The Seduction of Success

Counterfeit Gods

Fast Fading Satisfaction

Madonna’s drive was birthed from a terrible fear of being mediocre

“Achievement is the alcohol of our time” -Mary Bell

“In the end, achievement can’t really answer the big questions—Who am I? What am I really worth? How do I face death?” Page 74-75

Counterfeit Gods
Success & Achievements’ Roots

“And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth” (Genesis 1:26 ESV)

“And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”” (Genesis 1:28 ESV)

Counterfeit Gods

A good thing becoming a God thing

“More than other idols, personal success and achievement lead to a sense that we ourselves are god, that our security and value rest in our own wisdom, strength, and performance.” Page 75

“One sign that you have made success an idol is the false sense of security it brings. The poor and the marginalized expect suffering, they know that life on this earth is “nasty, brutish, and short.” Successful people are much more shocked and overwhelmed by troubles.” Page 75

Counterfeit Gods
The Barter System

• If I obey, then God will bless me
• We are looking for a God that is tame. A God that we can work into our debt
• The operating principle of religion is: if you live a good life, then the gods or God will have to bless you & give you prosperity.

Counterfeit Gods

Grace Means

• You are owed nothing good
• All good things in your life are a gift – they are not earned or owed
• Like Naaman, we must learn that the grace of God is not earned, but received
• 1 Corinthians 4:7, James 1:17

Counterfeit Gods
How do we destroy this idol?

- “The idol of success cannot be just expelled, it must be replaced. The human heart’s desire for a particular valuable object may be conquered, but its need to have some such object is unconquerable. How can we break our heart’s fixation on doing “some great thing” in order to heal ourselves of our sense of inadequacy, in order to give our lives meaning? Only when we see what Jesus, our great Suffering Servant, has done for us will we finally understand why God’s salvation does not require us to do “some great thing.” We don’t have to do it, because Jesus has. That’s why we can “just wash.” Jesus did it all for us, and he loves us—that is how we know our existence is justified. When we believe in what he accomplished for us with our minds, and when we are moved by what he did for us in our hearts, it begins to kill off the addiction, the need for success at all costs.” Page 93-94

- Clear vision