

AVOID BUILDING STRAW PEOPLE

Destroying False Narratives with God's Truth

Key Thought:

What we build in our minds can eventually influence how we live, speak, and treat others.

1. WHAT IS A “STRAW PERSON”?

A **straw person** is an imaginary person, situation, or scenario that we construct in our mind based on:

- Assumptions
- Misunderstandings
- Half-truths
- False information
- Fear
- Unanswered questions
- Imagined motives

The danger is that the situation may **not actually exist**, but we begin responding to it as though it does.

The teaching describes straw people as made-up scenarios that can grow into mental strongholds and affect our relationships, trust, and peace.

Teaching Statement:

Don't allow your imagination to become your evidence.

2. HOW DO WE BUILD STRAW PEOPLE?

It often happens in stages:

STEP 1 — Something Happens

Someone says something.

Someone doesn't call.

Plans change.

Someone looks at you differently.

You have a disagreement.

That's the fact.

STEP 2 — We Begin to Interpret It

Instead of asking what actually happened, we begin asking:

"I wonder what they really meant."

STEP 3 — We Fill in the Blanks

Now our imagination begins supplying information we don't actually have.

"They must be angry with me."

"They don't want me around anymore."

"They're probably talking about me."

STEP 4 — We Build the Straw Person

Eventually, we've constructed an entire story in our minds.

And now we're responding emotionally to **our story rather than the facts.**

3. THE DANGER: THE STRAW PERSON CAN BECOME REAL TO YOU

The teaching points out that false narratives can grow stronger over time and become mental strongholds.

This is where the danger increases.

You may begin with:

"I wonder..."

Then:

"Maybe..."

Then:

"I think..."

Then:

"I know..."

But nothing actually changed except **your thinking**.

Important Teaching Principle:

A thought repeated often enough can begin to feel like a fact—even when it isn't.

4. THREE COMMON EXAMPLES

Example #1 — Family

You previously had an argument with someone.

A family gathering is coming.

You begin replaying the old argument.

You imagine what they might say.

You imagine how you will respond.

You become defensive **before anything has happened.**

The teaching identifies this kind of mental rehearsal as something that can create unnecessary stress and conflict.

Question:

Am I preparing for an actual conversation—or one I created in my mind?

Example #2 — Friendship

Your family schedule changes.

You don't see your friends as often.

Instead of asking what happened, you conclude:

"They don't like me anymore."

Now you feel rejected.

You withdraw.

The relationship suffers.

But the original problem may have simply been a **change in schedule.**

Example #3 — A New Environment

You start a new job, school, or church.

You feel uncomfortable.

You notice people talking.

You begin thinking:

"They're talking about me."

"They're judging me."

"Nobody wants me here."

You withdraw.

Again, the teaching emphasizes that these assumptions can cause us to miss opportunities for genuine connection.

5. NEHEMIAH SHOWS US HOW TO CONFRONT A FALSE NARRATIVE

Nehemiah 6:8 provides an excellent biblical example.

The accusation was made, but Nehemiah didn't accept the false narrative.

He answered:

"No such things as you say have been done; you are inventing them out of your own heart and mind."

Teaching Point:

Nehemiah didn't build upon the accusation.

He confronted it with truth.

There is a powerful lesson here:

Don't build on information that God has not established as truth.

6. GOD HAS GIVEN US A WAY TO DEAL WITH WRONG THINKING

2 Corinthians 10:4–6

The teaching uses this passage to emphasize pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments, and bringing thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

This gives us a spiritual process:

IDENTIFY IT

What am I thinking?

EXAMINE IT

Is it fact or assumption?

CONFRONT IT

Does it agree with God's Word?

CAPTURE IT

Bring the thought under the authority of Christ.

REPLACE IT

Replace the false narrative with truth.

7. TRUTH IS THE ANTIDOTE

Jesus said in John 8:31–32 that continuing in His Word leads to knowing the truth, and **the truth makes us free**.

This is important:

We don't defeat deception by simply trying not to think about it.

We defeat deception by **replacing it with truth**.

Don't just say:

"That's a wrong thought."

Ask:

"What is God's truth concerning this situation?"

8. THE TRUTH MUST GET INSIDE US

Psalm 51:6 says:

"Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts..."

The goal isn't merely to **know about truth**.

The goal is to become **rooted in truth**.

Because what fills the heart eventually comes out through the mouth.

Matthew 12:34 connects the abundance of the heart with what the mouth speaks.

Therefore:

Wrong thinking → wrong words → wrong actions → damaged relationships.

