Resisting Demonic Strongholds

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| There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. *Revelation 12:7-9* |

If men had the ears of angels, then they might have overheard this conversation between the prince of the power of the air and his demon agents.

A particularly ugly spirit agent gripes, “Many humans are now too educated to deceive easily.”

“Garbage!” snarls back Lucifer. “Adolf Hitler’s ample education made it easier for us to delude him into loving our darkness. Stalin was so educated that he didn’t believe in us. He opened the door to his mind to let us make the fool so paranoid that he wiped out millions of his own citizens who resisted his collectivization.”

The demons cheer, sounding like a million frogs croaking.

“Go,” commands the Old Dragon. “Fortify our strongholds. Those fools that follow our enemy try to weaken our influence!”

☞Control+Click on the most accurate statement:

[Demons are active only in idol-worshiping societies.](#_Oh,_oh!_Incorrect.)

[Demons are active wherever people resist God’s message.](#a1correctproceed)

[Educated folk no longer believe in demons.](#a1motcorrectt)

Oh, oh! Incorrect. Go back and try again.

[Right. Proceed](file:///C%3A%5C%5CUsers%5C%5Cmento%5C%5CDesktop%5C%5Ctraining%20game%5C%5CChallenge%20demon%20stronghlds%2C%20intro%20%26amp%3B%201st%20stronghold.docx%22%20%5Cl%20%22a1).

Ernie went with his wife Lydia to tell their shepherd, “Elder Sam, we’ve identified quite a few demonic strongholds; most of them lie beyond our ability to examine.” Ernie handed Sam a list. “These are the ones that we’d like to investigate seriously, in order to help believers resist them. James said, ‘Resist the devil and he will flee from you.’”

“Really! So, just how do you recognize a demons’ stronghold, Ernie?”

“Well, it’s not always a place. I think it can be any source of pervasive, spiritual deception that people embrace irrationally, resulting in widespread misery, corruption or death.

Elder Sam examined their list. “I think you’re on the right track, Ernie and Lydia. We elders will lay hands on you to empower you to go to help people resist these influential strongholds of evil.”

“Pray also,” Ernie pled, “that we won’t be judgmental of those whom Satan has misled, or we could fall into the same deception.”

Lydia added, “Paul warned that the devil disguises himself as an angel of light.”

The following week, Elder Sam began their commissioning ceremony. “Now wait!” interrupted the church treasurer, Kerwin Perron. “This is moving too fast! Ernie and Lydia are too inexperienced. Think of the deep implications of such a project!” A steamy debate ensued, but nearly everyone sided with Ernie and Lydia. After praying for them, Sam advised, “Keep a journal of all that you learn, and we will share your findings with others.”

The young couple focused first on the fossilization of many older churches and Christian institutions. Ernie visited the director of a prominent denomination and asked, “What do you think causes denominations to decline, while around the world more people are turning to Christ than ever before in history?”

Taking a thoughtful pose, the director replied, “I’ve pondered this issue for some time. A dearth of prayer and faith is an obvious factor. Another is more subtle. Instead of simplifying our structures to conform to the New Testament, we ministers cling desperately to our five clergy P’s‒power, position, prestige, pay and pension. Our institutional structure guarantees these, even though the New Testament warns not to pursue them. I’ve questioned making them our primary aims, but most of my colleagues take them for granted.”

“So what might be the remedy?” asked Ernie.

“Nothing will change until we confess our collective sin, as Nehemiah did before he set out to rebuild Jerusalem.”

☞Control+Click on the most accurate statement:

[We cannot change old churches that are set in their ways, and should not waste our time trying.](#a1_2_incorrect)

[Many stagnant churches have a few members who want to do more to serve Jesus: mobilize them.](#a1_2_correct)

[Fire our denominations’ leaders.](#a1_2_incorrect)

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Ernie told the general director and some of his colleagues who were present, “You have wanted to simplify your structures. Our church is a young, simple church. It has birthed daughter churches that have started granddaughter churches and great granddaughters.”

The director sat silently for a long moment, then wondered aloud, “Could older churches restructure to multiply in that way?”

