



FOCUS[®]
ON THE FAMILY

52
WEEKS OF
PRACTICAL
INSIGHTS

The Family project[™]

Devotional

RAY SELDOMRIDGE

REFLECTING
GOD'S
DESIGN
IN YOUR HOME

“In the Family Project Focus on the Family has given us a unique resource to strengthen, empower and support the family as the Creator designed it to be. This project is sure to give you the tools you need to build the family God desires you to have.”

—DR. TONY EVANS

President, The Urban Alternative

Senior Pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship

“Healthy, stable families are one of society’s most precious resources. We need to do everything we can to protect and promote them. The Family Project has a timely message for the Church, and for the culture at large.”

—ANDY STANLEY

Senior Pastor, North Point Ministries

“When you look at a family, you’re looking at a God-designed picture of the gospel. This has profound implications for the Church and for society. The Family Project explores the theology of the family in an informative and accessible manner that lends itself to small group discussion. I highly recommend it!”

—DR. RUSSELL D. MOORE

President, Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious
Liberty Commission

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ON THE
FAMILY

RAY SELDOMRIDGE

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Foreword

When our team here at Focus on the Family first started working on *The Family Project*, we struggled to adequately define the scope of this endeavor. Is it primarily a work of theology—an academic exercise in the biblical principles that define and outline the family? Or is it more of a tool for families—a user-friendly assortment of practical helps that allows them to distill those big biblical concepts into everyday applications?

As the project unfolded, we realized that *The Family Project* needed to be *both* of those things: a much-needed reintroduction to the biblical concept of the family for those living in a postmodern world, and a practical tool to inspire and equip families to be the best they can be.

Nowhere are these two goals more fully realized than in the book you're now holding, *The Family Project Devotional*. Within the pages that follow, you'll delve deep into Scripture to discover the DNA of God's design for the family. You'll celebrate the fact that the historical institution of the family is a direct reflection of the Creator himself.

But you'll also encounter a wealth of useful, practical tips to help you discover how those timeless theological principles relate directly to *you* and to *your family*—right now, at this moment in history. You'll find encouraging and inspirational tips to not only strengthen your own family, but to make a dramatic impact on other families in your sphere of influence, and on the world around you.

May God bless you and your loved ones as you celebrate His design in *The Family Project Devotional*.

—JIM DALY
May 2014



Introduction

This book contains 52 devotional themes, one for every week in the year. Within each week, we provide daily Scripture readings.

The rationale behind the choice of most topics is that the Bible, particularly the New Testament, gives numerous exhortations to Christians on what they should do for and with one another. Of course, these “one anothers” apply wherever two or more believers are gathered. But the place that offers the best opportunity for significant Christian relationships is the home. What happens in the family not only affects every member, but it also impacts the larger church of which the family is a part. And that will determine what sort of light we’re able to shine into our dark world.

Specifically, here’s what this book offers for each week:

First, the topic and a subtitle to explain it a bit more. You’ll find that some topics overlap or are distinct only in subtle ways. Also, some deal with other aspects of family life; not all are derived from the “one anothers.” Then:

1

Opening Prayer to begin the day with the Lord and to zero in on the topic for the week.

2

Daily Scripture Reading, often consisting of several passages, though most of them are short. On some weeks, we've also suggested additional readings. And we've chosen one passage each week to print in full for your memorization. Some of the assigned readings in this book will reoccur, since the same Bible passage can touch upon multiple topics.

3

Activity of the Day, which most often is a series of questions related to the Scripture readings for that day. Some blank lines have been provided so that you can jot down answers or record notes for further reflection. Do not feel that you have to answer every question; we've provided more than one so you can pick the questions that strike a chord with you.

Occasionally the activity for the day is, instead of questions, a suggested assignment for the whole family.

4

Conclusion to summarize the main teachings of the week.

5

Closing Prayer to commit your family to the Lord once again.

This devotional was written for an individual reader or a married couple. But since it's all about family, we've indicated a few places where you can involve your children if you so choose. May you all, together, hear God's voice through this yearlong tour of His Word.

WEEK
1

In the Beginning

The family is God's idea.

1 OPENING PRAYER

Lord, reveal to us what kind of people You have made us to be. Help us understand Your basic design for all of humanity, so we may live in a way that pleases You. In Jesus's name. Amen.

