



THE 10 ENEMIES OF PROCESS

There are ten primary enemies of God's process. These enemies are what will make following Jesus so very difficult as you sit on that runway; they will do everything in their power to keep you from going V1. To gain victory of them, God wants you to face them. To sit down and truly face them while you accept the provision He offers.

Think of it like a dinner party, a gathering of your biggest and loudest haters. When you take a seat at that table, here's who you will see.

You will see an enemy named self-pity.

You'll see an enemy named fear.

You'll see an enemy named counterfeit vision.

You'll see an enemy named compromise.

You'll see an enemy named shame.

You'll see an enemy named success.

You'll see an enemy named comfort.

You'll see an enemy named impatience, whose nickname is "no."

You'll see an enemy named inconsistency.

And then you'll see an enemy named selfishness.

And here's the thing. While you're sitting at the table with these ten enemies, staring them down—being strong in their presence and bold in the face of their lies—God will serve up all you need for victory.

So let's unpack that.

Self-Pity

Self-pity is as destructive as narcotics. It's addictive. It gives momentary pleasure while it separates the victim from reality. Many of us take the pill of self-pity, because it feels so good! It allows us to justify our thoughts and actions and prevents any sort of life change.

I was raised in a trailer park on welfare. We paid \$15 a month for rent and ended up with some of the most horrific experiences. I clawed my way out of that hole and got a degree from a Big Ten university. I thought for sure that every employer within a ten-mile radius of my house was going to offer me a job before graduation. I thought this, because when you're poor and on the outside looking in on middle class white people, that's what you think happens. That's how you think the world works. Get a degree like the middle-class white folks, and you'll have people begging you to come work for them. Then you can get married, have kids, buy a house, and live happily ever after! Nobody told me that it takes way more than a degree to get hired.

I was stuck sitting at the table with this enemy called self-pity, and I didn't want to eat the confidence God was serving up. So I had to learn the hard way. I had to realize the world

doesn't owe me anything. It doesn't matter how many degrees you have; you've got to earn everything that comes your way.

But here's the true danger of self-pity: self-pity is excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness that is focused completely on one's own troubles. Romans 8:6 reads, "For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

In other words, focusing on your own carnal desires—what you want, what you need, how you feel—is hostility toward God.

The answer, then, is to submit to the Spirit. The Spirit brings life and peace. It will remind you of the goodness of God even in the face of incredible life troubles. That is what God will serve up to you when you face your enemy self-pity.

Fear

Helen Keller said, "Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. The fearful are caught as often as the bold."

The fearful are caught.

You may think that it's best to play it safe. To avoid risk. To never put yourself too far out there. To always look before you leap. But the person who plays it safe has the same likelihood of getting hit by struggle as the person who runs out ahead of the lightning bolt.

There is a saying, of uncertain origin, that one of the greatest discoveries a person can make is to discover they can do what they were afraid they couldn't do. We all love those videos that show someone excelling beyond what they thought they were capable of. Videos of people beating the odds, overcoming obstacles and changing their lives. But to do this, you have to stare fear down and tell it to step aside. You have to fight it with a heaping serving of faith.

Psalm 27:1 reads, "The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

When the Lord is a constant presence in your life, you will find that you have no one and no thing to fear. You will find that your faith overcomes all of that doubt and uncertainty.

Counterfeit Vision

Counterfeit vision is when you settle for good when God calls you to great. We like to pretend like everything is good. That everything is fine when it's not. But this mindset is an enemy of God's process.

It's far better to take the ugly and messy over the fake. It's better to go through the stench and the filth and the sweat and the blood and the mess of life and come out with something real than to live a perfectly polished pretend life.

This is why I love New Yorkers. They're so real. They'll cut you off and tell you how they feel, and you aren't left wondering where they stand.

But here's what happens. We say that we want things to be real and authentic, but when it comes to the vision we have for our lives, we settle for what's counterfeit.

Let me tell you a little bit about David, though. According to custom, it was the youngest son's responsibility to watch after the family sheep. So, because he was born the youngest, David was stuck with this task.

His brothers were in the militia, going up against the Philistines (1 Samuel 17). David took a break from watching the sheep to bring his brothers some lunch. He got there, and everyone was fixated on watching the Philistine giant, Goliath, as he taunted Israel over and over again.

They listened to his taunts, but greatness didn't come out of them. See, the taunts of your enemy will reveal whether true greatness is inside of you. How you respond to that situation will show what's on the inside.

So David showed up with lunch and heard Goliath running his mouth. And that's when David stepped away from the earthly destiny that his biological father had given him so that he could pursue his spiritual destiny that his heavenly Father had given him.

