



# ADDRESS THE MESS

## WE'VE ALL GOT MESSINESS...

Life is just messy, but the good news is it's not just you!  
So when it comes to messes, try to remember:

≡ ALWAYS BE A STUDENT, NOT A CRITIC, OF THE ≡  
PEOPLE AROUND YOU WHOSE LIVES ARE MESSY. ≡

Think about the phrase, "Nobody's perfect." You're really saying:

- There's a perfect that nobody is.
- There's a law, there's morality, there are ethics, there's something you don't live up to. It exists, and you fall short.
- There's a subtle sense of accountability to something that is over you and beyond you.

We've all felt the pressure of conscience... What if that pressure is the gracious presence of God? It doesn't press us to be better people, it presses us to acknowledge God and the standard we fall short of.

In his letter to the Romans the apostle Paul says: "Now, we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law."

- If you're a Jewish person, this refers to the actual law of God as found in the Old Testament.
- If you're a Christian, it would be the law of Jesus. And the law of Jesus is that you treat other people the way that God, through Jesus, has treated you.
- It could be the law of your conscience. There are things you just intuitively know you should and shouldn't do.

➡ This is something else we all have in common—all of us fall short of a standard, whether that's God's standard, the Old Testament, New Testament, or the standard of our conscience.

In summary, Paul is saying:

- There is a law we are all aware of in some general way.
- We all know we fall short.
- We all sort of feel accountable.

## WHAT'S THE POINT?

(NOT) so that you will be perfect.

The point is that we would be silenced when we're about to look at someone and be critical of them. Because we know we fall short as well.

- You'll never be so good that God says you're good enough.
  - God doesn't ding your conscience so you'll just become a better person.
- Through the law we become conscious of our failure. Nobody likes to be reminded of the fact they are not what they ought to be. But there's no way to escape it.
  - Every mess has a reference point... We all know how we SHOULD behave and how we SHOULD respond. C.S Lewis explains in *Mere Christianity* that there's something above and beyond ordinary facts when it comes to human behavior.
- The Law is a mirror and a reminder.
  - God speaks to you through your conscience. He reminds you so you will become aware that there's something, there's someone, outside of you to whom you are accountable.

## REFLECT ON THE MESS

1. Identify what the mess is.
2. Identify what created the mess.
3. Identify the reference point. What SHOULD be your response to the mess?
4. Evaluate how your current response reflects the reference point. Be specific.
5. Determine how (or if) your response needs to change to reflect the reference point.