

The Lies of the Enemy

by David Cannistraci

Though there are an endless number of reproaches the enemy may use, Scripture points out a few strategic ones he favors most:

At a Glance

1. "You will never be fruitful or significant."
2. "You will always be alone."
3. "You are a loser in life."
4. "If you don't have much, you aren't worth much."
5. "There is no hope for those who fail."

1. The reproach of barrenness can come over women who are unable to bear children. This lie says, "You will never be fruitful or significant." The difficulties of infertility or a miscarriage can be an anguishing trial to couples, but when a subsequent reproach tries to settle over them a more sinister force is at work.

This reproach can also hit people who feel insignificant compared to those they feel are successful. Pastors of smaller churches, owners of smaller businesses, and anyone who struggles to feel productive in life may face this reproach.

Even believers who have not received their prayer language may battle this. They may even have been told by cruel Christians that they are somehow second-class.

2. The reproach of widowhood seeks to suffocate those who find themselves lonely in life. This lie says, "You will always be alone." There is a cruel strategy of the enemy to oppress widows and widowers with a supernatural hopelessness that goes beyond the normal feelings associated with their situation.

Similarly, singles and divorcees often hear the enemy whisper that they are defective and doomed to be alone. It doesn't help when we isolate them and forbid them full participation

in the life and ministry of the church.

Yet God truly is the God of a second chance. This reproach is broken by the promise that we will never be alone. Since the Lord is our Spouse, our mourning can be turned into the joyful dancing of a wedding party.

3. The reproach of defeat can settle on those who have entered into life's challenges only to come up feeling like losers. This lie says, "You are a loser in life."

Who hasn't witnessed the fallen countenance of an athlete who suffers a loss in an important game? How much more does defeat affect those who fall short in business, lose a job or struggle with an addiction?

The enemy is right there to suggest shame and implant a reproach. Yet the promise of God is that our faith brings us into supernatural victory, no matter what defeats we may face in the world.

4. The reproach of poverty is devastating, but the Lord promises to take it away (see Ezek. 36:30). This lie says, "If you don't have much, you aren't worth much." Lack brings its own emotional and spiritual pathology into families, nations and cultures around the world.

The enemy knows poverty is a stifling source of humiliation to people. He uses it as an opportunity to drive us to hopeless passivity or (especially in the West) to birth the fear-filled triplets of overwork, greed and ostentatious living.

But material things can never lift the imbedded reproaches of lack. It's only when we realize how eternally rich we are in Christ that we can come to the place of true security.

5. The reproach of moral failure can be a merciless tormentor, especially in the case of fallen spiritual leaders. This lie says, "There is no hope for those who fail."

Remember Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The*

Scarlet Letter? She was forced to bear the reproach of her adultery by wearing an embroidered letter "A" wherever she went. Many never recover from the scarlet letter the enemy has placed on their lives after sexual sins.

Though falling into any sin brings a serious spiritual injury, it need not be terminal. God prescribes the cure of restoration. We must carefully and humbly administer this cure, resisting the urge to pull the spiritual life-support plug on a fallen brother.

Countless other reproaches seek to afflict God's people. Victims of sexual abuse, people suffering from HIV or AIDS, those who have been given up for adoption, members of minority communities and those who suffer from disabilities can all feel the unfair oppression of the enemy's shame.

Reproach can enter our lives through the front door of our own failures or sneak in through the back door of the sins of others. But if we will look to the cross, the enemy's last-ditch effort to keep us from coming into our place of blessing will be removed.