Ernie replied, “Simple churches are born not because an older church simplifies itself, which very seldom happens, but because believers, especially new believers, gather wherever they live or work. Instead of urging outsiders to come to your church building, take the church to them wherever they are, as the apostles did.”

“What does worship look like in your simple church, Ernie?”

“Well, we stay small enough so that all members, including children, can take part actively in worship. Teaching often includes vigorous dialogue. We enjoy lots of interaction. Family members stay together, while older kids lead and disciple younger ones.”

“What do you think it is that enables some simple churches to multiply rapidly?”

“Above all, we adopt as rules and practices only what the New Testament requires. Experienced believers coach newly-reborn heads of families who begin at once to shepherd their family and friends, forming the nucleus of a new church. We don’t take time or spend money to build chapels, and we encourage most leaders remain self-supported, avoiding financial burdens. We combine witnessing for Christ with healing and serving as in the New Testament. We help believers use their spiritual gifts to serve Jesus and others during the week as well as in worship. Churches must be very purposeful about this.”

“As in the Book of Acts! But how do leaders get training?”

“Mainly as in the New Testament, by being coached. They also accompany other leaders while working with people.

 [Download training booklets geared to simple churches in many languages: [http.//Paul-Timothy.net](http://www.paul-timothy.net/)/]

“But how can such small churches be strong enough to deal with the challenges that all churches face sooner or later?”

“Wise church planters bring together several flocks in an area, so there are no isolated congregations. Believers need to identify with a larger body, and small churches need fellowship with neighboring churches. Also, one small church body will not have all the spiritual gifts to do all that the New Testament requires. So churches remain closely knit, serving one another, forming a regional body of Christ.”

“Tell me, Ernie. How could old churches, set in their ways, transition into the kind of churches you described?

“Don’t try to change an entire congregation of an older church. Find those few members who want to serve Christ in a more significant way, and put them to work.”

One of those who had been listening suddenly exploded, “I disagree! You are tearing down things that our churches have been developing over decades.”

The director stood, stunned by his colleague’s vehemence. Ernie started to answer the irate man, but he recalled a Proverb about not answering a fool according to his folly, and quietly left.

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[To help a fossilized church or institution simplify, patiently help the entire congregation or body to change.](#a1_3_incorrect)

[Find a few members who are eager to serve Christ in a more significant way, and release them to go and plant New Testament type churches.](#a1_3_correct)

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Meanwhile, like vultures circling over dying prey, evil spirits hovered, plotting to intensify religious legalism in weak churches, the second demonic stronghold that Ernie and Lydia confronted. An elder from a large church visited them, and their discussion grew stormy. The elder insisted, “You must attend our church! Ours is the only one in the city that teaches the whole truth.”

“The only one?” Ernie replied. “We attended your church some time ago, and left because it insisted on so many rules of its own making. Its teaching was constantly critical. Some of the criticisms were valid, because it’s easy to find fault with other churches and organizations if you go looking for it. However, its constant attacks led to an unhealthy negativism, a cynical suspicion of all believers.”

“So where do you worship now?”

Ernie told him.

“Aha! Your simple church lies within our jurisdiction under our apostolic authority. You need our covering. Your leaders lack authority to baptize or officiate the Lord’s Supper, until we’ve ordained them.”

Ernie groaned quietly, then replied, “The Lord Jesus Christ is our King of Kings. It is he who commands us to baptize and celebrate the Lord’s Supper. So whom should we obey, you or Christ? We cannot obey both, and you won’t let us. Your rules have no basis in Scripture; they are men’s traditions.”

Lydia added, “Jesus severely opposed placing men’s rules above those of God. We try to…”

The elder interrupted her. “Jesus has given us his authority, young lady.” His mobile phone buzzed. He listened a moment, turned pale and hurried out. The next day Lydia heard what had happened on local TV. A lady had committed suicide when the leaders of that legalistic church opposed her engagement to a Christian of another church. The issue had become bitterly emotional.”

Ernie went to see Elder Sam and asked, “What drives such painful legalism?”

