

Can God Fix This?
First Colony Church of Christ
Small Group Series Leader's Guide
Fall 2011

Dysfunction: I Have Family Scars

Families are the basic unit of society. We all have one. God's design is that a healthy family would raise healthy children who would then go on to raise healthy families themselves and on and on. Unfortunately, sin has come along and tainted God's perfect design. Families have issues. From the real "First Family" all the way until today, families are imperfect and can leave future generations to deal with those issues.

When our family doesn't function as it is supposed to we are left with injuries, usually emotional ones, that turn into scars. Much like physical scars, these emotional scars leave us with a permanent reminder of the pain from the past. So what do we do as adults when these scars continually remind us of the pain and struggles from our growing up years?

Our goal in this discussion is not to delve deeply into each group member's psyche in order to fully unearth and expose all of the pain from our pasts. Our goal is simply to acknowledge that sometimes the past hurts. Sometimes we are left with a certain amount of dysfunction ourselves. So let's discuss how we can move ahead in a healthy, God-honoring way.

If you or your group members are feeling the pain of a dysfunctional past, you're not alone. Research studies show that approximately 98% of people have some kind of dysfunction (I guess the 2% leaves room for the study leaders to fall into the non-dysfunctional category). There's even plenty of messed up families in the Bible. Adam and Eve have a son who killed his brother. Abraham tried to give his wife away on multiple occasions to save his own skin. Oh, and he also had a child with his wife's servant. Joseph's dad played favorites, no doubt a result of his mother and father playing favorites. David, the man after God's own heart, had an affair and his son tried to kill him (seemingly unrelated incidents). There's plenty more where these came from. The point is, no family is perfect. They all fail to function as they are supposed to.

Read Genesis 25:19-34 & 27:1-41. This story of Jacob and Esau reads like a soap-opera. There's favoritism, lying, stealing, betrayal, mistrust and more. Probably the most telling verse to sum up the dysfunction is Genesis 25:28:

*Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.
(NIV)*

Is it any wonder that Jacob and Esau grew up so distant from one another with parent's like these? Isaac and Rebekah fell short as parents to these twin boys. The result was a lifetime of pain and distance.