

ADDRESS THE MESS

PART 1: The Mess in the Mirror

INTRODUCTION

Whether we're religious or not, we all have at least one thing in common: we've all made some messes in our lives. You've said things like, "I messed that up," "I made a mess of that," or, "My life is a mess." We've all been in, are in, or are only one decision away from a mess. But there's something you need to know: there's a powerful connection between your messes and your relationship with God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you usually respond to other people's messes? Do you go into fix-it mode, listen mode, or do you judge their failures? How has that tendency affected your relationships?
2. Talk about a time when you fell short of your own standards. How did you feel? What did you do to try to clean up the mess you'd made?
3. *"If you can see your mess, you can see God. To recognize one is to acknowledge the other."* Respond to that statement. Do you agree? Why or why not?
4. Read Romans 3:19–20. In what ways are you tempted to compare yourself to others and think of yourself as righteous based on your behavior? What, if anything, do you currently do to resist that temptation?
5. Read Romans 3:23–24. How do these verses challenge the way you think about your relationship with God? In what ways are they comforting?
6. Who is a person or group that is easy for you to judge? What can you do this week to acknowledge you share common ground with that person or group, that you are or have been a mess? How can this group help you?

MOVING FORWARD

We each have something in common with the people or groups we most despise. We're all a mess. We all fall short of our own standards. We all fall short of each other's standards. We all fall short of God's standards. When you see someone else's mess, don't judge and condemn. Instead, say to yourself, "I know a mess when I see one because I've been a mess."

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

Matthew 7:4–5