

Overcoming Dysfunctional Family Relationships

Making Peace with Your Past

Sessions 1 & 2

I. DEFINITIONS

A. What is a Dysfunctional Family?

--A dysfunctional family is one where improper and immature behavior of at least one parent damages the growth of individuality and healthy relational skills among family members.

--A dysfunctional family is one where family members are impaired emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually.

--A dysfunctional family is one where everyone is negatively affected even when only one family member experiences a problem.

“He who brings trouble on his family will inherit only wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise.” (Proverbs 11:29)

B. What is a Functional Family?

--A functional family is one where proper and mature behavior of two parents cultivates a healthy balance between **individuality** and **relational skills** among family members.

--A functional family is one where healthy emotional, psychological, and spiritual growth is cultivated among family members.

--A functional family is one where, as family members encounter problems, they cultivate the ability to face difficulty with confidence and the support of other family members.

“He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.” (Proverbs 14:26)

II. CHARACTERISTICS

A. Dysfunctional Family Roles

PARENTS (Eph 6:4)

--The _____ parent engages in some form of immature, or destructive behavior to the detriment of other family members.

--The _____ parent allows the inappropriate behavior to continue without establishing boundaries to the detriment of the other family members.

CHILDREN

--The _____ **Child.** The "*hero*" tries to fix the family problems and help create a positive family image with noteworthy achievement. This child receives positive attention but often develops perfectionistic, compulsive behaviors.

--The _____ **Child.** The "*scapegoat*" draws focus away from the family problems and onto himself or herself with rebellious, uncontrollable behavior. This child consumes time and energy from the family members and often develops self-destructive life patterns.

--The _____ **Child.** The "*lost child*" hopes that by ignoring family problems the difficulties will go away. This child avoids attention and is often lonely and withdrawn.

--The _____ **Child.** The "*clown*" uses humor and antics to direct the focus away from the family problems. This child is often hyperactive and usually seeks to be the center of attention.

ROLE REVERSAL

-- Children once did whatever they could to please their parents.

-- Now parents are doing whatever they can to please their children. Parents should communicate like adults, in respectful and positive ways, to a child. Don't be overly defensive of your child.

III. CAUSES

A. Dysfunctional Family Styles (Exodus 34:6-7)

The _____ Family

- Both the household and individuals are poorly organized.
 - Family is plagued by problems.
- Parents are inconsistent and indecisive.
 - Children are emotionally abandoned.

Result: Family members are not connected.

Remedy: Proverbs 28:2

The _____ Family

- Structure is overly rigid.
- Tone is authoritative and dictatorial.
- Parents tend to be faultfinding and critical.
- Children are task oriented...value is placed on their performance.

Result: Family members are fearful and insensitive.

Remedy: Ephesians 6:4

The _____ Family

- Parental authority is lacking.
- Feelings are overprotected.
- Disagreements are avoided.
- Children are the center of attention.

Results: Family members are undisciplined.

Remedy: Proverbs 13:24

The _____ Family

- Conformity is strong within the family.
- Self-direction is lacking.
 - Parents are overly possessive.
 - Children are smothered.

Results: Family members are insecure.

Remedy: Deuteronomy 6:5

B. The Functional Family Style

The _____ Family

- Structure and discipline are maintained by parents.
- Individual responsibility is required.
- Love and obedience to God are developed.
- Children are secure.

Result: Family relationships are balanced.

Remedy: Deuteronomy 12:7

C. Root Cause

Wrong Belief: *“My parents did not give me the unconditional love, significance and security I needed as a child. Since my past is unchangeable, I can’t change what I am today.”*

Right Belief: “My need for unconditional love, significance and security is being met by Christ who lives in me. Although I can’t change my past, I can change my attitude about my past. I will depend upon God to empower me to learn healthy ways of relating to my family.”

“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.”
(Colossians 3:3)

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”
(Colossians 3:13)

IV. STEPS TO SOLUTION

A. Key Verse to Memorize

*“If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples.
Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*
(John 8:31-32)

B. Key Passages to Read and Reread

Genesis 37, 39, 41, 42, 50

Breaking Free of Family Failures

Genesis 37

Joseph's DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

Lacking communication	--Angry
Playing favorites	--Vengeful
Jealous	--Disloyal
Dishonest	--Fearful

Genesis 39, 41

Joseph's WALK WITH THE LORD

Yielded to God's ways	--Faithful
Obedient to authority	--Honest
Trust worthy	--Humble
Morally pure	-- Persevering

Genesis 42

Joseph's RESPONSE TO HIS FAMILY

Forgiving Generous Honorable

Genesis 50

Joseph's RESPONSE TO GOD

Submissive Trusting Grateful

DON'T BE A PRISONER OF YOUR PAST

"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." (Genesis 50:20)

C. PUTTING away the PAST (Phil 3:13)

1. _____ yourself time to grieve your past. (John 16:20)

2. GIVE up your need to be _____ . (Psa 55:22)

3. GIVE Christ _____ place in your heart. (Luke 9:23-24)

4. GIVE God _____ for your past. (1 Thess. 5:18)

5. Give attention to how you _____ to your circumstances as a child. Were you. . . (Prov 18:15)

The _____ child?

The _____ child?

The _____ child?

The _____ child?

6. GIVE thought to your present _____ characteristics. (Ps. 139:23-24)

7. GIVE consideration to your _____ rights. (Acts 5:29)

8. GIVE yourself _____. (Gal 1:10)

9. GIVE up _____. (Eph 4:32)

10. GIVE time to _____ healthy family relationships. (Matt 5:23-24)

D. Cultivate Your Family for the Future (Jer. 29:11)

Emphasize the _____ of each family member. (1 Cor 12:14-17)

_____ togetherness but also encourage individuality. (1 Cor 12:4-7)

_____ consistency in the messages you communicate. (Jas 3:10-13)

_____ immediate but appropriate discipline. (Prov 13:24)

_____ a generous margin for mistakes. (Eph 4:32)

_____ the appropriate expression of feelings. (Prov 20:5)

_____ and develop natural talents and abilities. (Prov 22:6)

_____ family members to take responsibility for their own attitudes and actions. (Gal 6:4-5)

_____ everyone with love and respect. (1 Cor 16:14)

_____ a dependence on the Lord. (Prov 3:5-6)

“A poor background is a poor excuse for poor behavior.

With the power of Christ inside you, your past should not overpower you.

Never give the past the power that Christ alone should have”.

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