Think about it! Every moment that David spent planning for and killing Goliath was a moment not spent tending to the family sheep. David could have hidden behind the vision that had been handed to him when he was born the youngest son. He could have said, "Good luck brothers, but I've gotta go tend some sheep!" and no one would have thought any less of him.

But instead, David set his earthly vision and dared to step into his true vision, as leader, as man of God, and as future King.

Whose vision for your life are you living? Is it a counterfeit vision that was handed to you by someone else? Did you go to college because someone in your family told you to? Have you suppressed your desire for mission work because someone thought you should work a nine to five instead?

Are you operating under someone else's expectations and pressure or are you operating under God's power?

Don't get me wrong here. David was faithful to those sheep. But when it came time to set the staff down and be a giant killer, David showed up. The whole story of David and Goliath is a story of stepping away from the natural for the supernatural.

There are some people in my life who never understood why I launched a church. They never understood why I travel to speak, why I do what I do. It never made sense to them. No matter what metric of success I measured it by, they always wanted me to stay within the smallness of their own imagination. But I thank God for the boldness of the Holy Spirit who rises up inside and says, "Son, despite all your faults and failures to start, despite your introversion, I'm going to use you if you'll say yes."

Counterfeit vision will lead you down a path that is apart from God's best. And that's why we need to identify it as an enemy of His process.

Compromise

C. S. Lewis said, "Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without sign posts."

The demon assigned to rob you of what God has given you is offering you a gradual slope away from God's truth. Matthew 6:24 reads, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Now, this isn't saying that God won't bless you beyond measure. Rather, it says that He will bless you when you serve Him and become a conduit for that blessing. God will give you influence so that you can become an echo of freedom, not an echo of your own opinion. He will give you financial resources and wealth to steward in your life so that you can push those things out to others, not so that you can hoard them up.

But we tend to compromise. We think, "Oh, it's okay if I hoard this for myself," or, "It won't matter if I slide on a few of my commitments to God."

That approach doesn't work for God, because compromise leads to confusion. This confusion comes from listening to too many voices.

But God has one singular vision for you, and when you're listening to His voice, there will be no confusion. There will be no compromise. What He tells you might not be what you want to hear. It might not be what you want to do, but it will be a singular message that will produce clarity.

Shame

At this dinner party, shame is the guy who tells you that you're not allowed to access your future because of what you did in your past. That's what shame says on repeat. We'll get into this later

in the book, but know this: shame will rob you of all confidence. You might know the right thing to do, the right thing to say, but shame will tell you that you aren't qualified.

First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Those bad things from your past don't have to define you, because Christ washes you clean.

Micah 7:19 says, "You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (NIV). I love the word again. It means this isn't a one-and-done thing. So when shame starts talking, you can hear God saying, "I forgive you. My mercy is here for you. I'm renewing you again."

God wants to give you honor. He wants to give you favor. He wants you to live in a no-shame zone, even when you're sitting in front of an enemy that does nothing but promote shame. And He offers all the confidence you need to stare that enemy down and put him in his place.

Success

I have an acronym for haters:

Having
Anger
Towards
Everyone
Reaching
Success.

Pretty good, right?

Now the good thing about haters is that they're Equal Opportunity Haters. Haters usually hate everyone. No matter how well you do on a job, no matter how much you work it, no matter how transparent or humble you are, no matter how much you strive for excellence, there are people whose favorite pastime is to tear you down.

They do this because your success is a mirror of their failure. And I know this, because I'm one of those people who used to hate on everyone all the time.

Over a decade ago, I built an entire Twitter platform to bash preachers. No joke. Any time a pastor got a bump or some measure of success, and I felt he didn't represent biblical Christianity, I attacked him on Twitter in an attempt to defend those affected by his leadership.

Finally, the Holy Spirit had to deal with me. He showed me that I was attacking others because I felt like a failure. The wounds of my own fatherlessness deeply desired that men of that caliber would reach out to me. What manifested itself as an attack on them was really a cry for help

from me. And here's the thing with God: He doesn't just speak into something; He follows up for true healing.

After He spoke to me, He told me that He wanted me to heart, comment, and share every single one of these posts from pastors that I'd been bashing. He wanted me to celebrate them until I learned how to love and celebrate others the way God does.

God showed me that it was by His grace that these pastors were successful, and that any success that I would see would also be by His grace.

No one's story is a straight line. Every one of us has our own winding road that was born out of our pain and the decisions we've made. It may seem like there is no way that you'll arrive at your destination on time. It may seem like success is only something for other people to experience, not you. But I am here to tell you that time is not the same for God. What could take you a lifetime will take Him an instant. He's the one with the controls, and if you submit to Him, you will accelerate to your destiny.

