

say as the father in Proverbs 4:1-2, "*Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding. For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.*"

- 2) The wife must set aside quality time to read the Bible and pray every day. Her family and acquaintances ought to know her as "*a woman that feareth the LORD*" (Pr 31:30). It ought to be true that "*The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.*" (Proverbs 31:11).
- 3) Each child should learn at an early age to read the Bible daily and talk to the Lord in prayer. Of young Timothy, Paul said (2 Timothy 3:15) "*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*"

#### **b. Seek to know God intimately.**

- 1) Know that God delights in you getting to know Him (Jeremiah 9:23-24).
- 2) Search for God on every page of your Bible (e.g., Proverbs 2:1-6).
- 3) Note carefully His qualities and characteristics (e.g., Psalm 89:5-14).

#### **c. Deny self and live for God and others.**

- 1) Jesus said this is key to being His disciple. (Luke 9:23) "*And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*"
- 2) Jesus also said the greatest things we can do in life is to love God and others (Mark 12:30-31) "*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*"

**Conclusion:** If you see any of the signs of a dysfunctional family in your home, take heed. Those signs are sinful. With God's help, address, confess and forsake those sins. Then apply the solutions we just noted. Resolve to make your home all that God wants it to be.

**Song:** Cleanse Me - 166

# Signs of a Dysfunctional Family

19 September 2021 PM – Genesis 27:1-46 – Gen2021 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** A dysfunctional family is a family in which conflict, sinful behaviour, and the hurtful words of parents and children are a regular occurrence, leading to heartache and waywardness. No parent is perfect, but in dysfunctional families, he or she ignores or denies the problems. Sadly, Isaac and Rebekah's family had become dysfunctional.

**Transition:** As we dig through Genesis 27, I want us to note signs, sources and solutions to a dysfunctional family.

## 1. Signs of a Dysfunctional Family

### a. Failed leadership, v.1-4

- 1) Isaac was a **poor leader**. His family was dysfunctional and it was his fault.
  - a) God held Adam responsible for the fall (Gen 3:9). He was the leader. He was the head of his home.
  - b) In Ephesians 5, God gave husbands the duty to love and lead as Christ.
  - c) When a family becomes dysfunctional, the husband is not the only one guilty, but he is responsible.
- 2) He was **selfish**. He loved Esau, his firstborn son, above Jacob. He was grieved that Esau had married two heathen wives (Ge 26:34-35). He knew that Esau was not a godly man, yet he selfishly wanted him to receive the firstborn blessing. We can certainly see **pride** in his choice as well.
- 3) Isaac was **out of tune with God**. Prior to talking to Esau about his plans to bless him, nothing is mentioned about him seeking God's mind first. If he did pray about it, he certainly did not listen to God's reply.
- 4) He was **disobedient to God**. It seems very likely that Rebekah had told Isaac the words she heard from God before the twins were born (Gen 25:23).
- 5) He **did not commune with his wife Rebekah** about his plans. Dysfunctional homes lack communication.
- 6) Rather than admitting his fault, Isaac *trembled very exceedingly* when he learned he had been deceived (v.33). He **blamed** Jacob rather than admitting to Esau

that he had not obeyed God in the matter (v.35).

### b. Disharmony, v.5-17

- 1) When Rebekah overheard Isaac's words to Esau, she did **not try to communicate** with him. God ordained that she be his completer not his competition.
- 2) She was a **disloyal** wife. She disagreed with Isaac. She plotted to work behind Isaac's back. She wanted her loved son Jacob to get the blessing. She may have excused her disloyalty by thinking she was "helping God", but that does not justify her sin. God does not need our help.
- 3) She was a **deceitful** wife. She commanded Jacob and helped him deceive his father (v.8). **Do not forget that the Jacob is more than 40 years old** (Gen 26:34).
  - a) She said she would accept the curse (v.11-13).
  - b) She cooked the kid to taste like venison (v.14).
  - c) She took Esau's garment and put it on Jacob (v.15).
  - d) She sewed the raw goatskins on Jacob's arms and neck to make him appear hairy like Esau (v.16).
  - e) She put the meat and bread in Jacob's hands (v.17).
- 4) She was a **poor motherly example** to her sons. She failed as a wife and as a mother. She obviously never sought God's will in all of her scheming.

### c. Discontentment & deception, v.18-29

- 1) Jacob was old enough to stand up and be a man, but he **acted weakly**. There is no evidence that he sought God's mind in the matter.
- 2) He was **covetous**. He had already deceived his brother into giving him the birthright (Gen 25:33). Now he longed for the blessing of his father as well.
- 3) He was **deceitful**. He went along with his mother's crooked plan to deceive his father. He knew his mother's plan was not right (v.12). He killed the kid and prepared it for his mother to cook (v.14). He let his mother sew the skins on his arms and neck (v.16). He took the deceitful food in his hands (v.17).
- 4) He was a **bold liar**. He lied to his father at least four times. He said he was Esau (v.19). He said he had done according

to his father's command (v.19). He said that he was quick because the LORD God brought the deer to him (v.20). When asked if he was really Esau, he said, "I am" (v.24).

### d. Bitterness, anger & revenge, v.30-41

- 1) Esau was **bitter** when he learned Jacob had cheated him out of the family blessing (v.34, 36).
- 2) He **wept** over his loss (v.38).
- 3) Esau **hated** Jacob and **plotted** to kill him (v.41)
- 4) Frequently in dysfunctional families some members are hurt and left bitter, weeping, hateful and vengeful.

## 2. Sources of a Dysfunctional Family

### a. Neglect of God

- 1) If God had been the centre of focus in this family, they would not have become a dysfunctional family.
- 2) In a practical sense, it appears that Isaac left God out of his family life a good share of the time.

### b. Failure to pray

- 1) Though Isaac must have known God's prediction about the twins before they were born, he must not have talked to God about it.
- 2) He did what HE wanted rather than seeking what God wanted. Perhaps he lacked faith.

### c. Selfish living

- 1) Each member of the family was selfish. They wanted their own way. They each sought to please themselves.
- 2) Selfishness is deeply rooted in every dysfunctional family.

## 3. Solutions to a Dysfunctional Family

### a. Daily make time with God a priority.

- 1) The husband must set the example of giving his time with God priority. He must study God's word and live it. He must be a god-fearing leader in the home. He must have a close communion with his wife as God instructs in 1Peter 3:7, "*Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*" The whole family should know that dad walks with God. He must be able to