But:

God's truth → truthful thinking → truthful words → healthy actions.

9. SPEAK TRUTH—BUT SPEAK IT WITH LOVE

Truth doesn't give us permission to become harsh.

Ephesians 4:25 teaches us to speak truth with our neighbor.

Colossians 4:5–6 emphasizes wise, gracious speech.

Here's the balance:

Truth without love can wound.

Love without truth can deceive.

Truth spoken in love brings health.

10. JESUS IS THE STANDARD OF TRUTH

Jesus said:

John 14:6

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

The teaching contrasts truth with deception and identifies Jesus as the ultimate source and standard of truth.

So the question becomes:

"Does the way I am thinking line up with Jesus?"

11. FIVE PRACTICAL STEPS TO TEAR DOWN A STRAW PERSON

The teaching gives five practical steps.

1. IDENTIFY THE FALSE NARRATIVE

Ask:

"What am I telling myself?"

Write it down.

2. ALIGN YOUR THOUGHTS WITH TRUTH

Ask:

"What does God's Word actually say?"

Psalm 25:5:

"Lead me in Your truth and teach me..."

3. COMMUNICATE OPENLY

Don't allow assumptions to grow.

If clarification is needed, **ask**.

Don't create an answer when you can seek the truth.

4. RENEW YOUR MIND DAILY

Romans 12:2 teaches the importance of transformation through the renewing of the mind.

You cannot continually feed your mind deception and expect truth to control your thinking.

5. PRAY FOR WISDOM

Psalms 119:160:

"The sum of thy word is truth."

Ask God for discernment to recognize deception and reject it.

12. A SIMPLE “STRAW PERSON TEST”

When you find yourself upset about something someone supposedly did or meant, stop and ask:

FACT

What do I actually know?

ASSUMPTION

What am I assuming?

EVIDENCE

What evidence do I actually have?

TRUTH

What does God's Word say?

ACTION

What should I do now?

This can stop a small thought from becoming a large stronghold.

13. THE OBJECT LESSON

BUILD A STRAW PERSON

Take pieces of straw, paper, or lightweight material and construct a person.

As you build it, attach labels:

ASSUMPTION

FEAR

HALF-TRUTH

GUESSING

MISUNDERSTANDING

IMAGINATION

Then explain:

"Every time we accept an assumption as truth, we add another piece to the straw person."

Eventually we can become angry with someone who isn't even the person we've imagined them to be.

Then take the straw person apart.

As each piece comes off, say:

"This isn't established truth."

"This is an assumption."

"This needs to be brought into captivity."

Finally:

"What God says is more important than what I imagine."

14. THE BIG TAKEAWAY

DON'T BUILD WHAT GOD DIDN'T BUILD.

Don't build a relationship problem out of an assumption.

Don't build rejection out of a change in schedule.

Don't build an enemy out of a misunderstanding.

Don't build a stronghold out of an unchecked thought.

Don't build a false narrative and then live according to it.

Instead:

STOP.

EXAMINE.

SEEK TRUTH.

CHECK GOD'S WORD.

COMMUNICATE.

PRAY.

RENEW YOUR MIND.

CLOSING CHALLENGE

The teaching concludes with the call to live rooted in truth rather than deception and to reflect Christ through our words and actions.

Ask yourself this week:

"Have I built a straw person?"

Is there someone I'm angry with because of something they actually did—or because of something I've **imagined** they did?

Is there a relationship I'm damaging because I've accepted an assumption as fact?

Is there a thought I've been rehearsing that God never established as truth?

Remember:

You don't have to live inside a situation that isn't true.

Bring the thought to Christ.

Bring the situation to truth.

Bring the relationship into honest communication.

And let God's Word—not imagination, fear, or assumption—determine how you think, speak, and act.

TRUTH TEARS DOWN STRAW PEOPLE.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." — John 14:6

[Click here.](#) **Prevent Building STRAW PEOPLE! How? Who are straw people?**

AVOID BUILDING STRAW PEOPLE!

DESTROYING FALSE NARRATIVES WITH GOD'S TRUTH



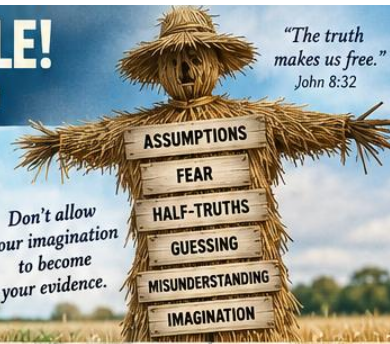
KEY THOUGHT

What we build in our minds can eventually influence how we live, speak, and treat others.

