

ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH

Omaha, Nebraska



A FIVE-LESSON COMPANION GUIDE

BREAKING ENEMY STRONGHOLDS

Uprooting What Stands Against Us

A five-week journey through Scripture, identifying the strongholds of pride, fear, a hardened heart, unforgiveness, and entitlement — and learning to fight from Christ's victory, not for it.

"I AM BECAUSE WE ARE"

Pastor Dwayne Hawkins · Antioch Baptist Church, Omaha

From the Pastor

FORWARD

This guide was developed from a sermon series preached at Antioch Baptist Church. We have an enemy among us — not people, but the mindsets and beliefs, the strongholds, that resist the health and growth God intends for us, individually and together.

Scripture is clear that the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but have divine power to demolish strongholds. And Scripture is just as clear that the war has already been decided — Christ has triumphed over every power. We do not fight for victory. We fight from it, toward the final victory still to come.

These five lessons name five strongholds and give you the Word, the truth, and a path to uproot each one. My hope is that you leave this study lighter — freer to become who God made you to be.

— PASTOR DWAYNE HAWKINS

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

FOR PERSONAL STUDY	FOR SMALL GROUP	FOR PASTORAL CARE
Work through one lesson a week. Sit with the reflection questions before moving on.	Use the discussion prompt to open honest conversation about where these strongholds show up.	Reference the relevant lesson when walking with someone wrestling with a specific stronghold.

A Five-Lesson Companion Guide

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Each lesson includes a Scripture focus, reflection questions, a discussion prompt, and a closing prayer.

Before you begin

UNDERSTANDING STRONGHOLDS



A stronghold is a fortified pattern of thinking, built on a lie, that resists the knowledge of God and keeps us from obeying Christ. Scripture describes our warfare plainly:

“The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4–5

This war was decided at the cross. Christ disarmed every power and authority and triumphed over them. We do not fight for victory — we fight from it, toward the final victory still to come.

FIVE STRONGHOLDS, ONE PATTERN

Each lesson in this guide follows the same shape: identify the stronghold, confront it with the Word, expose the lie beneath it, and rehearse the truth in its place.

01 · PRIDE Self-sufficiency that exalts itself above God.	02 · FEAR Distrust of God that breeds anxiety and control.
03 · HARDENED HEART Resistance to God’s voice, rooted in unresolved pain.	04 · UNFORGIVENESS Refusing to cancel a debt, at the cost of the gospel’s freedom.

05 · ENTITLEMENT

Claiming a status or exemption that divides us from one another.

Which of these five strongholds do you sense God pointing to in your life right now?

LESSON ONE

2 Corinthians 10:3–5; James 4:6 (ESV)

THE PROBLEM WITH PRIDE



WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

At its core, pride is about self-sufficiency. It exalts itself, seeks control, rejects ideas and correction from others, and in its most self-destructive form, exalts itself above God.

IDENTIFYING PRIDE

The absence of
humility

The focus on self

The lack of surrender

CONFRONTING PRIDE

With the Word: “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble” (James 4:6).

THE LIE

“I have all the answers. Listen to me.”

THE TRUTH

God alone is sovereign; we are called to humble ourselves and surrender control to Him.

YOUR REFLECTION

Examination — where do you need to say, “Show me, Lord”?

Confession — where do you need to say, “I have sinned against God”?

Repentance & Humility — where do you need to say, “I don’t have all the answers” and submit to God’s authority over your life?

FOR DISCUSSION

— Where has pride shown up in your life or leadership recently, and what would surrender actually look like there?

PRAYER FOCUS

“God, show me where pride has taken root. I confess it. I don’t have all the answers. I submit to Your authority over my life. Amen.”

“I AM BECAUSE WE ARE”

Pride isolates. Humility is what makes room for one another.

LESSON TWO

Isaiah 41:10 (ESV)

FACING YOUR FEARS



WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

Fear starts with a thought of danger, real or perceived. Left unchecked, it wreaks havoc — it gets in the way of where God is trying to take us. It must be faced head on.

