

## **Strongholds in My Relationship with God**

**1 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV) “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”**

There are many messages in the Bible that speak about our relationship with God and the barriers that prevent us from growing in Christ. Consider these words from Paul and Jesus:

- **Stop telling everyone how good you are! Be humble, as Jesus was humble.**

**“Do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do . . . , that they may have glory from men’ ” (Matt. 6:2, NKJV).**

- **Do anything to remove the lust from your heart, because this is a barrier to your relationship with God.**

**“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you’ ” (Matt. 5:28, 29, NKJV).**

- **Stop being so critical and judgmental of others. God is the judge, so let Him be so**

**“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged’ ” (Matt. 7:1, 2, NKJV). (1 Cor. 4:5).**

- **Stop hating your enemies. When you feel negatively toward those who treat you badly, it instantly places a barrier in your relationship with God. Instead, start praying for your enemies and see how this changes not just your walk with God but also your relationship with others.**

**“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you’ ” (Matt. 5:44, NKJV).**

Jesus warned about what we should do when our hands, feet, and eyes cause us to sin. What was Jesus warning us about? Read Mark

**Mark 9:42-48 (NKJV) ““But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. (43) If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— (44) where “Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’ (45) And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— (46) where “Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’ (47) And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire— (48) where “Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’”**

To cut off your hand or foot or pluck out your eye because it's causing you to sin is extreme. It was supposed to be. But this is how seriously Jesus sees sin and its impact in our lives.

## How seriously are you taking it?

### 1. God Takes Spiritual Influence Seriously

**“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble...”**

**Mark 9:42**

Jesus places grave responsibility on those whose actions, attitudes, or example lead others—especially the vulnerable or new believers—into sin.

Key truth:

- Sin is not only personal; it is relational
- Leading others away from Christ is treated as a severe offense
- *Spiritual leadership always carries moral weight.*

### 2. Sin Must Be Dealt With Radically, Not Casually

**“If your hand... foot... eye causes you to sin, cut it off... pluck it out...”**

Jesus is not endorsing self-harm but using strong imagery to show that half-measures against sin are dangerous.

Key truth:

- Sin is not to be managed—it is to be removed
- Anything that consistently pulls us toward sin must be decisively addressed
- *Delayed obedience is disguised disobedience.*

### 3. Eternal Life Is Worth Any Temporary Loss

**“It is better for you to enter life maimed... than having two hands to go to hell...”**

Jesus repeatedly contrasts temporary sacrifice with eternal consequence.

Key truth:

- Comfort is not the measure of faithfulness—eternity is
- What we surrender now is insignificant compared to what we gain in Christ
- *Nothing we give up for salvation compares to what we lose by rejecting it.*

### 4. Final Judgment Is Real and Not to Be Trivialized

**“Where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”**

Jesus emphasizes accountability by repeating this phrase, underscoring the seriousness of final judgment and the irreversible nature of sin left unrepented.

Key truth:

- Judgment is not symbolic rhetoric—it is a real outcome
- Grace does not eliminate consequences; it provides escape from them
- *The warnings of Jesus are acts of mercy, not cruelty.*