
What Dysfunction Looks Like

The Story

Genesis 27

Sermon Notes

7 Markers of Dysfunctional Families:

1. Dysfunctional families have favorite kids, and everybody knows it.
2. Dysfunctional families have secrets and sneak around.
3. In Dysfunctional families, mom and dad don't communicate.
4. In Dysfunctional families, parents don't stop parenting.
5. Dysfunctional families lie to each other.
6. Dysfunctional families don't trust each other.
7. Dysfunctional families hold grudges.

My Story

1. Looking back over your notes, what did you find most helpful, challenging, or interesting in this week's teaching? Was there anything you've never heard before or something that made you think differently?
2. Do any particular stories or thoughts come to mind when you think of family dysfunction?
3. Chris said God doesn't disqualify us because of our sin, but He redeems us. Have you seen this play out in your life? How?
4. Chris provided seven markers of a dysfunctional family. Can you relate to any of those markers? Why?
5. How would you rate your communication with your spouse or other family members? Why?
6. What does it mean to sacrifice your wants for your spouse? What does this look like?

In The Beginning

Chris Figaretti
October 23, 2022
Sermon #25 | Genesis 27

7. Chris said in dysfunctional families, parents don't stop parenting. When you hear this, what does it mean to you? Is God nudging you in any way when you think of this point?
8. How do lies destroy relationships in families?
9. Is your family one where family members trust each other? Why do you think you either trust or don't trust one another?
10. What is a grudge? Are you holding any?

Digging Deeper

Read through these guiding scriptures and answer the corresponding questions.

Read Genesis 27

1. Think of each person in this account (Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob). How has each exhibited the markers of a dysfunctional family?
2. Think of the sins of each of the people in this account. How did these sins pile on top of each other and keep making the situation worse and worse?
3. Can you see any escape points where the people involved could have humbled themselves or acted boldly in a way to stop the situation from continuing to deteriorate?
4. Now think of your own story. Can you relate to any of the people? Why?
5. What are you going to do about this?

Read Ephesians 5:22-33 and 1 Peter 2:21 – 1 Peter 3:7

Spend some time thinking and praying through these passages. Don't just read them once and even read them in different Bible translations (NKJV, NIV, HCSB, NASB, NLT, ESV), so you don't miss the truth and nuances of what God is trying to tell us about what makes a successful, holy (set apart for God) marriage.

1. What do you think God is telling you in these passages if you are married or in a serious relationship pursuing marriage?

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2. How are you doing with what is written about marriage and the roles and consequences for each spouse in these passages? Where are you doing well? Where are you not doing so well? Why do you think that is?
3. Is there anything you don't understand or struggle to agree with in these passages? If so, what will you do to seek clarity or help as you wrestle through what God is telling us? If you're not sure, please talk with one of the church staff members so we can help you.
4. If you are married or in a serious relationship considering marriage, please consider reading these passages together with your spouse and talking through them together. If you did that, how did it go? If there was conflict or disagreement, is there another Christian couple you know who you can talk with together? If not, please speak to one of the pastors or church staff so that we can help.

Bringing It Home

1. When Chris discussed the seven markers of a dysfunctional family, did any of those remind you of any family environment you're part of? Have you resolved the dysfunction in your mind and heart? If so, how? If not, have you asked God to help you navigate the situation? What are you doing about it?
2. Why do you think it can be problematic when parents have a favorite kid, and everyone knows it?
3. Ask yourself, "Are you keeping secrets from your spouse or other family members who should know? Are you sneaking around to maintain those secrets?" Ask God to search your heart and speak to you about this. What is God telling you to do? What will you do?
4. If you're married, do you and your spouse communicate well? Would you rate most of your communications as loving? As respectful? Do you pray regularly for your spouse? Do you regularly pray together with your spouse? If your honest answers to these questions are not positive, what will you do about it?
5. If you're married, how are you fighting for your marriage? List specifics. If you can't list specifics, what will you do to start fighting for your marriage? Are you willing to humble yourself and ask for prayer? Are you willing to be upfront in your Life Group and seek prayer from your group members? Are you willing to talk to a Christian peer or mentor? Are you willing to talk to one of our pastors and seek help?

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Sermon #25 | Genesis 27

6. How is your relationship with your child/children? If it's strained, is there anything you can do to seek healing in that relationship? Have you asked God what can be done? Are you praying for God to soften your heart and soften your kids' hearts regularly? Have you sought wise council from another Christian? Have you asked for prayer for your relationship with your kids?
7. Do you lie to your family members? Why? What fruit have you seen come from that? How can you make the situation right if you have struggled with this?
8. Is trusting someone a challenge for you? If so, please spend some time asking God into that area of your life. What is He telling you? How will you seek restitution and the ability to trust? Will you seek prayer from another Christian?
9. Think of all we have learned about Esau. He was willing to trade away his inheritance because he was godless and had to face the consequences of his godlessness (Hebrews 12:16-17). Can you see any of Esau in yourself? How are you, or have you traded away the inheritance God has given you for something temporary? What specifically will you do about that?
10. Why is holding a grudge so damaging to yourself and your relationships? Think of your close relationships; where are you holding grudges? What can you do about it?
11. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and Romans 12:9-12. How would adopting these scriptures and living them out help you avoid or resolve the dysfunction in your family?
12. Read 1 John 1:8-9. Read it aloud; read it multiple times. Try different translations. What does this tell you about the nature of God? What does this tell you about your nature? Does this give you hope? What will you do with this?
13. If you are a follower of Jesus, how does He give you hope even though the world around us, our families, and even ourselves might be steeped in dysfunction? Spend some time talking about this in your group - this is important, and one of the goals of our gathering together should be reminding one another of the hope we have in Christ regardless of what's going on around us.