

Dysfunctional Living Pt. 2 (2021)

Pastor James Foley – Shared Sunday, March 7 and 14, 2021

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.

SETTING THE STAGE

FYI – We have established that man was created to thrive within the context of four key relationships (SLIDE)...

1) Relationship w/ God

We were made to “glorify God and enjoy Him” forever. As the ultimate reason for our existence, this is the primary of the four relationships (i.e., with all others being informed and impacted by it). We were made to experience a rich, abiding and intimate relationship with the Lord.

2) Relationship w/ Self

We were made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). Therefore, we have an inherent and immutable dignity and worth. Though we are not God, we were fashioned to uniquely reflect and radiate His glory and nature to this world (i.e., making us preeminent amidst creation).

3) Relationship w/ Others

The Lord created us to function within the context of human relationships. We were made for interpersonal connections—connections based upon mutual love, compassionate concern, service, encouragement and beyond. Simply put, we were made to share life together.

4) Relationship w/ Work

Lastly, we were also made to work (i.e., investing time and energy into God-ordained industry). We were originally created to survive and thrive off of the bounty of His creation, participating in a labor that possessed both temporal and eternal significance.

KEY – Despite our high calling, we often fail to function within the bounds of these relationships. Rather, we are given to dysfunction (i.e., abnormal, improper and unhealthy behaviors that prove costly for time and eternity). I would like to identify and explore some of the more common manifestations of dysfunction that we can and do experience...

LET’S DELVE IN...

1) RELATIONSHIP W/ GOD

Firstly, let us identify and explore some of the faulty ways in which we relate to the Lord...

1) Atheism

Q. What is atheism?

A. Atheism is the denial of God's existence.

QUOTE – Atheism is a sin “peculiar” to the human race as even the demons believe and tremble (James 2:19).

Psalm 14:1 (NIV)

1 The fool says in his heart,
“There is no God.”

They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

NOTE – The Hebrew words rendered “fool” in the Book of Psalms denote one who is “morally deficient.” Is it not amazing how many people deny the existence of God in order to avoid any form of moral accountability (i.e., justification for sinful behavior)?

2) Agnosticism

Q. What is agnosticism?

A. Agnosticism is the view that the existence of God is “unknown” and/or “unknowable.”

Psalm 19:1–4

1 The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2 Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
3 They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.

Romans 1:20

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

ILLUSTRATION – Sir Isaac Newton had a perfectly scaled-down replica of the then known solar system built for his studies. A large golden ball represented the sun at the center, and the known planets revolved around it through a series of cogs, belts, and rods. It was an incredible machine. One day while Newton was studying his model, an agnostic friend stopped by for a visit. The man marveled at the machinery and asked, “Who made this exquisite thing?” Without looking up, Newton replied, “Nobody.” “Nobody?” his friend asked. “That's right,” said Newton, “all of these balls and cogs and belts and gears just happened to come together, and wonder of wonders, by chance they began revolving in their set orbits with perfect timing.”

Hebrews 1:1–3a

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

3) Idolatry**Q. What is idolatry?**

A. The worship of something or someone other than God as if it were God.

Exodus 20:1–6

1 And God spoke all these words: 2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 3 "You shall have no other gods before me. 4 "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

NOTE – This was the particular sin of OT Israel and the people of God (i.e., costing them severely). However, we would be remiss to believe that idolatry is limited to the pages of the OT alone! The NT warns against it recurringly...

1 Corinthians 10:14

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

1 John 5:21

21 Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

Colossians 3:5

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

Luke 14:25–26

25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. 27 And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

4) Rebellion**Q. What do I mean by "rebellion"?**

A. Rejecting the authority of the One True God.

Acts 7:51–53 (Stephen Before the Sanhedrin)

51 "You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52 Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— 53 you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it."

Psalm 2:1–6

- 1 Why do the nations conspire
and the peoples plot in vain?
- 2 The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord and against his anointed, saying,
- 3 “Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles.”
- 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
- 5 He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
- 6 “I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain.”

5) Distortion**Q. What is the meaning of distortion?**

A. Misrepresenting the biblically revealed character and nature of God.

Matthew 25:24–25 (Parable of the Talents)

24 “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

Q. Common distortions in our culture?

- A1.** Grandfatherly God who condones sin and evil.
- A2.** Harsh God who is always looking to squash and condemn.
- A3.** Removed God who is detached, aloof and uncaring in life or living.
- A4.** God who exists to respond to your beck and call (i.e., dispenser of goods).

KEY – Each of these elements breeds distortion and disconnect in this primary relationship for healthful living!

Q. What should you do?

- A1.** Repent of “any trace” of these elements.
- A2.** Embrace the character and nature of God on His terms.
- A3.** Prioritize, worship and serve the Lord above all else and all things.
- A4.** Glorify and enjoy Him forever in the context of a rich, intimate connection.

2) RELATIONSHIP W/ SELF

Secondly, let us explore some of the faulty ways in which we may esteem, value and relate to ourselves...

1) Self-Exaltation (i.e., Pride)

Q. What is self-exaltation and/or pride in this context?

A. An overestimation of one's value and/or capacity (i.e., causing us to believe we can live without God).

NOTE – Many live utterly smitten with themselves. You can tell by their social-media feeds and “selfies”...