2 SCRIPTURE READING

Monday	GENESIS 1:26-28
Tuesday	GENESIS 2:18-25
Wednesday	GENESIS 4:1-2
Thursday	GENESIS 12:1-3
Friday	PSALM 128:3-4
Saturday	MARK 10:7-9
Sunday	EPHESIANS 3:14-16

FEATURED SCRIPTURE

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being. —EPHESIANS 3:14-16

3 ACTIVITY OF THE DAY

Monday

Answer this: Have you ever stopped and marveled at the existence of the family, or have you always just taken it for granted, like the air you breathe? Why?

Tuesday

What would your life be like without a family? How might society function without families?

Wednesday

Ask your spouse what's the first thing that comes to mind when recalling the family that he or she was raised in. Then share about your own family. Pray together for your parents and siblings. (If unmarried, do this with a close friend.)

Thursday

Based on the book of Genesis, how would you define a family?

Friday

At dinner, share with your spouse and/or children what you're learning or thinking about God's invention called the family.

Saturday

What did Jesus say about marriage? About divorce? Why?

Sunday

Memorize this week's featured Bible passage or your favorite portion from one of the other readings.

4 CONCLUSION

God is one, yet He is also a community of three Persons. We, too, are individuals, but we were meant to live in relationship to others. By God's design, the primary way we do that is the family, where a man

and woman, together with their children, form the building block on which all of society is based. Without strong, lasting families, nothing in life can hold together.

5 CLOSING PRAYER

Talk to God alone or together about your family, friends, church, and community, as well as about what He is saying to you today through His Word. Then conclude with this:

Father, thank You for families. Teach us to act rightly toward all members of our own family, and show us how to reach out to those who have no family at all. Amen.

WEEK 2

We Need One Another

Families aren't just a nice idea—they're necessary.

1 OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, forgive us for thinking that we can go through life on our own power. Show us more and more why You placed us in families for mutual support. Amen.

2 SCRIPTURE READING

Monday	ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12
Tuesday	ROMANS 12:4-8
Wednesday	PROVERBS 27:17
Thursday	ROMANS 1:11-12
Friday	1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-25
Saturday	2 PETER 1:5-8
Sunday	EPHESIANS 4:15-16

See also GENESIS 2:18-24; 4:9-10; ISAIAH 41:6-7; LUKE 6:41-42;
ROMANS 14:14-20; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-11; HEBREWS 10:24-25;
1 JOHN 3:16-18

FEATURED SCRIPTURE

We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. —EPHESIANS 4:15-16

3 ACTIVITY OF THE DAY

Monday

Answer this: In biblical times, people thought much more about “we” than “I.” In what ways has Western culture’s emphasis on “me” colored your outlook on the family? On the church?

Tuesday

In a fun family discussion over a meal, let everyone say what they are best at, what “gift” they offer that the rest of the family needs. It could be a skill, or it might be a personality trait, like “always being positive.” Let others provide helpful feedback after each family member speaks.

Wednesday

“Iron sharpens iron.” Who in your life provides you with that kind of support?

Thursday

How much do you really *need* your spouse? Each of your children? Are you able to develop a godly character without others knowing (and working with you on) your innermost struggles and weaknesses? Explain.

Friday

Is Scripture saying that things work out much better when we join together, or that we simply can't do much of anything without one another? Which is closer to the truth? Why?

Saturday

Pick a family activity or chore that you can accomplish only if you all pitch in and do it together. Then grab a dessert and talk about the day's work.

Sunday

Memorize this week's featured Bible passage or your favorite portion from one of the other readings.

4 CONCLUSION

Your family is more than a collection of individuals living under one roof. It's a body that thrives only when all parts are working together as a whole. But in a culture driven by an emphasis on the individual, this biblical truth is almost unimaginable. We *need* one another. Our lives are defined and made meaningful only in relationship to others.

5 CLOSING PRAYER

Talk to God alone or together about your family, friends, church, and community, as well as about what He is saying to you today through His Word. Then conclude with this:

Lord, forgive us when we think or say, "I have no real need for that family (or church) member." As we work through this devotional guide, show us what sort of relationships You desire us to have, so that together we can grow up into You and become more fruitful in our faith. Amen.