

## DISMANTLING THE STRONGMAN OF RELIGION

Religion pollutes your life in deceptive ways. It does not matter what religion your family has practiced – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity. You will need to overcome the ways of religion.

If you have been born into a family involved in the church for generations, you are probably dealing with a strong root of the Pharisee. Jesus warned His disciples to be aware of the leaven of the Pharisee, the Sadducee, and the Herodians. The Pharisees based their righteousness on the fulfillment of the law—legalism. The Sadducees denied the miraculous and based their beliefs in a Greek worldview rather than a Biblical worldview. The Herodians listened to the Gospel message of repentance but refused to change their lifestyle of sexual immorality. They mixed politics with religion.

The church world ignores the reality of the polluting influence of religion. Satan does not war against religion, but against your living faith in the Resurrected Christ Jesus—the Word of God. Religion is not to be confused with liturgy flowing out of love for the Lord. Every person has the ability to walk in the ways of religion, relying on outward actions as the source of righteousness. Religion is controlling, demanding of service through outward actions and unmoved by the commands of the Lord to love. Rather than wear the full armor of God, you are clothed in the armor of religion.

### ————— P R A Y E R —————

In the name of Jesus, I bind the strongman of religion in my life. I confess that my family has walked in self-righteousness and has judged others harshly. I repent for all judgments that I have made against other denominations in the Body of Christ. I have judged them as being deceived and walking in darkness. My ancestors have even killed other Christians in the name of Christ because of this deadly Pharisaical spirit. Just Judge, I ask that You forgive all words, deeds and actions committed by my ancestors and me that have destroyed others in the Body of Christ. Cleanse us of this blood guilt.

I confess generational hatred of the Jewish people (Israel) rooted in replacement theology taught for hundreds of years by the church, jealousy of their position as the Chosen People, and believing Satan's lies against them. We have attempted to rob them of Your precious promises. I ask that You cleanse my family lineage of anti-Semitism. I confess the grievous sins against Your people through thoughts, words, and actions. My ancestors attempted to remove them from the face of the earth through pogroms [systematic destruction of Jewish villages in Europe], the Holocaust, removal of Jewish children from their parents, and murder.

Father, I ask that the blood of Jesus cleanse us of this blood guilt against Your Chosen People. I ask that all lies that I have believed be revealed through the truth of Your Word. In the name of Jesus Christ, I accept the natural branches of the olive-tree and their position before You. I bless them with peace—Shalom.

I acknowledge that there is only one righteous, Jesus Christ, and all my self-righteous deeds are like filthy rags before the Throne of God. I renounce my self-righteous identity rooted in good works, religious affiliation and the “humanistic” lies of the innate goodness of man. I renounce every attitude and belief standing in opposition to the cross, the sacrifice of Jesus and the sanctifying truth of God’s Word. I recognize that my self-righteousness has destroyed true intimacy with my family, others and the Body of Christ. Father, I have embraced this false righteousness and declared that I was good! I have been partaking of the fruit of the Knowledge of Good and Evil rather than the Tree of Life. Each time I partake of this poisoned fruit, the Pharisaical spirit is strengthened in my life. I ask for the antidote, the blood of Jesus, to be applied to my soul. Forgive me for living so far beneath my destiny in Christ. Help me to enter into Your abundant life through humility and love.

I take my stand this day against the strongman of religion in my family and my life—the Pharisaical spirit. I strip him of the armor on which he has relied (Luke 11:21-22). I strip off the helmet of inflexibility, limiting my vision and hearing of truth because of strongholds in my thinking. These strongholds stand against the truth of God’s Word. My stronghold of pride in the rightness of my beliefs shuts down my mind and keeps me trapped in my distorted view of God and the world.

I remove the breastplate of self-righteousness held in place by my arrogance and pride that refuses to take responsibility or acknowledge my sinful actions against others. I consider all that I do and say as right and good because I eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Father, allow me to see that my righteousness comes only through the blood of Jesus Christ. All my self-righteous deeds are as filthy rags before You.

I strip my loins of the belt of deception and delusion that has polluted the pure flow of the Spirit in my anointing and gifts. Deception has kept me from producing godly offspring in the Lord. All that I hear and see is examined through this defiled stream. Father, cleanse me of all deception and bring forth a pure flow of Your life. Lord, teach me to compare my thoughts and actions against the Word of God, the nature of Christ and the fruit of the Spirit.