“Pride and confusion, Ernie. There are three levels of authority for what believers do. The commands of Christ and his apostles have the highest level. Secondly, of less priority, are activities mentioned in the New Testament but not commanded; we are not obligated always to do them, but we do not prohibit them. A third level are practices agreed upon by a congregation, such as when to meet to worship; these have authority only for those who have agreed to them. Problems arise when believers confuse these three levels of authority, and especially when prideful people make their own rules a law for everyone.”

☞Control+Click on the most accurate statement:

[The largest church in an area should set rules for smaller churches.](#a2_incorrect)

[Believers are to obey Jesus’ commands out of love for him, not because obedience is forced upon them.](#a2_correct_)

[The commands of Christ applied fully only to the churches of the first century.](#a2_incorrect)

Incorrect. Try again.

Correct. Proceed.

In their realm beyond human sight, demons keep on devising ways to spread their leaven, adding more flaming arrows to their insidious arsenal. The third demon stronghold that Ernie and Lydia looked into was theological rationalism. They interviewed a seminary professor known for denying the bodily resurrection of Christ. Ernie asked him, “What is your view of Scripture?”

“Oh, the precious book! Such beauty! Such stirring poetry! How it inspires an open mind!”

“Do you take its authority seriously?” asked Ernie.

“Oh, my, no! That would be so restricting! The world is changing constantly, so we who speak on behalf of the ever-changing church must adapt its message accordingly. With all respect, I’m afraid your view is a hangover from a bygone age, no longer relevant.”

“We won’t argue with you, Sir, as your unbelieving mind is made up. If I understood you correctly, your teaching shifts with the times.”

Lydia asked, “Have you not left the Lord Jesus Christ behind?”

“Young lady, you mean well, but you lack the knowledge and background necessary to deal with such issues.”

She rejoined, “To train new pastors, you trust your own knowledge rather than the teachings of Christ and his apostles.”

“Goodbye.”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[God’s truth as revealed in Scripture is unchanging, and always authoritative for believers.](#a4_correct)

[The world keeps changing, so God’s message must change with it, for what was true yesterday may not be true today.](#a4_incorrect)

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At lunch, Ernie asked Lydia, “Are you ready to probe the fourth demonic stronghold? This one has plagued the church for many centuries: luring believers into trusting in secular government and human laws to secure sacred values.”

“Such misplaced faith can open the door to one’s mind for demons to bring in their subtle influence.”

Ernie and Lydia go visit a lawyer who had been hired by a large church to lobby in state and federal legislatures. Ernie asks him, “What is your view of Christ’s declaration that his kingdom is not of this world? We are to render to Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and to God that which is God’s.”

“Oh, I agree. Throughout history, churches that have identified too fully with the state have gotten into conflicts when trying to reconcile the two, and government-backed churches have usually persecuted other churches. However, in a democracy, God’s people do have a responsibility to overturn laws that forbid mentioning God in schools and public buildings.”

Ernie replied, “History also shows that churches have often been healthier under unfriendly governments than under friendly ones. The New Testament teaches that we are to obey our government, but does not teach us to look to it for support or approval.”

“Let’s be realistic. Churches should welcome support wherever they find it. A church’s duty is to see that government provides religious freedom, and take whatever legal steps are required. We are a nation of laws, so let’s pressure legislators to make those laws just. Now, if you will excuse me, I’m preparing a lawsuit.” The lawyer was frowning as he turned away and opened a large book.

“Oh!” sighed Lydia as they left, “The Old Dragon is so astute!”

“He certainly knows how to tempt believers. Ezekiel 28 says he was perfect in beauty when he deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden.”

Outside the lawyer’s office, they noticed a man in a dark gray suit standing in the shadows; he seemed to be watching them. After they got home, a member of their church offered Lydia a book on exorcising demons. She refused it, saying, “We’re not looking for persons to exorcise.”

Soon afterwards, other church members urged Ernie to look into political issues that were not on their list. “No,” he replied, “We are not dealing with cancer, which is of natural origin. Neither will we attack the sale of toy guns, which are child’s play. And large foreign drug cartels lie beyond us, for we are not law enforcement. Paul said our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against forces of darkness, spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. We’re simply trying to help believers know how to resist the devil so that he will flee from them, as James said.’”

