

# Dysfunctional Living Pt. 1 (2021)

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, February 28, 2021

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for joining us today! Whether you are here in person or watching via the livestream, you are most welcome. Please have a Bible at the ready and be prepared to take some notes. We have much to cover in a relatively short amount of time.

## THE REALITY OF DYSFUNCTION

**KEY 1** – I want to put forth and operate from the premise that man is a fundamentally dysfunctional being. Our lives and living are indelibly marked and marred by a sense of brokenness that we cannot remove, repair or reverse by our own power...

**Q. Don't believe me?**

**KEY 2** – Turn on the news on any given day and the brokenness of humanity will be on full display. Moreover, look to your own community, family, circle of friends and personal life and it will not take long to see patterns of dysfunction (i.e., abnormal, improper and unhealthy behaviors) that linger unceasingly...

**Q. How many will admit that—in varying ways—you are a bit dysfunctional?**

**Q. How many have said that you and your family put the “fun” in dysfunction?**

**KEY 3** – I will admit that I am and that I have...

## FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONTEXTS PT. 1

**NOTE 1** – Of course, the presence of dysfunction is contrary to God's good purpose and original design for humanity. You see, in dealing with the topic of our dysfunction we must first realize that we were originally created to be fully functional in Him (i.e., per Gen. 1–3a).

**FYI** – The term “dysfunction” has no meaning if there is no healthful “function” to measure against...

**NOTE 2** – Specifically, we were made to thrive in the context of four key arenas or relationships (SLIDE)...

- 1) God
- 2) Self
- 3) Others
- 4) Work

**NOTE 3** – Let us delve a bit deeper as we wade into the waters of this study...

## FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONTEXTS PT. 2

### 1) Relationship w/ God

Man was made to abound in vital relationship with God. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism beautifully expresses, man was made to “glorify and enjoy Him forever.” As the ultimate reason for existence of humanity, this is the primary of the four relationship (i.e., with all others being informed by it). Man was created to know a rich, intimate and abiding relationship with the Lord.

### 2) Relationship w/ Self

Man was made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). Thus, man has an inherent and immutable dignity or worth! Though man is not God, man was fashioned to uniquely reflect or radiate His glory and nature in this world (i.e., making man preeminent amidst creation).

### 3) Relationship w/ Others

God created man to function within the context of human relationships. Man was made for interpersonal connections—connections based upon mutual love, compassionate concern, service, encouragement, etc. Simply stated, humanity was made to share life together.

### 4) Relationship w/ Work

Lastly, man was made to work (i.e., investing time and energy into God-ordained industry). Man was created to survive and thrive off of the bounty of God’s creation, participating in a labor that possessed both temporal and eternal significance.

## FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONTEXTS PT. 3

**KEY** – It is necessary to consider the experience of Adam and Eve through these four filters (Gen. 1–3a)...

### 1) Relationship w/ God

Adam and Eve knew an unveiled and unbroken communion with the Lord. So intimate was their relationship, Scripture notes that they walked with the Lord “in the cool of the day” (cf. Gen. 3:8). Can you imagine what it was like to experience God face-to-face?

### 2) Relationship w/ Self

Adam and Eve knew a condition of innocence (i.e., knowing neither guilt nor shame). Our forebears knew only a healthy love of self—a perfect love of self before God. Can you imagine what it was like to never question your worth or value before God?

### 3) Relationship w/ Others

Adam and Eve knew only mutual love and support in the beginning. Argument, angst, selfishness, and so forth had no place in the framework of God's original design. This was the last time men and women made any sense to one another! Can you imagine a world of only "blissful" connection?

### 4) Relationship w/ Work

Adam and Eve knew a sacred duty to manage, oversee and preside over the creation of the Lord. Man (i.e., as the steward and appointed agent of God) was provided for by and through the fruits of his labor—a labor that was life-giving and meaningful. Can you imagine a world of only joyous industry?

**KEY** – What a glorious condition this must have been! Even God described creation as "very good" (Gen. 1:31).

**Q. How many wouldn't mind experiencing some time in Eden?**

## TRANSITIONS

**NOTE 1** – When humanity operated within the context of these four arenas, man knew both harmony and wholeness (i.e., "shalom"). However, dysfunction was induced by the introduction and disastrous consequence of human sin...

**NOTE 2** – Let us take the time to consider the fall of man and the outflow of that singular decision to disobey...

## TO THE WORD PT. 1

### Genesis 2:15–17 (NIV – Foundational Parameter)

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

**Q. Why did God put such a tree to the Garden in the first place?**

**A1.** As a reminder. Man may have been given dominion over the creation but not over the Creator. The earth may have been subject to Adam and Eve as the created agents of God, but they were subject unto the Lord and His divine commandment. Every time they saw that tree they were reminded of their subservience and obligation to God

**A2.** To establish the context necessary for love. You cannot have love apart from the freedom of choice. Adam and Eve could not have prioritized connection with God (i.e., the essence of love) if no viable alternative existed. If there was no capacity in the Garden to reject God in preference for another, there would have been no capacity for love to exist or abound!

