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Holiness within families

Family members who strive to follow God's command for holiness make God's values their values. When a lawyer asked Jesus about the greatest commandment of the law, He responded, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22: 37-40).

These commandments embody respect for God and our fellowman. They include a focus that is outward, away from self. Instead of a preoccupation with oneself, God's way is inclusive. When we live holy lives, we are concerned about God and other people as well as ourselves. The foundational principle of holiness runs throughout many biblical instructions for families.

God's instruction that a husband and wife are to love and respect each other (Ephesians 5:21-33) for a lifetime (Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 13) is the ideal for couples and their children. Of course, this is best accomplished when both spouses are committed to holiness and its inherent mandate to consider others as well as themselves. Paul summarizes this principle when he tells us, "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:4).

Concern for family members is also reflected in Paul's instruction to fathers to avoid provoking their children "lest they become discouraged" (Colossians 3:21) and for mothers to "bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully" (1 Timothy 5:14).

The Bible contains much additional instruction on the way people can and should conduct their lives. Since God tells us to pursue holiness (Hebrews 12:14), why not forget about being normal? Be holy instead.

Source: [Forget About Being Normal](#) - November/December 1999 Good News magazine.

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