Lydia added, “Peter warned that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking whom to devour. We can’t stop him in our own strength, but we can warn people when we detect his paw prints.”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[Government should have final legal authority over churches, because of their many differences.](#a9_incorrect)

[Christians are to pay taxes and obey civil laws, but not to count on government to settle spiritual matters.](#a5_correct)

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The fifth demon stronghold that Ernie and Lydia investigated is also very old, very prevalent and insidiously luring: trust in money rather than in God. They were shocked to see this lethal venom penetrate their own little church.

After a business meeting, Ernie asked the church treasurer, “Brother Perron, do you realize that our members spent much more time discussing finances, the budget, and how to get larger offerings, than in dealing with spiritual and pastoral matters?”

“That’s as it should be, Ernie, if the fiscal side is not healthy, then there will be no platform for the spiritual side of our work.”

“Derwin, you know that Jesus warned about the love of money, and laying up treasures on earth. It’s so easy to get caught up in the snare of lust for money! God expects our church to get free of them.” Derwin laughed derisively and walked away.

A few days later, Ernie and Lydia were shocked again to learn that Derwin had been pilfering the church’s money. There was not much in the treasury, so his theft was minor. When Perron returned the money, the church forgave him.

Sometime later at night, Lydia spied a man in a dark gray coat lurking outside the house, but it was too dark to recognize his features. “Make sure again that the doors are all locked,” she begged Ernie.

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[While churches are to focus more on spiritual things, they also must face the reality that God’s work normally requires substantial financial backing.](#a10_incorrect)

[Around the world, very poor believers are doing more than wealthy churches, to bring others to Christ while doing much to serve needy.](#a10_correct)

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Far below, the Father of Lies points upward and screams at his fellow fiends. “Look at that globe spinning through space. How I hate that planet earth! Now it’s facing so that we can see North America.” He then indicates Ernie’s city and growls, “Human vermin crawling around there are attempting to thwart our deceptions.” He belches out spine-chilling, sinister laughter that only a demon could spew. “My invincible plan will foil their futile efforts! For some time I’ve been laying the groundwork.”

Elder Sam suggested to Ernie and Lydia, “You might investigate the deceiving spirit that drives reckless, arrogant preaching, as seen sometimes on TV. It creates widespread suspicion of all pastors, including godly ones.”

“I’ve wondered about that,” replied Lydia. “It is the exact opposite from Christ’s way of teaching; he never tried to be flashy or proudly bombastic. I know people who idolize preachers that give glitzy, but anemic, sermons.”

Elder Sam groaned, “Sad! It embarrasses me because people think that other pastors are also that weird.”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[Jesus resisted gaudy show, and the apostles preached with humility.](#z6Correct)

[Flashy, shallow preaching is the only kind that will reach less educated people.](#z6aIncorrect)

Incorrect. Try again.

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The seventh demon stronghold that Ernie and Lydia examined was that which entices Christian missions into creating **dependency** on the part of those whom they seek to serve. Ernie went to Haiti, where he remarked to the coordinator of a mission agency’s humanitarian arm, “I see you are giving away tons of material aid to those in poverty. Able-bodied men hang around waiting to get their dole, rather than working in the fields.”

“Oh, but they are so poor! It tears at my heart. We must show our compassion in a practical, material way.”

“The apostle Paul told the Thessalonians that if a brother does not work, then he should not eat. He was referring to the dole that the church provided for the poor and widows.”

“Other ministries and international agencies have tried to create jobs and to stimulate micro business, but the economy cannot sustain such efforts. So we have to do whatever we can to feed everyone.”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[Poor persons that are idle, who keep receiving free supplies, are apt never to recover from their poverty.](#z7correct)

[A compassionate Christian will always give to the poor, under any circumstances.](#z7incorrect)

Incorrect. Try again.