**NOTE 1** – God created man for the purpose of receiving and reciprocating love. This "necessitated" choice...

**NOTE 2** – Sadly (as we are about to note)—humanity chose poorly...

## TO THE WORD PT. 2

### Genesis 3:1–13 (The Fall of Man)

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

**NOTE** – It should be noted that the tricks Satan used to tempt Adam and Eve are still utilized today...

### 1 John 2:16

16 For all that is in the world—the [a] desires of the flesh and the [b] desires of the eyes and [c] pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

### Genesis 3:6

6 When the woman [a] saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and [b] pleasing to the eye, and also [c] desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it.

## TO THE WORD PT. 3

### Genesis 3:16–19 (Corresponding Judgment)

16 To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;  
with painful labor you will give birth to children.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you.”

17 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food from it  
all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow  
you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
and to dust you will return.”

## FOUR-FOLD DYSFUNCTION

**NOTE** – We have read quite a bit of Scripture (i.e., much of a whole chapter of Genesis). However, I want to note that man’s four foundational relationships became distorted and marred upon the entrance of sin into the world—producing grave dysfunction...

### 1) Relationship w/ God

Their relationship with God was damaged because they failed to obey Him. Once sin entered the world, dysfunction immediately set in! Note that their sense of intimacy with God was replaced by a sense of fearfulness...

### Genesis 3:8–10 (Emphasis Mine)

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they **hid** from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was **afraid** because I was naked; so I **hid**.”

Moreover, man sought to repair that dysfunction apart from the Lord (i.e., according to their own capacity)...

### **Genesis 3:6–7 (Emphasis Mine)**

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; **so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**

**KEY** – This is a manifestation of pride and a spirit of self-reliance!

Lastly, note that man instantly learned to blame God for their own failings...

### **Genesis 3:12 (Emphasis Mine)**

12 The man said, **“The woman you put here with me—**she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

## **2) Relationship w/ Self**

Their relationship with “self” was marred. Notice that they developed an immediate sense of shame upon their decision to sin! Whereas they had known dignity and innocence prior to the fall, now they knew only shame and a compelling desire to cover their guilt and inadequacy...

### **Genesis 3:6–7**

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

## **3) Relationship w/ Others**

Human connection would never be the same after the fall. As has been noted, Adam quickly blamed Eve for his personal sin, and the Lord promised that marital bliss would be disturbed as long as sin was in the world. Consider...

### **Genesis 3:16b**

“Your **desire** will be for your husband [i.e., “longing for mastery” cf. Gen. 4:7], and he will **rule** over you.”

**NOTE** – Mutual love, submission and selflessness would be replaced with both parties vying for control. Tragic!

**FYI** – Keep in mind that human enmity would infect every interpersonal relationship (cf. Cain v. Abel of Gen. 4).

#### 4) Relationship w/ Work

Their relationship with their labor was also impacted. They would continue to work, but henceforth their work would be characterized by toil and pain. Also, what would have once been a labor of love would become a fight to survive amidst an opposing creation...

##### **Genesis 3:17–19**

17 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food from it  
all the days of your life.

18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.

19 By the sweat of your brow  
you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
and to dust you will return.”

### **SUMMATIONS AND APPLICATIONS**

**KEY 1** – Man became and remains a fallen creature subject to dysfunction in four critical relationships...

**KEY 2** – Next week I want to delve deeper into specific manifestations of dysfunction in each context.

HOWEVER, I want you to understand as we leave this place that...

**KEY 3** – Christ has come to undo our curse that we might experience the “fullness” of life and living...

##### **John 10:10 (Emphasis Mine)**

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the **full**.

**KEY 4** – Thus, a way has been made to restore proper function in each of these areas by His power...

**QUOTE** – “Vitality comes from living in proper relationship with these four elements. Dysfunction occurs when our connections to these four elements are not properly established or maintained. Dysfunction is the result of faulty relationships.”

##### **Q. Do you want to overcome your personal dysfunction?**

**A.** Begin to track down where you are off base and look to Christ.

## CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Should those of you who have joined us online wish to give, please do so through the giving portal of our church website ([www.NewLifeBarre.org](http://www.NewLifeBarre.org)). For those who are present, you may place your donation in one of our offering boxes.

### **Numbers 6:24–26**

24 The Lord bless you  
and keep you;

25 the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;

26 the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.