ILLUSTRATION – In Greek mythology, Narcissus was a handsome young man who caught sight of his reflection in a pond, fell in love with his own image, toppled into the water and drowned. So “narcissism” is an excessive love for oneself, an unbounded admiration of “self. Let us be cautious of such an attitude and/or condition of the heart...

Romans 12:3

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

Revelation 3:14, 17

14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. . . . 17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

James 4:6b–10

6 . . . “God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble.”

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

2) Self-Abasement

Q. What is self-abasement?

A1. A self-loathing based upon an un-scriptural form of humility.

A2. It is founded upon an underestimation of one's dignity and capacity.

NOTE – Please note that this is still a form of pride as the emphasis remains on “self” over God!

KEY – Far too many live with a cripplingly low sense of self-esteem or self-worth (i.e., devoid of self-love).

Q1. Do you realize that it is permissible (i.e., biblically) to love yourself?

Q2. Do you realize you cannot love others until you love yourself properly?

Matthew 22:35–40

35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him [Jesus] with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ [Deut. 6:5] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ [Lev. 19:18] 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

KEY – Either of these elements breeds distortion and disconnect in this key relationship for healthful living!

Q. What should you do?

A1. Repent of any trace of pride (“self-exaltation or abasement” as they are both “self-absorption”).

QUOTE – “Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking about yourself less.” (C. S. Lewis).

A2. Come to recognize your worth before God and your place before Him (i.e., loved yet accountable).

3) RELATIONSHIP W/ OTHERS

Thirdly, let’s talk about our relationships with others...

FYI 1 – It is amazing how many types of interpersonal connections we can have (i.e., manifold)...

FYI 2 – It is amazing how much the Bible has to say regarding these manifold interpersonal connections...

Q1. Did you know that one-half of the greatest commandment centers upon how we treat one another?**Matthew 22:34–40**

34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Q2. Did you know that over one-half of the Ten Comm. (cf. Exod. 20) deal with how we treat one another?

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not craft and/or worship man-made idols.
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy (i.e., sacred “rest”).

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5. Honor your father and mother
 6. You shall not murder
 7. You shall not commit adultery
 8. You shall not steal
 9. You shall not give false testimony
 10. You shall not covet your neighbor

KEY 1 – We come to know dysfunction when we violate these principles and mistreat one another. How many lives are riddled with needless drama because they simply cannot play well with other people (i.e., in and out of the church world)?

KEY 2 – Moreover, our vertical connection with God is linked to our horizontal connections with one another. Thus, one affects the other! Do you realize that God will ultimately assess the reality of your faith and the condition of your connection with Him by how you treated others in this life?

KEY 3 – We are by faith alone, but our works testify to and/or evidence its reality or absence (cf. James 2)...

Matthew 25:31–46

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

34 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

37 “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

40 “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

44 “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

45 “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

46 “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Q. What should you do?

A1. Prioritize healthful relationships.

A2. Put God’s Word into practice re: human interaction.

A3. Watch how you treat one another as it is revelatory to your religion.

4) RELATIONSHIP W/ WORK

Finally, it is amazing how much the Bible speaks to the issue of work and its place in our lives. Consider...

1) Scripture Warns Against Laziness

Colossians 3:22–25

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

Proverbs 24:30–34

30 I went past the field of a sluggard,
past the vineyard of someone who has no sense;
31 thorns had come up everywhere,
the ground was covered with weeds,
and the stone wall was in ruins.
32 I applied my heart to what I observed
and learned a lesson from what I saw:
33 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
34 and poverty will come on you like a thief
and scarcity like an armed man.

2 Thessalonians 3:6–15

6 In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching[a] you received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

11 We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. 12 Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. 13 And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good. 14 Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. 15 Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.

ILLUSTRATION PT. 1 – Some people refer to Paul Railton of Consett, England, as the laziest man in the world. That would be difficult to prove, but his legal troubles certainly provide evidence that he is in the running for the title. In December of 2009, Railton was reported to the authorities by a cyclist who saw him "walking" his dog by driving his car slowly and holding the leash out the car window! Railton admitted that his unusual method of exercising his dog, "Was a silly thing to do and there was an element of laziness," and pled guilty to a charge of "not being in proper control of a vehicle." He was fined sixty-six pounds and ordered not to drive for six months.

ILLUSTRATION PT. 2 – As our society moves further and further away from valuing hard work, we are seeing a rise in laziness. This disease is undermining not just the foundations of our nation, but it is striking at the church as well. It is always easy to justify taking it easy. While there is a place for rest—following the pattern God established in the beginning of Creation by resting on the seventh day—few in our age are suffering from overwork. Instead too many continually “hit the snooze button” and waste their lives through laziness.

2) Scripture Warns Against Making an Idol of Work (i.e., Being a Workaholic and/or Given to Greed)

Colossians 3:5

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

1 Timothy 6:6–10

6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Ecclesiastes 5:10a

10 Whoever loves money never has enough;
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.

Hebrews 13:5

5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Matthew 6:19–21

19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Q. How should you respond?

A. Work hard at your job as unto the Lord but keep proper priority in your work. Balance!

CONCLUSION PT. 1

KEY – As we have established, we must navigate each of these four fundamental relationships if we are to live the healthful, abundant and full lives Christ offers (cf. John 10:10). It appears that life is a bit of a balancing act and requires diligence, prayer and ongoing self-reflection...

Q1. Is this always easy? Not at all.

Q2. Is this worthwhile? You better believe it!

CONCLUSION PT. 2

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). 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.