[Correct. Proceed](file:///C%3A%5C%5CUsers%5C%5Cmento%5C%5CDesktop%5C%5Ctraining%20game%5C%5CChallenge%20demon%20stronghlds%2C%20intro%20%26amp%3B%201st%20stronghold.docx%22%20%5Cl%20%22a4).

The eighth demon stronghold that Ernie and Lydia explored is that of idolizing knowledge. Ernie visited a seminary that had shifted away from its original stand on the inspiration of Scripture and the truth of God’s written Word.

He interviewed a pleasant professor in the faculty lounge who said, “I’m resisting the shift towards making our own intelligence and knowledge as the final judge of what is God’s truth, rather than humbly accepting Scripture as our final authority. But I’m losing the battle. Most of our professors are very bright and are held in prestige. They trust in their advanced knowledge, which keeps them from lowering themselves to be humble servants as Jesus said to do.”

Ernie interviewed another professor, who told him, “The best safeguard for God’s changing truth is a highly educated clergy.”

“But would not requiring seminary for all pastors leave a huge lack of New Testament type leaders in the churches? Especially in poor and underdeveloped societies?”

The professor had no reply. He rose, muttered something about writing a book, and left without finishing his coffee.

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[When scholars start trusting their own intellectual prowess rather than the Holy Spirit to defend God’s truth, they are already on the slippery slope towards rationalistic unbelief.](#z8b_correct)

[Holding the highest standards of academic excellence in scholarly training by Christian institutions has proven to be a sure safeguard against drifting into rationalistic unbelief.](#z8bincorrect)

Incorrect. Try again.

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A friend of Ernie and Lydia urged, “You should look into those lunatic shooters that enjoy killing people they don’t even know?”

“Tell us who a potential shooter is,” replied Ernie, “and we might interview him. Hundreds of well-trained experts are already diagnosing what warps such minds. I hope they take into account the spiritual dimension.”

The ninth demon stronghold that they tackled is an ancient one: idolatry practiced in one form or another. They ventured into a local Muslim mosque and asked the imam, “What is your teaching concerning worshiping images?”

“Islam condemns all forms of idolatry.”

“Yes, but I’ve known Muslims that trusted in fetishes that amount to the same.”

“So have I. Some uneducated Christians also worship statues of saints, do they not?”

“I’m afraid so.”

Back home, Lydia reminded Ernest, “Missionaries have found that Buddhist and Hindu temples in Asia are filled with idols.”

“Many homes have them, and not just in Asia. Anything that men value higher than God is an Idol that demons can exploit, whether money, pleasure, prestige, power over others. The list is long.”

“How subtle they are!” gasped Lydia, “Without God’s help, we’d all be hopeless captives, left writhing in the Old Dragon’s claws!”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[It is proper to pray to statues as long as one knows that he is actually praying through the statue to God or to a saint.](#z9bIncorrect)

[The Ten Commandments prohibit representing God with humanly made images.](#z9bcorredt)

Incorrect. Try again.

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Ernie came home from shopping and found Lydia weeping. She sobbed, “Derwin Perron’s wife came to our women’s Bible study for the first time. She kept asking me, ‘How many demons did you find today hiding in your clothes closet?’ and ‘Did you clean the demons out of your micro oven?’ and so forth. Some of the ladies kept laughing, and I left.”

Ernie and Lydia encountered the tenth demon stronghold by accident: pornography, sexual perversion and exploitation. While waiting in an airport, a man sitting by them shamelessly boasted of his successful business publishing pornography.

Lydia asked him in a voice etched with fury, “Do you have any ideas of how many marriages you ruin, and how many lives you destroy?”

“Chill out, little angel,” he snarled. “All that I do is legal; I provide enjoyment for thousands, that you prudes would deny them.”

Ernie felt an aura of evil about the man and patted Lydia’s hand to calm her down; he whispered, “Remember Paul’s advice. We are to take up the full armor of God to resist spiritual evils. He listed the pieces of armor, and angry arguing was not one of them.”

Lydia’s face was red with ire; she challenged the man. “I read how you corrupt children and import impoverished Thai girls to be sex slaves. Pure evil!”

“They come by their own will, and can leave anytime they wish.”

