

SERIES: I'M NOT ANGRY
PART 4A: I'M A LOSER

“I won't amount to anything.”

“I'm a failure.”

“It's too late for me.”

“I'm never going to make it.”

“I'm never going to get this right.”

“Why try? Everytime I try it always ends up the same.”

“I've blown it.”

“I keep repeating the same mistakes over and over.”

“Am I going to be like this for the rest of my life?”

“Is this really as good as it gets?”

“I'm unlovable.”

“I'm a loser.”

Do you struggle with condemning thoughts and emotions like these? Most of us do at some point in our lives. What are some of thoughts and feelings of inferiority that you struggle with? How would you add to this list?

Or maybe you say to yourself: I don't ever say or hear these types of things in my head. I don't feel these things. I have a very healthy self-esteem. Maybe you are thinking right now, "I have it all together", "I'm doing well", "I don't struggle with this at all." If that's you, then I would challenge you to consider this: Have you ever heard anyone say things like this? Chances are you are in relationship with someone who struggles with feeling like a loser at times. They may not be comfortable sharing their feelings of inferiority with you because you may dismiss them or not empathize.

Personally, I do struggle with these, but there are also times that I am uncomfortable with feelings of inferiority coming from others. I don't want to listen to them at times. Most of the time, people who say they don't experience feelings of inferiority are overcompensating for the fact that they do but deny these feelings in themselves. I'm guilty of that. I need to learn how to be more sensitive to those around me who need encouragement. If I'm too arrogant, sarcastic, or dismissive of others' feelings of inferiority, I'm missing an opportunity to connect with others, and with Christ, who Himself identified with those of us who struggle the most.

Another common symptom for those of us who struggle with feelings of inferiority and who feel like we don't measure up: we regularly test those close to us in an attempt to make them prove that they really do love and care about us. We ask the question of people in our lives, "If you really love me, then you will _____." Unfortunately, this kind of thinking and behavior has a boomerang effect. Someone who struggles with low self-esteem, inferiority, who feels "less than", or like they don't measure up, often have a desperate need to please others. We call this people-pleasing codependency. In other words, my safety or emotional state is dependent upon you liking me or being in good standing with me. I cannot have any conflict, because conflict triggers my feelings of inferiority, or my fear of not measuring up. The more I try to please others by trying to figure out other people's expectations and desires, the more I have to read other people's minds, the greater my frustration, hurt, anger, and sense of disconnection—because in reality it's impossible to do. I can't read minds. If you've ever tried it or struggled with people-pleasing, you know you cannot please all of the people all of the time! Trying to be perfect and hoping that people will love me because of how successful, great, pleasing, or how well I perform leaves me feeling empty, frustrated, exhausted, hurt, and—you got it—angry. Last

week, Josh did a wonderful job of laying out God's heart toward those of us who struggle with outward-directed anger. Today then, we will continue with our series "I'm Not Angry!" with part A of "I'm a Loser", which deals with inward-directed anger. I'm going to introduce the subject, dive into it as deep as I can, get our heads under the water so that next week, Pastor Scott will pull us up for air and teach us how to swim. In this series "I'm Not Angry!" Pastor Scott has shown us that every human being feels anger. It's a basic human emotion. We all deal with it. Either we explode like Josh's barbecue lighter, or we simmer like his candle. The other way is that we internalize it, we stuff it, we direct it at ourselves.

What does Jesus have to say about this destructive cycle of inferiority, people-pleasing anger, and codependency? Jesus Christ has made some incredible promises to every one of us who surrender our lives to Him.

Would you read John 4:14 with me out loud? Let's begin, "**But the water I give them takes away thirst altogether. It becomes a perpetual spring within them, giving them eternal life.**" And also John 10:10b, let's begin, "**My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.**" These are amazing promises. Jesus promises everyone who enters into a loving relationship with Him that

He will quench their deep-seated need for meaning, value, and significance. This water that Jesus gives becomes a way of living, thinking, and feeling about ourselves that lines up with God's view of us. This 'living water' springs up within us, and it changes how we perceive ourselves, because Jesus meets our deepest needs to feel loved, accepted, and valued. Jesus promises living water to all of those who admit they are thirsty. If you struggle with pride and arrogance and think that anger is not an issue for you, or if you struggle with low self-esteem and self-directed anger, Jesus says: "My purpose is that you may experience life to its fullest." Anger is a part of everyone's life. But how many of us would say, "I know these promises, and I have tried to experience them, but I end up feeling tired and frustrated. I wonder if these promises might be true for others but not for me." 1 John 4:9-10 says, **"God showed how much He loves us by sending His only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through Him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins."** Some in this room today believe the truth of this scripture. Others may not. Last Sunday, Josh eloquently laid out how not processing our emotions and acting out of anger is unhealthy, destructive, and that God would call it sinful and relate it to murder. That's a

