



**Freedom from
Strongholds**

A Guide to Help your Group Encourage and Support Each Other

1 John 1:7 says, “But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.” There is no hidden sin in God. He is light, and he lives in perfect light. Our call is to live in that light of total transparency, so no darkness is hiding in our lives. That kind of vulnerability is risky. We have all said too much to someone only to have it backfire on us, or change and damage the relationship with that person. We must be careful how we get to this point of living in the light. Nevertheless, we also see that true fellowship with other believers comes as we are living in the light. As we open our lives up to another person, it takes us to a deeper level of relationship. It even enhances our understanding and experience of the cleansing from sin that is available in Christ. When we share our struggles with someone else and they pray for us and support us in our journey, we have an incarnation of the acceptance of God on our lives. It is worth exploring how to bring our group to a point where there is a place for open confession, under the right conditions and with the right safeguards. If we can move a group into a position that allows its members to live in the light, they will experience a deeper level of connection and fellowship than they may have ever experienced.

Below are some steps you can take to allow your group to experience “living in the light.” If your group has been through Rooted and Shapes of Rooted, you have already experienced the Strongholds process. It is important to re-visit it periodically.

1. **Sub-Groups** – Consider breaking your group into sub-groups for a part of your meeting once in a while. You can do it in the middle for a part of your discussion time or at the end of your meeting for a prayer time. Sub-groups give everyone a better chance to share their thoughts. Some people are too intimidated to share honestly, even in a group of 8-12 people. In addition, the small group gives everyone more chances to talk. You will likely have some push back on this idea at first, because everyone wants to hear what everyone else has to say. Hopefully after a few experiences like this, they will begin to see the value of this. You can break up into groups of men and women or divide into groups of three or four, and even vary it from time to time. Again, you don’t need to do this every week unless it becomes a valuable part of your meeting. You can use it once or twice a month to help get people in the habit of some deeper times of sharing. This can pave the way for a time to share struggles and strongholds that may be keeping people from “living in the light.”

2. Sharing Strongholds – As you begin to feel your group opening to the experience of the deeper sharing in the sub-groups, you can choose a meeting to give them this exercise to be done in their sub-groups. Have them follow this simple process:

Confidentiality – Agree together that what is shared in your sub-group will not be shared with the main group or anyone outside your sub-group unless there is a danger of harm to that person or someone else.

Honesty/Confession – Identify an area in your life that you are struggling with and share it with your sub-group. This may be troublesome relationships, an on-going problem you can't seem to break out of (stronghold), or a repeated pattern of sin like an addiction or hang-up that keeps tripping you up. Share this area with as much detail as you are comfortable.

Surrender/Repentance – Surrender this area to God using the following prayer of repentance. Encourage everyone to pray this prayer as it is written, filling in their own area of struggle.

*Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus. I recognize the power You have given me by the shed blood of Jesus to demolish spiritual strongholds in my life. I confess that I have given a foothold to sin and I renounce the area of _____
(The area you just shared). I claim your healing, cleansing, and forgiveness by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. Through Your power, I take back the ground I surrendered to the enemy. I pray You will enable me to trust and obey your Holy Spirit so that this area of my life will be in conformity to the image of Christ. Amen.*

Accountability/Freedom – Have another person in your sub-group pray for the person that just shared. Ask God to set them free from their struggle, and pray that the sub-group can support them with love and encouragement as God works in their life.

Prayer of Celebration – As a sub-group, pray together thanking God for his power over sin and his ability to deliver us from the strongholds and struggles that we face. Remind each other that "... there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

3. Repeat this periodically – consider repeating this process 2 or 3 times a year with your group. It is most effective if you can use the same sub-groups for your Freedom From Strongholds experience.