



QUESTIONS YOU CAN'T SHAKE

Why Can't I Shake My Inner Critic? // Jeff Brodie // April 19, 2026

You know that voice in your head that keeps telling you you're not good enough? The one that says you'll never measure up, never fix your mistakes, never become the person you hoped to be? This week we're tackling the question most people quietly carry: Why can't I shake my inner critic? Because what's happening inside your head is shaping the life you're living. And there might be a way to silence the lies and finally find peace.

Scripture: [Romans 7:15-20 NLT](#) // [Romans 6:6-7, 14 NLT](#) // [Romans 8:1-2, 6 NLT](#)

Bottom Line: Your inner critic isn't the final word; it's an invitation to a better one.

Digging In:

Reminder: The goal is a good discussion, not completing every question. Use these as a tool to help.

1. If you had to guess, what's the ratio of positive to negative in your internal conversation about yourself this week?
2. Jeff described the inner critic as something that identifies you as the source of your problems. Where does that show up most in your life—relationships, work, parenting, money, something else?
3. Jeff drew a distinction between *self-esteem* (denying sin), *self-compassion* (comforting sin), and the *gospel* (freeing us from sin). Which of those three has been your default approach, and what has it actually produced in you?
4. Read Romans 7:15-20 together. The apostle Paul shares that he so often does the things he hates and can't do the things he wants. Does that resonate with you? Frustrate you? What does it feel like to have someone as sharp as Paul admit that?
5. Jeff talked about the "cracks" or broken places created by what we've done or what's been done to us. What's one crack you've noticed in yourself that tends to collect the most lies?
6. Thomas Merton called it the "false self"—the version of someone else's life we think would finally fix our broken places. Who or what have you been reaching toward as a secret solution to your own brokenness?
7. Read Romans 6:6-7. Our culture tends to treat the inner critic as purely a psychological problem, something therapy or mindfulness can fix. What does it change if the inner critic is also a spiritual problem, not just a mental one?

8. Jeff made a clear distinction between conviction and condemnation. What's the difference? Which voice do you hear more, and how can you tell them apart in real time?
9. Romans 8:1 says there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. If that's true, why do so many followers of Jesus still live under crushing self-judgment? What gets in the way of actually believing that?
10. Is there a specific lie your inner critic keeps replaying that you're ready to name out loud and replace with what the gospel actually says about you? What is it?

Responding Together:

Take a few moments and have someone read Psalm 139 over the group to allow God's perspective to drown out their inner critic. And then pray Romans 8:1 over each person in the room by name: *There is no condemnation for _____ who belongs to Christ Jesus.* Let the group hear their own name spoken in that sentence. Invite the Holy Spirit to do what self-esteem and self-compassion can't—not just silence their inner critic, but replace it with a voice that's true.

Looking Forward:

Each morning this week, before you check your phone, read Psalm 139 slowly (out loud if possible). Then complete this sentence in a journal or on your phone: *Jesus defeated sin, so I don't have to be/have _____ to be okay.* Let a different answer surface each day. By the end of the week, you'll have a record of what your inner critic has actually been saying and what the gospel says in response.