whole separate teaching and I encourage you to go on the website and watch/listen to Josh's teaching from last week. Here's the application: Jesus, in His death and resurrection, demonstrates just how much God loves us by giving His life so that our sins would be forgiven (including our anger-related ones, our failure to process our anger toward others and toward ourselves), and that we can now relate to the Father intimately and forever. Yet, God's truth for many of us doesn't seem to make a difference. We still loathe ourselves and the truth of God's acceptance and love of us doesn't seem to impact us internally. We need to experience the refreshment and joy that comes from the living water Jesus promises. For those who feel like a loser, Jesus' promises can leave us feeling angry and disappointed and that we don't measure up. How then do we learn to deal successfully with these feelings—of not measuring up, that we don't really matter, these feelings of insecurity and doubt? We must:

I. Identify where thoughts and feelings of inferiority come from

These feelings typically come from things we were told as children, or things we thought about ourselves that we never shared and that no adult challenged

with God's love. Inferiority comes from someplace. It has an origin story in all of us! The enemy is the father of lies and he twists our relationships and circumstances as children to try to convince us from a very young age that we are of no value, and that God has abandoned us.

A. Realize that feelings of not measuring up come from feeling separated from God

This comes directly from Paul's take on the human origin story. Romans 5:12;15-17 says: **“When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned... ¹⁵And what a difference between our sin and God's generous gift of forgiveness. For this one man, Adam, brought death to many through his sin. But this other Man, Jesus Christ, brought forgiveness to many through God's bountiful gift. ¹⁶And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but we have the free gift of being accepted by God, even though we are guilty of many sins. ¹⁷The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God's**

wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one Man, Jesus Christ.”

The Bible teaches us that when sin entered the world through Adam’s disobedience and rebellion against God’s purposes and plans for his life, that sin, spiritual separation and relational disconnection, set in and took over each one of our lives. The sense of knowing my true purpose, destiny, joy, and the fullness of life can only come from being in a right relationship with God. You were created to worship, adore and value God. You came from Him. You are created in His image. Thoughts of not measuring up, feeling less than, not knowing the reason behind your creation stem from being cut off from God. This deep sense of feeling defective is a direct result of our own abandonment of Him. How then do I get reconnected to God so that he can heal my inferiority?

B. Discover any characteristics you have that come from a shame-based perspective

Let's recap what Pastor Scott has taught in this series and tie it into **inferiority** and how inferiority affects anger. Remember that anger is the feeling of **having to preserve and protect yourself** under any perception of being challenged, attacked, or your boundaries violated. This takes place in three basic areas. **You will experience anger when you feel that you have to preserve your: 1) Self-worth, 2) Basic needs, and 3) Essential convictions.** Feelings of inferiority, insecurity, and fear can leave you feeling under a constant state of threat. This constant state of threat over time manifests into shame. **Shame is the belief that something is inherently wrong with you.** It's not that you feel bad about your behavior (that's conviction or guilt), it's that you sense that you are defective, deficient, and worthless as a human being. Over time you develop a **shame-based perspective (or 'grid')** of how you perceive yourself. You accept the fact that other people make mistakes, but they are still basically worthwhile people. But no matter how many times you get it right, do good things and have the appearance that you're being successful in the different areas of your life, deep down inside you feel you will never be acceptable. At your core, you believe that something is wrong with you. You're blemished, damaged, defective and deficient. You become hopeless that you cannot

change. **What is a shame-based grid or perspective?** Jeff VanVonderen, author, motivational speaker, former pastor, and interventionist on the A&E reality show *Intervention* says this:

1) A shame-based perspective causes you to perceive words, external circumstances and events, and the way others treat you as an indictment—a judgment that you aren’t good enough as a person.

In other words you interpret words and actions to mean more than what they really mean; you assume that people see you as a lesser person. You perceive that most people are a threat to your self-worth, basic needs, and essential beliefs—the three anger triggers. Can you see how anyone who truly thinks and believes this way will struggle with anger? Here are some everyday examples: This one is rampant in our culture today. If a person states their opinion and I disagree with it, in reality what that means is, “He has an opinion; I have an opinion.” The truth is we disagree. It’s okay to disagree, right? We can still love each other and be committed to each other and disagree. But someone with a shame-based perspective hears: “You think something is wrong with me for having my opinion.” In other words: “I

don't agree with you," gets translated into, "You're stupid for thinking that way." Making a mistake gets translated into "I am less of a person." Someone else having things go well for them, a loving relationship, a promotion, new car or house, translates into, "God must not love me as much as them." Your children's misbehaving or imperfections translate into "I'm a lousy parent." Your inability to live up to some Christian formula translates into "I'm a defective Christian." Your spouse's feeling depressed translates into "I'm a terrible spouse." Do you hear the shame and condemnation?