IDENTIFYING FEAR

The absence of trust
— not believing God

An increase
in anxiety —
constant worry

The pursuit of
control —
manipulating or
avoiding danger

CONFRONTING FEAR

With the Word — four promises to meet four fears:

PRESENCE · ISAIAH 41:10

“Fear not, for I am with you... I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you.”

PROTECTION · PSALM 27:1

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”

FAITHFULNESS · DEUT. 31:6

“He will not leave you or forsake you.”

REDEMPTION · ISAIAH 43:1

“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”

THE LIE

God don’t (know). God ain’t (with me). God can’t (do anything about it).

THE TRUTH

God knows what lies ahead, and God will see you through.

YOUR REFLECTION

Expose it — name the fear you are carrying right now.

Evaluate it — test that fear against what God has said. Which promise above meets it?

Eliminate it — what is one faithfully obedient step you will take despite the fear?

FOR DISCUSSION

— Where are you not trusting God right now — personally or as part of this church?

PRAYER FOCUS

“God, You know what lies ahead of me. I trade my fear for Your promise to see me through. Strengthen me, uphold me, help me. Amen.”

“I AM BECAUSE WE ARE”

Fear tells you to withdraw. Community reminds you that you are not facing it alone.

LESSON THREE

Ezekiel 36:26 (ESV)

HEALING A HARDENED HEART



WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

A hardened heart is both a choice and a result — willful, stubborn resistance to the voice and will of God, formed over time by pain that was never healed. Fear seeks control; a hardened heart seeks protection.

IDENTIFYING A HARDENED HEART

Unresolved pain —
the initial hurt was
never healed

Unconfessed sin —
keeping others at a
distance instead

Continual resistance
— repeatedly
ignoring God's voice

CONFRONTING A HARDENED HEART

“And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

EZEKIEL 36:26

THE LIE

*“God failed me. I can't trust Him.
I have to protect myself.”*

THE TRUTH

*Some pain has purpose. God is
always present. He promises
to heal.*

YOUR REFLECTION

Process your pain — what hurt do you need help carrying, and who could you let bear it with you?

Confess your sin — name one area where your heart has hardened, and how you have contributed to it.

Depend on God — where do you need to receive His love before you can show it to others?

FOR DISCUSSION

— What would it look like this week to become vulnerable with someone about a pain you have been protecting yourself from?

PRAYER FOCUS

“God, give me a new heart. Remove what has turned to stone. I confess where I have resisted You. Teach me to receive Your healing. Amen.”

“I AM BECAUSE WE ARE”

You are never more courageous than when you let someone else help carry your pain.

LESSON FOUR

Matthew 6:14–15 (ESV)

UNPACKING UNFORGIVENESS



WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

At its core, unforgiveness is the unwillingness to cancel the debt that stems from someone else's sin against us. It develops unhealthy roots that corrupt our hearts and push us further from experiencing the gospel.

IDENTIFYING UNFORGIVENESS

Stubbornness —
refusing to let go or
move forward

Devaluing —
thinking less of
others because of
their faults

Blindness — seeing
their sin, not
your own

CONFRONTING UNFORGIVENESS

“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

MATTHEW 6:14–15

THE LIE

“My unforgiveness is justified. You owe me, and I’m going to take it in the form of unforgiveness.”

THE TRUTH

Forgiveness is an expression of the gospel — giving to others what we first received from God.

YOUR REFLECTION

Recognize the offense — name the sin done against you, specifically, without minimizing it.

Remember the pain — how did it make you feel, and what impact has it had on your life?

Return to the cross & release the debt — what would it look like to stop collecting what you feel entitled to, and live in the freedom of forgiveness?

FOR DISCUSSION

— What makes forgiveness feel unfair, and how does the gospel answer that feeling?

PRAYER FOCUS

“God, thank You for canceling my debt. Help me release the one I am holding against another. Break the chain of unforgiveness in me. Amen.”