I strip off the boots of war that cause me to be so easily offended and hurt. I have used these boots to trod down, destroy and discount others’ gifts, views, voices, purposes, and destiny. Father, forgive me for being self-centered. I look for offense and quickly make war with those around me. Lord, teach me to be a peacemaker!

I strip off the shield of the fool that extinguishes the truth of God's Word as it brings conviction, sound judgment, and godly wisdom to my heart. Father, allow me to hear the truth in Your Word from leadership, others and the Spirit. Remove the ways of the fool from my path!

I strip the sword of death that destroys others with words of criticism, faultfinding, cursing, justifying, blaming, judging, accusing, lying, gossip, and flattery. Father, forgive me for every word that has brought death instead of life. I ask that every unholy word is plucked up so that it will not bear fruit. Please cover all my words of death in the blood of Jesus. Father, may I have a tongue of life. May every word that I speak be in agreement with Your heart for others!

Father, I repent for being a vessel of the enemy through my carnal prayers against the plans and purposes of the Holy Spirit in the earth. I have stood as a judge against the move of the Holy Spirit and have prayed curses against leadership, worship, unusual manifestations of Your Spirit, revivals, and new revelations from Your Word. Everything was measured against my knowledge and understanding. With my words inspired by hell, I have been used to quench revival fires in the Body of Christ. Forgive me; I did not understand the power of my tongue to release death, the demons of hell stopping Your work in the Body of Christ. Forgive me for drawing others into agreement with hell against the work of the Holy Spirit. Forgive me for standing as God in the assembly, thinking that I understood Your marvelous ways. I am but dust and You are the Creator of the Universe, filled with the wisdom of the ages. All understanding and knowledge belong to You. I ask that You sever the ungodly agreements I have made with hell.

Father, consume with fire the strongman's armor—the false armor of pharisaical religion. I will not rely on this false armor again. I ask that You uproot the pharisaical ways from my self-life. Send Your fire and completely consume this root from the ground of my life. Purify my heart from the poison of this fruit that keeps me separated from Your heart of love. I refuse to feed on the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Keep me alert to the temptation to rely on religious ways rather than You.

Forgive me for every person that I have poisoned against You by my harsh pharisaical ways. Forgive me for presenting a false image of You to those around me. Destroy this false image in their lives so they can serve You in truth. Forgive me for the war I have waged against those who refused to bow to my idol of religion. Lord, help me to humble myself and make peace with my perceived enemies.

Father, I ask You to destroy the yoke of religion from my life. Destroy the shackles of condemnation and frustration. I declare that I am yoked to the Lord. You promised that Your yoke is easy, and Your burden is light.

Now, I put on the full armor of God beginning with the helmet of salvation, which renews my mind by the Word of God. Everything I hear and see I judge against the Word of God. I am in agreement with Your Word, Your thoughts, and Your purposes.

I put on the breastplate of righteousness, which is the righteousness of Christ. I boldly come to Your Throne to receive mercy. You declare that I am holy, and so I am! The Lord is my righteousness. The righteousness of Jesus Christ shields my heart from all condemnation and guilt.

I have the belt of truth around my loins. I declare that nothing is hidden in darkness or covered up in my life. I stand naked and unashamed before My Father in the truth of my redemption. My spirit is born from above of incorruptible seed. My innermost being is the abiding place of the Lord. Streams of living water, pure and holy, flow from my inner self bringing life to a weary land.

My feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. I walk in the spirit of peace as a minister of reconciliation. I place the covering shield of faith over my life, which quenches all the flaming darts of the wicked one. Your faithfulness is my shield, and I trust in Your ability to keep me from the evil one.

I skillfully use the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God. I will be effectual in my use of the Word of God to release the angels who obey the voice of the Word of the Lord. I will pray with my understanding and pray in the Spirit. I will be vigilant and pray at all times, in every season for the Body of Christ and the nations of the world with determination and endurance for the Kingdom of God to be manifested on earth.

Lord, I rely upon Your armor. With the complete armor of Almighty God, I am able to stand against the enemy. I dismantle the strongman of religion's house and proclaim that I am free of his control. Thank You Lord for freeing me from the dominion of this strongman! Hallelujah! I am able to walk in my position as a son of the Most High God totally dependent upon the righteousness of Christ Jesus, His Word, His truth, and His mercy.