“No, they can’t! You’re a liar! They don’t have the means or the know-how to escape your claws. Your company fuels a devastating and rampant obsession with filthy, immoral sex!”

The man blew cigarette smoke in her face, huffed and moved to another seat beyond talking distance.

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[The best way to curb sexual morality is to provide more explicit sex education at a younger age in schools.](#a10bincorrect)

[Lust leads even virtuous people like King David to stumble if they fail to keep their minds on what is pure and holy.](#a10bcorrect)

Incorrect. Try again.

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Ernie discovered the eleventh demon assault by research: keeping believers from using their God-given spiritual gifts. He went and talked with leaders and members of a church that had increased its membership by thousands, and then met with an associate pastor to discuss what he found.

“Brother, I have interviewed many of your members. Your growth has been due to attracting believers away from smaller churches that could not stage such entertaining worship services as yours does. Not one of them has recently come into your church by receiving Christ”.

“Those new members,” replied the pastor, “are receiving better teaching here, and have access to a wider variety of programs.”

“That’s debatable. Most had been fairly active in their smaller churches, where they were using their different spiritual gifts. Almost none of them is doing so now. They have left a church where they were busy in the Lord’s work, to transfer to a church where they sit passively listening to sermons, and letting paid staff do everything of any significance.

The pastor turned red in the face. “This interview is over!”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[Demons influence churches, large and small, to keep believers from using their gifts freely in a practical way.](#z11correct)

[Serious church work should be done by academically trained Christian workers, to assure excellence in ministry.](#z11incorrect)

Correct. Proceed.

Incorrect. Try again.

Ernie looked over the shelves of three Christian book stores to discern the prevailing emphasis of the books. He told Lydia, “The twelfth demon stronghold that we will deal with is that of excessive emphasis on self-serving, feeling good and assuming always that one deserves more.”

Lydia exclaimed, “This is so subtle! I’ve noticed in Christian bookstores that most of the books deal with doing things that serve one’s self or one’s own family, rather than their neighbor.”

They went to call on a publisher of popular Christian self-help books. Ernie told him his findings and asked her, “Might it be more edifying to deal with serving other people rather than one’s self?”

The lady replied, “Publishing must adapt to current culture, or else it fails. Entitlements, serving one’s self and getting all that you “deserve” is what people, including many Christians, expect now.”

They debated this for a few minutes, and then Ernie left with Lydia. He told her, “I don’t blame the bookseller entirely. The root of this weakness is demon’s influence beyond human power to discern easily.”

“But the apostle Paul said that with Christ all things are possible. Let’s not give up telling the truth, no matter if it offends, Ernie.”

“Right. The truth is that this entitlement mentality leads some people to justify an action simply because it makes them feel good. A friend of mine felt he was justified in no longer fulfilling the responsibilities of a husband. He divorced his wife and neglected his children. He then became alcoholic.”

“How sad!”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[Love seeks the welfare of others, so if we can help them feel good then we have done our duty.](#z12incorrect)

[Serving others rather than self is to lay up eternal treasure in heaven.](#z12correct)

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Incorrect. Try again.

The thirteenth demon stronghold that Ernie and Lydia faced is internet abuse. Ernie remarked, “The Internet is of tremendous benefit both for good and for evil. In and of itself, it is morally neutral, providing platforms for widespread communication. Sadly, demons lure many to use those platforms to spread hate, lies and filth.”

Lydia replied, “I once tried to post a blog that emphasized conservative Christian values, but the censoring system blocked it. Should they do away with censors?”

“No. Without censors, neo-Nazis and other hate groups would flood the Internet. Let’s pray that the censors and others in the industry will do their duty with integrity.”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[The cure for Internet abuse is to let government control it.](#z13incorrect)

[A concerned Christian’s duty is to pray for integrity on the part of Internet providers and their workers.](#z13correct)

Incorrect. Try again.

### [Correct. Proceed](file:///C%3A%5C%5CUsers%5C%5Cmento%5C%5CDesktop%5C%5Ctraining%20game%5C%5CChallenge%20demon%20stronghlds%2C%20intro%20%26amp%3B%201st%20stronghold.docx%22%20%5Cl%20%22a4).

