

Are Your Walls Up?

“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down without walls.” Proverbs 25:28

A big snowstorm the night before had dropped lots of snow in our city—so much that the schools were closed for the day. But of course that didn't slow down my 9-year-old son, and he and his neighborhood friends had been outside for hours playing. After awhile, the boys split into two groups and began building snow forts in preparation for a massive snowball fight. They needed strong, sturdy walls to keep the enemy out and to protect “command central” from which they would stockpile their ammo (lots of snowballs) and plan their warfare.

With preparations finally complete, I watched as the boys tried to break into each other's snow forts, knowing that if they could breach the enemy's walls, they could probably win the battle.

Today, I'm fascinated by the history of city walls and gates. According to BibleHistory.com, in ancient times, walls around cities were of utmost importance to both cities and villages. Cities were large areas with many homes, a metropolitan area, and were surrounded by protective walls. Villages were smaller areas than cities and did not have walls around them. They were often located close to a city and depended on that city for commerce and protection.



The walls of a city were very tall and several meters thick, with a flat top and towers. The flat top enabled guards to walk along the top edge and see far in every direction—both inside and outside of the city. They

could watch for criminal activity inside the city, and they could watch for enemy invasions coming from outside the city.

Towers were built higher than the rest of the wall and were often positioned on top of a gate. They were also located where the walls turned a corner (called corner towers). The towers allowed even greater visibility and also provided a protected place to fire off arrows and hurl other weapons at the enemy. The gates themselves were an important part of a city's life. The gates were open during the day to allow for commerce and travel and were closed at night to protect the city. Important meetings were often held at the gates.

Ultimately, a city depended upon its walls for protection. If the walls were breached or knocked down, an enemy could overtake the city. Understanding the importance of a city wall helps us understand this analogy as God compares a man who has no rule over his own spirit to a city without walls.

When we go through our days without taking charge over our own spirits, we are like a biblical city that didn't have a wall to protect it. We are vulnerable to attack from the enemy.

So, how do we have rule over our own spirit? By protecting our "walls."

I believe the main way is by putting on the armor of God as described in Ephesians 6:10-18. God does not leave us without protection while we are living on this earth. We have our armor to protect us from enemy attacks, we have prayer to fight the battle, and we have the Holy Spirit to guide us. We

need to be proactive to protect ourselves.

However, the threat is from more than outside sources. Just as the soldiers of an ancient city could see criminal activity *within* their own city walls, we must also protect ourselves from the battle we fight with our flesh from within ourselves, because it's just not outside enemy attacks that can hurt us—our own decisions and choices can lead to our downfall as well. Having control over our own spirits means that we live as mature believers, taking control of our emotions, actions and words. It means walking in the Spirit so that we do not gratify the desire of the flesh. We must set a guard on what we watch, read, hear and do.

When we set boundaries, our “walls of protection” can't be breached, but when we ignore our own boundaries, we can end up saying things we regret; we can end up dwelling on negative, fearful thoughts; or, we can end up in places we shouldn't be doing things we shouldn't be doing. We have then breached our own walls of protection, giving the enemy a foothold into our lives. If we repent and make a better choice, we can move forward. If we repeat the bad pattern, it can become a stronghold.

Just as a bunch of 9-year-old boys understood the importance of walls in winning the battle, as Christians we too must be savvy enough to maintain the walls of protection in our own lives.

Thought: Keep your wall of protection in good repair.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, We thank You that You have not left us defenseless. You have given us the armor of God to protect us, prayer to wage the battle and the Holy Spirit to guide us. Help us to make the right choices each day so that we can live in freedom, not in bondage. Amen.

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Praying for Our Enemies: Part 1 by Mary Kane

As Christians, God calls us to love our enemies. Can we do this in our own power? No! But God is willing to give us all we need to love our enemies.