip/Slander
- Betrayal
- Critical nature
- Judgmental
- Suspicious
- UnChristlike competition
- Cruelty

RELIGIOSITY

- Religious busyness
- Knowledge without love
- No spiritual power
- Spiritual blindness
- Hypocritical
- Legalistic perversion
- Presumes on Grace

FEAR & INSECURITY

- Inferiority
- Inadequacy
- Timidity
- Pleasing people, not God
- Lack of trust; Worry
- Phobias
- Anxiety over injury, Death
- Perfectionism
- Dread of failure
- Inability to set goals
- "Motor-mouth"

FALSE PROPHECY/ANTI-CHRIST

- Denies Jesus as God and Man
- Bondage to man-made teaching
- Manipulation
- Prophecy for pay
- Prey to Cults, Heresies
- Encourages lawlessness
- Counterfeit miracles
- Contrives dreams/Visions

If you are unsure how to pray, you might consider something like this:

Father in heaven, I recognize the power You have given me by the shed blood of Jesus to demolish strongholds in my life. I confess that I have given a foothold to the sin(s) of _____. I renounce the stronghold of _____ by the authority of the Name of Jesus Christ according to Your Word. I take back through Your power that ground that I surrendered to the enemy and pray that You will fill me with trust-grounded obedience to Your Holy Spirit so that this area of my life will be in conformity to the image of Christ. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen.