

THE DIRTY DOZEN

Every Man Complete (EMC) - Based on Colossians 1:28-29

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life, and have it abundantly." – John 10:10 (NASB)

1. IDENTITY IN CHRIST

How the Enemy Steals It: The thief attacks a man's core identity by constantly whispering lies about who he is, anchoring his worth in performance, possessions, or the approval of others rather than in Christ. The enemy uses shame from past failures, comparison with other men, and cultural definitions of masculinity to erode the foundation of being "in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17). He exploits wounds from fathers, coaches, and mentors who withheld affirmation, creating a lifelong search for validation in all the wrong places. The enemy replaces the truth of "beloved son" with the lies of "not enough," "too much," or "mistake."

"The devil's deepest strategy is to convince us that our identity is rooted in our accomplishments rather than in God's affection." – Brennan Manning

"Until we believe that we are as bad as God says we are, we can never believe that He is as good as He says He is." – Tim Keller

2. PURPOSE AND CALLING

How the Enemy Steals It: Satan steals purpose through distraction, discouragement, and deception. He buries men under the tyranny of the urgent, filling calendars with good things that aren't God things. He whispers that a man's calling ended with his last failure, that he's too old to start, too young to be taken seriously, or too broken to be used. The enemy creates counterfeit purposes—building kingdoms made of career success, financial security, or personal comfort—that leave men exhausted but empty. He uses

fear of man's opinion and fear of inadequacy to keep men from stepping into the "good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10, NASB).

"The glory of God is man fully alive." – Irenaeus

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." – Frederick Buechner

3. INTEGRITY AND AUTHENTICITY

How the Enemy Steals It: The thief steals integrity incrementally, through small compromises that seem insignificant. He creates compartmentalized lives where Sunday morning doesn't match Monday morning, where public persona contradicts private behavior. The enemy exploits the performance trap, convincing men they must present an image of having it all together while hiding struggles with pornography, anger, fear, or doubt. He uses shame to create hiding places, just as Adam hid in the garden (Genesis 3:10). The devil makes authenticity seem weak and vulnerability dangerous, isolating men behind masks of strength that become prisons.

"Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching." – C.S. Lewis

"The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle." – Brennan Manning

4. MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

How the Enemy Steals It: Satan attacks marriages through selfishness, pride, unforgiveness, and passivity. He convinces men to prioritize work over family, ministry over marriage, or personal hobbies over their children. The enemy introduces thought patterns that devalue wives—comparison to other women, pornography that distorts intimacy, or resentment over unmet

expectations. He steals the servant-leadership model of Ephesians 5:25-28, replacing it with either domineering control or passive abdication. The thief uses unresolved anger, unforgiveness, and refusal to pursue emotional intimacy to create distance. He exploits generational patterns, convincing men to repeat their fathers' failures.

"The Christian husband is called to reflect Christ's love for the church. This is not a love dependent on the loveliness of the object." – John Piper

"A good marriage is not one where perfection reigns: it is a relationship where a healthy perspective overlooks a multitude of 'unresolvables.'" – James Dobson

5. SEXUAL PURITY AND WHOLENESS

How the Enemy Steals It: This is ground zero in the war for men's souls. The enemy weaponizes sexuality through pornography, fantasy, emotional affairs, and outright adultery. He twists God's good gift into an idol, convincing men that sexual gratification is a need rather than a desire to be surrendered. Satan exploits early exposure to pornography, creating neural pathways of shame and compulsion. He uses isolation, stress, boredom, and entitlement as entry points. The thief knows that sexual sin uniquely damages: "Flee sexual immorality. Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body" (1 Corinthians 6:18, NASB). He keeps men trapped in cycles of sin-shame-secrecy-sin.

"Sexual sin is not just about sex. It's about worship. We were made to worship, and when we don't worship God, we'll worship something else." – R.C. Sproul

"Lust is the craving for salt of a man dying of thirst." – Frederick Buechner

6. TIME AND PRIORITIES

How the Enemy Steals It: The devil doesn't need to make men bad; he just needs to make them busy. He steals time through the deception that more activity equals more significance. The enemy convinces men to say yes to everything except what matters most. He creates a culture of hurry that makes abiding in Christ seem impractical (John 15:4-5). Satan uses technology, social media, endless entertainment, and the relentless pursuit of financial security to devour hours that could be spent with God, family, or kingdom purposes. He whispers that rest is laziness and Sabbath is legalistic, driving men toward burnout while calling it faithfulness.

"The devil doesn't have to convince us to do something bad; he just needs to make us busy." – Charles Spurgeon (attributed)

"In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action." – Dag Hammarskjöld

7. FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD

How the Enemy Steals It: The thief steals faith through doubt, disappointment, and self-reliance. He uses unanswered prayers to suggest God doesn't care, delayed promises to imply God isn't faithful, and unexpected trials to question whether God is good. The enemy promotes functional atheism—intellectual belief in God coupled with practical living as if everything depends on us. He replaces childlike trust with cynicism, expectant faith with cautious hedging. Satan exploits financial pressure, health crises, and relational breakdowns to shift men's eyes from the Provider to the problem. He whispers, "Has God really said?" (Genesis 3:1), planting seeds of doubt about God's Word and character.

"Faith does not eliminate questions. But faith knows where to take them." – Elisabeth Elliot

"God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him." – John Piper

8. JOY IN THE LORD

How the Enemy Steals It: Satan steals joy through comparison, complaint, and circumstance-dependent happiness. He replaces the "joy of the Lord" which is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10) with temporary pleasures that leave men empty. The enemy uses depression, anxiety, and relentless negativity to cloud the soul. He convinces men that joy comes from circumstances aligning rather than from Christ's presence. The thief exploits exhaustion, disappointment, and delayed gratification to create joyless religion—dutiful obedience without delight. He makes men experts at identifying what's wrong while blinding them to evidence of grace.

"Joy is the serious business of Heaven." – C.S. Lewis

"The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me.'" – Billy Graham

9. SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

How the Enemy Steals It: The devil steals spiritual authority through compromise, passivity, and ignorance. He convinces men they aren't qualified to lead spiritually—in their homes, workplaces, or communities. The enemy exploits past failures, creating a narrative that disqualifies men from spiritual influence. He promotes passivity, convincing men to outsource spiritual leadership to pastors and professionals. Satan uses ignorance of Scripture and prayer as weapons, keeping men ineffective in spiritual warfare. He replaces bold proclamation with timid silence, prophetic voices with people-pleasing acquiescence. The thief knows that spiritually passive men create vulnerable families and ineffective churches.

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."
– Often attributed to Edmund Burke

"A faith that hasn't been tested can't be trusted." – Adrian Rogers

10. PEACE OF MIND AND HEART

How the Enemy Steals It: Satan steals peace through anxiety, anger, and restlessness. He floods men's minds with worst-case scenarios, financial fears, and relational what-ifs. The enemy uses unresolved conflict, unforgiveness, and buried resentment to create internal turmoil. He replaces the peace "which surpasses all comprehension" (Philippians 4:7, NASB) with chronic stress that men medicate through alcohol, overwork, or entertainment. The thief exploits trauma, PTSD, and unprocessed grief to create constant hypervigilance. He convinces men that peace comes from controlling circumstances rather than surrendering to God's sovereignty.

"Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of God no matter what the conflict." – Unknown

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." – Philippians 4:6 (NASB)

11. HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

How the Enemy Steals It: The thief steals hope through discouragement, cynicism, and myopic focus on present circumstances. He uses repeated disappointments to convince men that nothing will ever change. The enemy replaces hope anchored in Christ's return and promises with hopelessness born of fixing eyes on temporary troubles. Satan exploits mid-life crises, career plateaus, and awareness of mortality to create despair about wasted time. He whispers that past mistakes have forfeited future blessing, that patterns are permanent, that change is impossible. The devil knows that "hope deferred makes the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12, NASB) and actively works to defer hope indefinitely.

"Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out." – Václav Havel

"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope." – Martin Luther King Jr.

12. BROTHERHOOD AND AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

How the Enemy Steals It: Satan knows isolated men are vulnerable men, so he steals community through pride, self-sufficiency, and fear of vulnerability. He convinces men they should have it all together, making authenticity seem weak. The enemy uses busy schedules, geographic distance, and digital substitutes to prevent deep, accountable friendships. He exploits past betrayals to make men guarded, replacing "bear one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2, NASB) with "figure it out yourself." The thief creates competitive rather than collaborative masculine culture, where men compare instead of confess, posture instead of pursue one another. He knows men who walk alone fall alone.

"The devil's a better theologian than any of us and is a devil still." – A.W. Tozer

"Christianity isn't a solo sport. We need each other." – Timothy Keller

CONCLUSION: RECLAIMING WHAT THE THIEF HAS STOLEN

"So that we may present every man complete in Christ." – Colossians 1:28
(NASB)

The enemy's strategy is exposure and exploitation. He exposes our wounds, weaknesses, and wants, then exploits them to steal what God intends for our abundant life. But Jesus came to give life abundantly—to restore what the thief has stolen, repair what he has broken, and redeem what he has distorted.

Every man complete. Not perfect. Complete in Christ. That's the goal. That's the battle. That's the calling.