The fourteenth and final demon stronghold that Ernie and Lydia encountered is as old as the Tower of Babel, and had taken root in their own little church: irrational fear and rejection of aliens, other races and foreign culture.

Elder Sam extorted his little flock, “Thousands of refugees have fled from terrorists in the Middle East, and churches are hosting these uprooted families. Should we help a displaced Muslim family get settled, find work and adjust to our community?”

This touched off lively debate, and Elder Sam could not get the believers to come to a decision. Some expressed fear of aliens in general, and of people of any other race, culture or color.

Ernie pointed out, “It is normal to feel uneasy at first about people or cultures that are different from ours. However, Satan uses this uneasiness to stir up unreasonable fear and hatred.”

“We must not be motivated by fear but by love,” added Elder Sam. “Boaz in the Old Testament received an alien, Ruth, who was of a different race and culture, and God blessed them both. Ruth and he became ancestors of King David and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fear and dislike of those who are different fuel wars and keep societies in turmoil.”

Elder Sam later confided sadly to Ernie and Lydia, “The more I beg our members to host a displaced family, the more divisive the issue becomes, which is forcing me to drop it for now.”

Lydia replied, “My sister told me that her church received a Muslim family and helped them get settled. In a few weeks the grateful family received Christ and were baptized. It has been a blessing for both the church and those Muslim-background believers.”

☞Control+Click on the more accurate statement:

[Those of a dominant culture have the right to impose their views on those who are different, in order to maintain unity.](#z14_incorrect)

[Fear and friction between races can go on and on, but God’s people can bring healing by actively practicing genuine love.](#z14correct)

Incorrect. Try again.

### [Correct. Proceed](file:///C%3A%5C%5CUsers%5C%5Cmento%5C%5CDesktop%5C%5Ctraining%20game%5C%5CChallenge%20demon%20stronghlds%2C%20intro%20%26amp%3B%201st%20stronghold.docx%22%20%5Cl%20%22a4).

The small church held a meeting in which Ernie used his journal to report their findings. They discussed how to make the best use of this information. Elder Sam then announced that Ernie and Lydia had finished looking at demon strongholds.

A member who taught at a local university suggested, “So soon? Why don’t they look at central banks and governments that take on debts that will burden future generations? Urging war merely to sell armament? Fake news and false reporting by journalists? Terrorists and those who back them? Attempts to establish one global government? Unhealthy GMO crops and food additives?”

“Whoa!” Elder Sam laughed. “Let’s not forget that the god of this world is active wherever humans live, or the list of things influenced by demons would be a mile long!”

The professor went on, “Some harmful vaccines and pharmaceutics? Health care insurance fraud? State-supported atheistic teaching? Islam promoted in some government schools?”

Elder Sam tried again to calm the professor, “The things you are mentioning lie beyond Ernie and Lydia’s ability to deal with them.”

“Unhealthy political agendas, leftist or rightist?” continued the professor in a voice colored by emotion, “Hidden government structures? Abusive surveillance and police brutality? Bribes and secret collusion of corporations with government?”

“Enough!” Elder Sam said, “Those things are already being well examined and aired, and hardly need our help!” The meeting ended.

Ernie found that his journal had been stolen during the meeting. “This worries me,” sighed Elder Sam. “We have a traitor in our midst.”

That night, Ernie glanced out the window and happened to spot the man in the dark gray suit leaving a package by their door.

“Don’t touch it,” Ernie warned Lydia, and called the police. They found that the package would have exploded had they opened it. Ernie held Lydia tightly that night to calm her sobs and prayed for their protection.

The next day police came to tell them, “We found fingerprints on the lethal package; they belonged to a Mr. Derwin Perron, who is now in our custody. You won’t have to worry about him anymore.”

Elder Sam visited Ernie and Lydia to tell them, “You have done your job well. Now it’s time for you to take on some other ministry, a more pleasant one, and not to let yourselves become unhealthily obsessed with demons as some have done, expecting to find them on every roof and in every room.”

“Amen!” Lydia cried and wiped a tear.