

DysFUNCTIONal: DysFUNCTIONal Me

June 5, 2022

PREPARATION

▶ STUDY

Spend the week studying 1 Peter 1:13-25. Consult the commentary provided and any additional study tools to enhance your preparation.

▶ PRAY

Pray for our pastors and this week's message, the upcoming group time, your group members, and their openness to God's Word.

▶ LANDING POINT

I am called to give my love to others without strings attached.

GROUP DISCUSSION

▶ **CONFIDENTIALITY** | What's said in the group stays in the group.

▶ **NO CROSS-TALK** | Be considerate of others as they share. Refrain from side conversations and texting during group time.

▶ **NO FIXING** | We are not in the group to fix each other. Jesus does that part.

▶ **SHARING** | Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Don't talk too much or too little. Every person brings something valuable to the group.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

SOMETHING'S MISSING

Relationships are supposed to be the source of life, joy, encouragement, and blessing in our lives. However, often we don't experience the relationships in our lives that way. It feels like something essential is missing in those relationships. Sometimes there seems to be more dysfunction and trouble than blessing.

In this series, your group will look at how to bring more fun into your relationships and experience more life, joy, encouragement, and blessing. This week your group will look at the fact that putting the fun back into your relationships begins with you. Love begins with you and your giving love to others without strings attached. Only by doing that can you have the kind of relationships you desire in life.

Q: *Share about an important relationship in your life where you experience life, joy, encouragement, and blessing.*

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PUTTING THE FUN BACK INTO RELATIONSHIPS

God's desire for us is that we love one another. Love is the greatest command God has given us and we know that; but how many times do we experience something different in our relationships? Instead of the life, joy, and fun in those relationships, we experience the dysfunctions, breakdowns, and roadblocks that make them feel like more of a burden than a blessing.

Let's take a look at a short passage from Peter, one of Jesus's followers, and the path forward to putting the fun back into our relationships that he shows us.

Q: *Have a volunteer read 1 Peter 1:22. What does your soul need to be purified from? What keeps you from experiencing better relationships with God and others?*

Q: What does Peter say is the way to purify our souls? In what ways can you practically do this in your day-to-day life?

Q: How would people see believers differently if they saw a “sincere brotherly love” being practiced for one another?

REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

LOVE IN ACTION, LOVE IN REAL LIFE

What does Peter teach us about relationships? How can we apply his instructions from 2,000 years ago to our lives today? To experience better relationships in our lives, we see three key areas to focus on:

- *The command.* Love is more than something you feel for someone. It is a deliberate choice that you make every day. Love is a commitment to care for someone sacrificially as Jesus does. Love is a call to put the interests of others above your own. Love takes us out of ourselves and into the lives of others where we seek to serve their needs and help them experience more of God’s best in their lives.
- *The requirement.* We need our souls to be purified. Your soul includes your intellect, emotions, and will. It’s the center of who you are—and you need that place to be cleansed if you want better relationships. The path of cleansing is through confession and faith. You need to (1) acknowledge your sin before God and (2) believe that Christ died and rose again to overcome the problem of sin for you. Confession and faith open the way for you to better understand your identity, value, and purpose in Christ. These two key steps remind you that you are a new creation in Christ and this fact makes real changes in your relationships possible.
- *The result.* What do you get when you take the step of confession and faith? You understand better what it means to have sincere love for others. Sincere love is love without hypocrisy. It’s not fake love but love as it should be, as God intended it to be. It’s a love that’s freely given to others without strings attached. This is the only real way to give our love to others—to give it freely without expecting anything in return.

This summer you can be a part of God’s redemptive story. You can have clear vision to see the needs, desires, hurt, and pain of others God puts on your path and respond to them with love and compassion. This summer you can see and love as Jesus does.

Q: What’s one thing you could do this week to remember the command to love others as Jesus does?

Q: Spend a few minutes in silent prayer with the Father. Ask Him to reveal areas in your life where you need to take the key steps of confession and faith.

Q: Think of one relationship in your life where you'd like to see more fun (i.e., life, joy, encouragement, and blessing). What first step could you take this week to introduce more fun into that relationship?

Q: How can the group be praying for you this week?

COMMENTARY

The Need for Transformation

"Obeying the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ requires a moral transformation that means believers are to love each other sincerely (John 13:34–35; Rom 12:9; 1 Thess 4:9–10). This does not denote emotional sentimentality, but entails relating to each other in ways that honor God."

Growing in the Character of Love

"As trials refine faith, so obedience to God's Word refines character. One who has purified himself by living according to God's Word has discovered the joy of obedience."

Love and Hope in Community

"To love one another 'deeply' and 'from the heart' is particularly important in a social climate of hostility, wherein mutual encouragement, affection, and support would be indispensable to be able to withstand persecution. A community of love will produce and necessarily preserve a community of hope."

ENDNOTES:

1. Douglas J. Moo, "The Letters and Revelation," in *NIV Biblical Theology Study Bible*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 2240.
2. Roger M. Raymer, "1 Peter," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 844.
3. Daryl J. Charles, "1 Peter," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Hebrews–Revelation (Revised Edition)*, ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 13 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 100.