

## Letters From a Skeptic

### Lesson 12: Mission Impossible: Righteousness Without Christ

*“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ,  
so that we may be justified by faith”*

Gal 3:24



*“Being a Christian isn’t about doing what you don’t want to do; it’s about allowing Christ to change what you want to do.”*

### Correspondence 26: “Isn’t the Christian life impossible to live?”

**Father** <brief, selected sections from pp. 202-204>

1. Reflects on the correspondence so far: *“I’ve really come a long way!”*
2. Says he can’t believe he’s seriously considering *“all this”* (i.e. Christianity).
  - a. Also says he *has* to consider it seriously, given all the evidence
3. Says he’s *“largely over the hump on this whole thing”* and thanks Greg for his persistence!
4. Tells Greg that the reply on hell really helped him. He liked the “option” of believing that eternal punishment might not mean eternal torture but eternal termination.
5. States that he’s **considering becoming a Christian**, but **wonders what he’s getting into**.
6. Wonders **“How can God really expect anyone to live up to His ideals?”**
  - a. **Looking lustfully** = adultery, **Remarriage** = adultery
  - b. **Loving your enemies**
    - i. Offering your coat after he steals your shirt; turning the other cheek
    - ii. Not a “practical” alternative in a sinful world
7. Says he **can’t live up to that**, but **doesn’t want to be a hypocrite**.

**Son** <pp. 204-208 – **CLASS READS ON THEIR OWN** >

1. Tells his dad to always remember that it’s not first and foremost a matter of what you believe, but first and foremost a matter of whom you trust:

*“A saving relationship with God is not forged by resolving particular issues, but by embracing the Savior as your own. Confess your need for Him. Receive His sacrifice for you. Commit your life to Him. That is it, Dad. That is everything. Everything else Christianity is about flows from this one act and is really just a footnote to it.”*
2. Explains being unable to “live up to God’s standards” shows out how badly we need a Savior.
3. Uses the **Pharisees** as an example of how **pride** makes people think they don’t need a Savior
  - a. Says *“Left on our own, we are all ‘in danger of hell fire.’”*
  - b. Says that with God, it’s all or nothing. We’re either righteous or we’re not. And without Christ, **no human is righteous in God’s sight**.

*“as it is written, ‘THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;’”* -Rom 3:10
4. Explains that the **Law was given primarily to show us the need for salvation** and to bring us to Christ (see Gal 3, specifically Gal 3:24-25)
5. Also explains that we can’t earn (merit) salvation—it can only be accepted as the gift it is.
6. Addresses his father’s perception that he’ll have to “give up” certain things in his life.
  - a. Says that God ***“cleans you up from the inside.”***

## Next Week

1. **Correspondence 29**, Epilog, and Tribute (with very brief looks at intro to **correspondence 26**).
2. Also, **correspondence 27** is an **excellent discussion** of why and how the sacrifice of Jesus pardons us. Read this on your own.