

Part 36: Un-control-ability

Begin with a prayer for the grace of openness to the truth about ourselves. Share some of your experience of anger in the past week. Has there been any change in your response to your anger?

Anger at our inability to control life

Much of the anger that we experience is as the result of things not being as they should or could be. We imagine how good and satisfying life would be if things worked out as they should. When they don't, we may find ourselves seeking reasons or people responsible that we can blame, and they become the object of our pent-up anger and frustration. Blaming and scapegoating is very common in our society.

This attitude of anger at imperfection arises because we live with a world view which says that perfection is possible. 'We can get it right if only we try hard enough'. 'We can achieve excellence.' We feel that if only others can get to a point of perfection, then there is hope for us. So we are ever in search of the perfect person, the perfect situation, the perfect deal.

All we find, however, is inadequate mediocrity and variations on this theme. This angers us because we so want and need to be perfect. Again, by our value system, we need to be perfect to be acceptable. And that is the issue.

There is little understanding of the reality of sin and its effects on all that we experience, as well as the fact that life is difficult and often involves suffering. We also find it difficult to accept our own imperfections. But we cannot be perfect on our own terms, we can only come to wholeness with Jesus.

Anger puts justice before love. This can make us destructive in executing justice, usually with a noticeable lack of compassion or acknowledgement that we are fallible and fail so easily.

Judgement and condemnation in any form are a very risky business since they presume to stand in a position of sinlessness ('Let them who are without sin cast the first stone.'). Our very basis of judgement is what exposes us, since we are anxious to cover our own sin by finding another person guilty. Look at Matthew 7:1–5 and John 8:1–11 for 20 minutes.

- What does it mean to be perfect?
- On what basis can we judge another?
- How can we diffuse anger aimed at things or people who are not being or doing what we feel they should be?

Write up your reflections and share.

End with prayers of sorrow at criticism or judgmentalism. Select next week's reader.

At home, pray through your areas of non-acceptance or where you feel you are out of control.



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