WHAT IS A STRAW PERSON?

A straw person is an imaginary person, situation, or scenario constructed in our minds based on assumptions, misunderstandings, half-truths, false information, fear, unanswered questions, or imagined motives. The danger is that the situation may not actually exist, but we begin responding to it as though it does.

Don't allow your imagination to become your evidence.



HOW DO WE BUILD STRAW PEOPLE?

- 1 Something Happens**
Someone says something, doesn't call, plans change, etc. (That's the fact.)
- 2 We Interpret It**
"I wonder what they really meant."
- 3 We Fill in the Blanks**
"They must be angry with me."
- 4 We Build the Straw Person**
We create an entire story and respond emotionally to our story rather than the facts.

THE DANGER

A straw person can grow stronger over time and become a mental stronghold, leading to unnecessary stress, hurt relationships, and destroyed trust.

"A thought repeated often enough can begin to feel like a fact—even when it isn't."

THREE COMMON EXAMPLES

- 1 Family**
You replay a past disagreement and become defensive before the event even happens.
- 2 Friendship**
You see friends less often and assume they don't like you anymore.
- 3 New Environment**
You assume everyone is judging you, so you withdraw and miss opportunities for connection.

A BIBLICAL EXAMPLE



Nehemiah 6:8

"No such things as you say have been done; you are inventing them out of your own heart and mind."

Nehemiah didn't build on the accusation, He confronted it with truth.

GOD HAS GIVEN US A WAY

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

We are called to pull down strongholds and bring every thought captive to Christ. Here's the process:

- 1 Identify it** – What am I thinking?
- 2 Examine it** – Is it fact or assumption?
- 3 Confront it** – Does it agree with God's Word?
- 4 Capture it** – Bring it under Christ's authority.
- 5 Replace it** – Replace the false with truth.

TRUTH IS THE ANTIDOTE

John 8:31-32

"If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

We don't defeat deception by simply trying not to think about it. We defeat it by replacing it with truth.

THE TRUTH MUST GET INSIDE US

Psalms 51:6

"Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts..."

What fills the heart eventually comes out through the mouth.

Matthew 12:34

"For out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks."



- THOUGHTS
- WORDS
- ACTIONS
- RELATIONSHIPS

SPEAK TRUTH WITH LOVE



Ephesians 4:25

Speak truth with love.

Colossians 4:5-6

Be wise and gracious—seasoned with salt.

Truth without love can wound. Love without truth can deceive. Truth spoken in love brings health.

JESUS IS THE STANDARD



John 14:6

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

Does the way I am thinking line up with Jesus?

FIVE PRACTICAL STEPS

- 1 Identify the false narrative** – What am I telling myself?
- 2 Align your thoughts with truth** – What does God's Word say?
- 3 Communicate openly** – Don't allow assumptions to grow.
- 4 Renew your mind daily** – Romans 12:2
- 5 Pray for wisdom** – Psalm 119:160

THE STRAW PERSON TEST

- Q FACT** – What do I actually know?
- ? ASSUMPTION** – What am I assuming?
- ✓ EVIDENCE** – What evidence do I have?
- 📖 TRUTH** – What does God's Word say?
- ➔ ACTION** – What should I do now?

AN OBJECT LESSON



- 1 Build a straw person** (use straw or paper).
- 2 Add labels:** assumption, fear, half-truth, etc.
- 3 Explain:** Every time we accept an assumption as truth, we add another piece.
- 4 Take it apart:** As each piece comes off, say, "This isn't established truth."
- 5 Remember:** What God says is more important than what I imagine.

THE BIG TAKEAWAY



DON'T BUILD WHAT GOD DIDN'T BUILD.

- ☑ Don't build a relationship problem out of an assumption.
- ☑ Don't build rejection out of a change in schedule.
- ☑ Don't build an enemy out of a misunderstanding.
- ☑ Don't build a stronghold out of an unchecked thought.
- ☑ Don't build a false narrative and then live according to it.

INSTEAD...



- STOP.
- EXAMINE.
- SEEK TRUTH.
- CHECK GOD'S WORD.
- COMMUNICATE.
- PRAY.
- RENEW YOUR MIND.

CLOSING CHALLENGE

Ask yourself this week: "Have I built a straw person?" Bring the thought to Christ. Bring the situation to truth. Bring the relationship into honest communication. Let God's Word—not imagination, fear, or assumption—determine how you think, speak, and act.

TRUTH TEARS DOWN STRAW PEOPLE.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." – John 14:6

Think Truth. Speak Life. Live Free.