“I AM BECAUSE WE ARE”

Releasing someone else’s debt is how you both get to experience the gospel again.

LESSON FIVE

Philippians 2:3-5 (ESV)

UNTANGLING ENTITLEMENT



WHAT THIS LESSON IS ABOUT

At its core, entitlement is about exclusivity — claiming a special status, an elite privilege, or a deserved exemption that others don't get. By nature, it creates an “us and them” culture that divides.

IDENTIFYING ENTITLEMENT

“Look what I’ve done.
Remember how
much I’ve given.”

“My contribution
deserves more
recognition than
others.”

“I shouldn’t have to
follow the same rules
as everyone else.”

CONFRONTING ENTITLEMENT

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves... Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-5

THE LIE

*I’m better. I deserve it. I don’t
have to.*

THE TRUTH

*God made us equal. Grace is
given, not earned. Greatness
requires service, not exemptions.*

YOUR REFLECTION

Acknowledge your entitlement — what makes you feel more special than others? Tenure? Giving? Performance?

Accept God's grace — where are you demanding what you think you deserve, instead of freely receiving what God gives?

Apply servant leadership — who are two people whose service or contribution you will recognize this week?

FOR DISCUSSION

— Where have you seen entitlement create an “us and them” divide, and what would humility look like there instead?

PRAYER FOCUS

“God, I confess where I have believed I deserve more than others. Thank You for grace I could never earn. Teach me to serve, not to demand. Amen.”

“I AM BECAUSE WE ARE”

Grace given equally to all of us is exactly what makes us one body, not many camps.

Conclusion

MOVING FORWARD



You have named five strongholds — pride, fear, a hardened heart, unforgiveness, and entitlement. Each one resists the knowledge of God in its own way, and each one has already lost its final battle.

Uprooting a stronghold rarely happens in one sitting. It happens in the decision, and it is proven in the demonstration — the small, repeated choices to reject the lie and rehearse the truth, every time it shows up.

You are not fighting for victory. You are fighting from it. Christ has already triumphed — and He fights alongside you still.

OUR PRAYER FOR YOU

“Let’s uproot what stands against us, together.”

With you on the journey,

PASTOR DWAYNE HAWKINS

Rev. Dwayne Hawkins, Pastor



ANTIOCH BAPTIST CHURCH

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APPENDIX

For small group and pastoral leaders

FACILITATOR NOTES



This section is for whoever leads a group through this series. Strongholds are personal and often hidden — your role is not to expose anyone, but to create space where people can name their own.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

- **Confidentiality first** — agree as a group that what is shared stays in the room.
- **Name it, don't assign it** — let each person identify their own stronghold. Resist the urge to point out someone else's.
- **Model vulnerability** — a facilitator willing to name their own stronghold gives others permission to do the same.
- **Protect the quiet ones** — invite, never pressure, someone who hasn't spoken.

SUGGESTED SESSION FLOW

Each lesson runs comfortably in about 30 minutes.

OPEN · 5 MIN	Prayer, and an honest check-in on how everyone is doing.
TEACH · 5 MIN	Walk through “What This Lesson Is About” and “Identifying” the stronghold together.
REFLECT & DISCUSS · 15 MIN	Quiet time for “Your Reflection,” then use “For Discussion” to open the floor.
CLOSE · 5 MIN	Pray the “Prayer Focus” together, aloud, as one voice.

IF SOMEONE NEEDS MORE THAN A GROUP CAN OFFER

Some strongholds — especially deep unresolved pain or a long-hardened heart — are beyond what a lesson or group conversation can heal. Don't try to resolve it in the room; connect that person with their deacon or Pastor Hawkins for pastoral care.

A NOTE TO FACILITATORS

You don't have to have every stronghold in your own life uprooted to lead this series well. You only have to be honest about your own, and patient with everyone else's.

"I AM BECAUSE WE ARE"

A facilitator's job is to hold space, not carry the outcome — God does the healing.