

...but God

Series with Skip Heitzig

SERIES:	...but God
MESSAGE:	Families Are Dysfunctional...but God
SPEAKER:	Skip Heitzig
SCRIPTURE:	Genesis 31

MESSAGE SUMMARY

One of the most used (if not overused) terms of our culture is the word *dysfunctional*. It has become the chic descriptor of flawed and broken people and especially families. Too often this expression is used as an excuse to justify bad behaviors in other people. But this story of Jacob and Laban yields much insight into human behavior as well as divine intervention. Here we discover three levels of relational interaction and family dynamics.

DETAILED NOTES

- I. Introduction
 - A. You can't choose your family, but you can choose to adjust to and add positivity to your family
 - B. The term *dysfunctional family* has been used since the 1960s to describe families that have problems that follow children into the next generation
 - C. *Dysfunctional* is overused, but dysfunction is pervasive
- II. Every Family Is Dysfunctional (vv. 1-2)
 - A. Genesis 27-33 chronicles one messed up family: Jacob, his wives Rachel and Leah, and his father-in-law, Laban
 - B. Jacob both came from and married into a dysfunctional family
 1. Dysfunctional people tend to attract dysfunctional people
 2. Jacob and Laban were two peas in a dysfunctional pod
 - C. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are biblical heroes, but lying and deception was practiced and passed on for generations
 1. Jacob's parents played favorites: Isaac preferred Esau; Rebekah preferred Jacob (see Genesis 25:28)
 2. God predicted Esau, the oldest, would serve Jacob, the youngest (see Genesis 25:23); Isaac fought against God's prediction
 3. Jacob connived, deceived, and tricked Esau out of his birthright in exchange for a bowl of stew (see Genesis 25:29-33)
 4. When Isaac was old, Jacob and Rebekah conspired to deceive Isaac into giving Jacob his blessing (see Genesis 27)
 - D. Jacob fell in love with Rachel, whose father, Laban, was a master deceiver (see Genesis 29:18-28)
 1. Laban forced Jacob to work for him for seven years in order to marry Rachel
 2. On their wedding night, Laban switched Rachel for his older daughter, Leah
 3. Jacob worked seven more years for Laban to finally marry Rachel

- E. Jacob had two wives, two concubine wives, lots of kids, and many problems
 - F. Every human has their issues that affect their family and the family they marry into
 - 1. We don't function the way God intended
 - 2. Dysfunction is the result of sin (see I Corinthians 15:21)
 - 3. Even the church is dysfunctional
 - 4. Jesus described humans as poor, brokenhearted, captives, blind, and oppressed (see Luke 4:18)
- III. God Can Function in Dysfunction (v. 3)
- A. A dysfunctional family never stopped God from functioning, blessing, or working through that family
 - 1. God spoke to Jacob (see v. 3)
 - 2. God spoke to Laban (see v. 24)
 - B. Perfect God works through and uses imperfect people; Holy God speaks to and works through unholy people
 - 1. There is no other kind of people for Him to use (see I Corinthians 1:27)
 - 2. Peter failed; Moses failed; David failed; Abraham failed; Isaac and Jacob failed
 - 3. Taking failure as the final word is to fail; learning from failure is to grow
 - 4. Don't let your failure define you—make your failure serve you
 - C. God reserves the right to use people who disagree with you, who don't like you
- IV. Growth Is Seeing God Instead of Dysfunction (vv. 4-11)
- A. Jacob demonstrated real spiritual growth (see vv. 4-8)
 - 1. He included God in his situation
 - 2. He gathered his family together to discuss the problems; he was honest and candid
 - 3. He revealed a new way of seeing, of processing evil and pain; the lens through which he now viewed his life and events was *but God* bifocals
 - 4. He acknowledged God's presence (see v. 5), God's protection (see v. 7), and God's partnership (see v. 9)
 - B. Jacob saw the functioning God rather than the dysfunction around him
 - C. Other biblical heroes also wore *but God* bifocals
 - 1. Joseph (see Genesis 50:20)
 - 2. David (see I Samuel 23:14)
 - 3. Ezra (see Nehemiah 9:17)
 - 4. Paul (see Romans 8:28)
- V. Closing
- A. *But God* bifocals let you see the divine hand; they pull back the curtain of providence
 - B. Let's interpret life through the lens of *but God* bifocals
 - C. God is never intimidated by our flaws or failures; He can match all our dysfunction with His faithfulness
 - D. The gospel—the cross—is the greatest example of how God functions in our dysfunction

Figures referenced: James Montgomery Boice, George Burns, Richard Carl Hoefler, J.I. Packer, George Bernard Shaw

Cross references: Genesis 25:23, 28, 29-33; 27; 29:18-28; 31; 50:20; I Samuel 23:14; Nehemiah 9:17; Luke 4:18; Romans 8:28; I Corinthians 1:27; 15:21

Topic: Family

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