In your moments of failure, instead of listening to the voice of success that makes you envious and down, listen to the God who holds time in His hand.

Comfort

The comfort zone is a psychological state in which one feels familiar, safe, secure, and at ease. It's a place where we love to set up camp, don't we? Comfort is one of my favorite enemies. So fluffy, so nice.

But you can never change your life until you're willing to leave your comfort zone.

You see, leadership is simply somebody who has abandoned comfort over and over and over again. Leaders aren't necessarily smarter than you, they're just a bit more daring than you. They're willing to step out of comfort while the rest of us stay put.

And if you've ever tried to step out of your comfort zone, you'll notice how difficult it is to keep going. You get that first step out of the way and before you know it, comfort comes to you and tells you to just stay put. To create a new comfort zone.

Following Jesus is painful. It's difficult. It's not always fun, but Proverbs 3:5-6 reads, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." And that's why you can face comfort and know that God will provide the courage needed to take that step into the unknown.

Impatience

Wise people are careful with their time, but impatience can cause the wise to do foolish things. Impatience is what causes you to leave your marriage right before God is about to heal it. Impatience is what makes you grumble and complain about your job right when you were about to get a promotion. Impatience is what can ruin the good that is about to come your way. In fact, one of the most successful historic strategies of warfare is to wait. Wait until the enemy grows impatient. Once they are impatient, they will make mistakes.

The devil knows this! He taunts you with impatience so that he can pounce. To have victory over this enemy, all you need is to wait on the Lord. He will work in His time, every time.

Inconsistency

Charles Spurgeon once said that inconsistency among Christians is what prevents wicked men from following God.⁸ They see us Christians backsliding on the things that we said we would never do, and it pushes them further away from accepting Jesus.

You see the enemy of inconsistency tells you that it's not that big of a deal to stop following Jesus here and there. It's not that big of a deal to slip up every now and again. And before you know it, your witness is blown.

I don't know about you, but I have a vision for men who are going to rise up—not as perfect men, but as men who are submitted to God and going on a journey of maturity. Their very presence will be a conviction of those around them, and their consistency with what they believe will offer a pure conscience in a society where everyone's conscience is being seared.

I have a vision of women rising up, whose very presence signals that God is with them in a palpable way. These women refuse to give in to carnal desire, and they are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

That's my dream for you, for the church. My dream is that the enemy of inconsistency be put to rest as we feast on God's incredible provision to see us through.

Selfishness

Almost every sinful act ever committed can be traced back to a selfish motive. Think about it.

Selfishness is a trait that we hate in other people, yet we justify it in ourselves. But take this to heart: Love is patient. Love is kind. Love doesn't envy. It doesn't boast. It doesn't have to give you a list of qualifications or a list of accomplishments. Love is not arrogant. Love isn't rude. It doesn't insist on getting its own way all the time. Love is not irritable. It's not resentful. It doesn't

rejoice in wrongdoing; it doesn't rejoice when someone else fails. It rejoices with the truth (1 Corinthians 13:4–6). And what's the truth? The truth is the cross demands that we accept the reality that the best is yet to come. And the renewal of all things is going to be what we see if we surrender to the cross.

A Seat at the Table

Julie and I made a very difficult decision several years ago. It was something that we wrestled with for a long time as we sought God's will for our lives. After we made this decision, there were many, many people who didn't understand it. They didn't think it was the right thing.

Now these were people that we had served and given our lives to and poured into, and they were coming at us, questioning everything about the decision we had made.

And it hurt. You see we thought we had built up credibility. We thought that these people trusted us and knew us enough to know that we only wanted to follow Jesus. But we were getting slandered and gossiped about, and it was a very dark time.

One night in the midst of that, we went out to eat with our young daughter Bella. Before we knew it, every single person who had bashed us, walked into that very same restaurant. Not only that, but out of all of the tables in the restaurant, they were seated at the one in front of us. Julie and I were sitting side by side, and they were sitting side by side, and we were all just looking at one another.

And while they were looking at us and we were looking at them, a scripture came to mind.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

—Psalm 23:5–6

God prepares a table for us in the presence of these ten enemies—and He provides all that we need to overcome, friend.

Within the last two years, people from that table have called me up individually and told me that they were sorry. They've told me that they can't believe they had acted in that way. They've asked for forgiveness, and we've made amends with every single one.

It's clear. There are true enemies to God's process, but God wants you to be strong against them. Simply rest in Him, eat from the platter of faith, consistency, and empowerment that He is serving up. And trust Him for the rest.