Please hear me, CVCHURCH—shame and anger are vital for us as a church family, because I believe that many, if not most of us, struggle under a shame-based perspective. It is rampant in our culture. If we do not identify the origin of these feelings, and we just continue to live thinking we're damaged goods, we will have a tendency to run angry and blame others! We will not experience the 'living water', the 'living life to the fullest' that Jesus Christ said He came to give us. We each must be open and rigorously honest with ourselves. Jesus said that when you know and embrace the truth, the truth that is in Jesus Christ, will set you free. So how do I let Jesus free me?

2) Identify any shame-based characteristics you grew up with

Today I'm going to close by giving you two of the seven most damaging shame-based characteristics. Next week Pastor Scott is going to cover the last five and then teach you the remedy for shame and inferiority. These characteristics all come from our families of origin. This is how destructive sin is in generation after generation. When Adam and Eve sinned, and the love, acceptance and life of God was snuffed out of their lives, they passed on the sinful nature to every one of us. Romans 5:12 says: **“When Adam sinned, sin entered the entire human race. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.”**

God created the family to be a place that builds up and affirms the value of each member. Unfortunately, because of our sinful nature, the family home is usually the place where the shame-based perspective takes root. As we identify these first two shame-based characteristics today, and as Pastor Scott continues next week, you will likely identify with some or much of what you hear. Do not beat yourself up! We will close later today by going to Jesus for the healing and restoration we need, and to do that, we must find out exactly

why we feel **defective, deficient, and damaged**. We don't feel that way because it is true, the Bible is very clear that these feelings of inferiority and shame are a lie. We feel this way because we have been tricked and lied to that we are defective, and we have believed what we have been told. The tricks and lies happen to everyone! But when we believe it, that's our choice—that's on us, it's our sin. Satan loves to create dysfunctional and damaged families so that we carry the curse of shame from generation to generation. The first, and most common, shame-based characteristic is:

a) Verbal shaming

We could spend all day on this one. I encourage you to write down what shaming words you heard growing up. Anything that attacks your intrinsic value is verbal shaming. Comparing one person to another creates shame. Name calling causes shame. Phrases like, "What's wrong with you?" "What an idiot you are!" shame a person. Raising the standard after a job is completed saying, "Well, that was good, but you didn't do _____," or "You could have done better," sends the message "**You don't measure up.**" You're inferior. You're defective. You're damaged. Anything that verbally

says ‘You aren’t good enough’ is verbal shaming. Write down some of the verbal shaming you have experienced in your life. The second shame-based characteristic, one that’s rampant in high-achieving families of origin, is the idea that:

b) Value comes through performance

God intended for each of us to grow up in an environment where our needs are met because of who we are and not because of what we do. **In shame-based relationships, value and acceptance are earned on the basis of performance.** The double bind that happens in shame-based relationships is that our performance always seems to fall short of the standard, sending us the message “you are inadequate.” Over time, this communicates a deep defect in our intrinsic value, leading us to simply quit caring about ourselves, and others, because we feel that it doesn’t matter what we do, it is never going to be right, we will never amount to anything, so why try.

As Pastor Scott will teach in more depth next week, the answer to the shame-based characteristics you may carry with you from your childhood is NOT to

try harder, but to accept what God says about you. All shame is a lie from the pit of Hell. You are not who you think you, or who Satan says you are, but who God says you are.

Paul gives us the antidote to shame in the book of Romans. Let's read Romans 5:1-2 out loud: **“Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of highest privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.”**

Do you struggle with feeling like a loser? Are you in relationship with someone who struggles with inferiority? The Good News of the Gospel is that, through Jesus Christ, you can have a right relationship with God.

Because Jesus Christ took Satan’s shame for you on the cross, when you submit and surrender your life to Jesus you can experience peace with your Creator, Father God, and with that comes the highest privilege of experiencing confidence and joy because your Heavenly Father, who created the galaxies, the sun, moon, and stars promises you can choose to actually share in His glory, His victory, His life and His love. Let's read Romans 8:1-

2 out loud together, **“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. ²For the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death.”** The Bible teaches that when you belong to Jesus Christ, there is no condemnation, no shame, no nagging sense that you don’t belong, don’t measure up or don’t count. That can all be taken away by a relationship with Jesus Christ. If you’ve never asked Jesus to have a relationship with you, you can do that today in just a moment. But maybe you are sitting here today thinking: “I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, but I deal with strong feelings of inferiority and shame.” This is why identifying your thoughts and feelings of inferiority are so important. When you surrender your life to Jesus Christ, inferiority and shame don’t automatically cease operating in your life. You get to grow in your faith and in retraining and renewing your mind to think the way God thinks about you. For every condemnation you feel, or hear, or experience, you get to say, out loud, “there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” Let’s say it together: **there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus** Let’s pray.