



Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them

John Ortberg

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Normal? Who's Normal? Not you, that's for sure! No one you've ever met, either. None of us are normal according to God's definition, and the closer we get to each other, the plainer that becomes. Yet for all our quirks, sins, and jagged edges, we need each other. Community is more than just a word—it is one of our most fundamental requirements. So how do flawed, abnormal people such as ourselves master the forces that can drive us apart and come together in the life-changing relationships God designed us for? In *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*, teacher and best-selling author John Ortberg zooms in on the things that make community tick. You'll get a thought-provoking look at God's heart, at others, and at yourself. Even better, you'll gain wisdom and tools for drawing closer to others in powerful, impactful ways. With humor, insight, and a gift for storytelling, Ortberg shows how community pays tremendous dividends in happiness, health, support, and growth. It's where all of us weird, unwieldy people encounter God's love in tangible ways and discover the transforming power of being loved, accepted, and valued just the way we are. The need for community is woven into the very fabric of our being. Nothing else can substitute for the life-giving benefits of connecting with others—not even God. He won't preempt the way he himself has designed us to reflect his own intensely relational nature. But there's a hitch in our experience of community, says John Ortberg: We're all weird. Folks around us may seem normal enough, but just wait till we get to know them—and they get to know us. The unhealthy, sinful ways we respond to life in a fallen world are hardly God's idea of “normal,” and they can make us as unhuggable as porcupines. We face the “porcupine dilemma,” says Ortberg: We need each other, but how do we get close without getting hurt? How do we get past all those quills and grow together in Christ? In *Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them*, Ortberg once again reveals his gift for sharing profound insights using a lighten-up approach. With winsome humor and a fondness for well-spun stories, he pops the myth of normalcy and hands us the keys to creating and sustaining relationships. “God's dream for community encompasses the redemption of all spheres of life,” he says. Who doesn't want like to be liked, to be wanted, to have solid, satisfying friendships! Ortberg shows what such relationships are made of. He reveals the benefits of authenticity—what it means to live with an “unveiled face,” as the Bible puts it. He encourages us to trade the stones it's so easy to cast at others for acceptance. He opens our eyes and heart to empathy, the art of reading people. And he takes us through the ins and outs of conflict, forgiveness, confrontation, inclusion, and gratitude. The principles and discussion questions in this book are down-to-earth. They're for real people living in a real world, and are intended to help us count the practical cost of relationship and then pay it—because in all the rewards and struggles of community, we're investing in something beyond our comprehension. You could call it heaven. You could call it home. It's the place where all of us are headed, all of us belong, and all of us will be normal at last.

Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them Details

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Melissa M says

This is my first Ortberg read. Honestly I read through the book faster than I would have liked due to a deadline for a book club (that I found out about without much notice). I think the book would in fact be ideal for small group to go through together as the issues brought up could lead to a lot of great discussion. There are a set of questions at the end of each chapter & I'm anticipating that tonight I may come away a bit frustrated from a one hour discussion that attempts to cram in the entire book! There weren't necessarily a lot of "new" ideas in the book (for me) but they were often presented in a fresh way.

Breanna Harthan (Zumhof) says

I think it's a 3.5, but I'll say 4.

The book is interesting. I started reading it in a book club. The porcupine/hedgehog analogy could've been used a bit later in the book. However, it was spot on. I understand completely about how long it takes for two of these creatures to mate. It takes quite sometime to bond. It's incredible. But they literally have only a 1 week window. It was a great analogy for bonding in friendship. It's a tango of thorns, but you always have that 1 week you're close. The rest of the time you're either too guarded, defensive, shy, whatever it might be. I liked that part of this book.

I hope I don't spoil it.

Joe Oaster says

Another great book I have finished by John Ortberg. John has a way of presenting topics in a clear way. I love his honesty and his anecdotes that he sprinkles in throughout his book.

I found particularly moving was his last chapter on the first five minutes. I will leave that statement at that but those three words really got me thinking.

Terri Milstead says

First, I think the title is catchy but not representative of the whole idea of this book, which is about building authentic Christian community. That said, I am excited to bring this book to a women's study soon. Almost every chapter has something I can envision a gathering time activity for, which is great. There are good discussion questions at the end of each chapter. As always, Ortberg is an engaging writer although there may

be a joke or two made that could be eliminated to make the book more up to date (the book is over a decade old). All in all, very pleased with the book and the possibilities it has for our small group.

Karen says

This is a great book. I love John Ortberg. He is a gifted writer that keeps your interest. This book reminded me about the importance of community and accepting people for who they are.

Jason Kanz says

In the past, I have read a couple of engaging books by John Ortberg, so when I saw Everybody's Normal Till You Get to Know Them (Zondervan, 2003) on the shelf at the thrift store, I thought I would give it a go. To not delay your suspense, I told a friend of mine that this book was gold. In fact, when I was half-way through the book, I purchased two other copies to give to people. I've already given one away.

Ortberg has an engaging writing style that shows a wide breadth of knowledge and a capacity to capture the reader's attention. In this book, he explores the concepts of loneliness, community, and boundaries. In essence, he reminds us of the need for healthy community.

One of the things I most appreciated about this book was his discussion of the Canaanite woman who approached and asked him to heal her daughter. He told her that "its not right to take the children's bread and toss it to dogs." I have always hated that verse. It doesn't fit with my conception of Jesus. Ortberg used it as a lesson, not so much for her, but for his disciples, showing the role of faith rather than lineage. I had never looked at it that way before.

Just this morning, I was reading from John 17 and Jesus is praying that we would be one, just as he and the Father are one and that we may be in them (the Father and Son) as they are in each other. That's a call to Trinitarian community and Ortberg writes of that idea well.

Heather says

3.9/5 stars. I loved that it was packed with theology. The title was a bit misleading for me. I expected more of an examination of human nature but the theme was more centered around building community and relationships. Which was fine once I let go of the title. The author does take liberties on biblical interpretation which was confusing for me for biblical stories I'm less familiar with. I can see why he'd do that but that can be risky in my opinion. Overall, I learned much from reading this book and recommend it.

Chris Marler says

So, I think I understand why this book is being rated highly. Because if you rated it, it means you finished it, because you are probably a devout Christian, that you enjoy sermons, and everything in it is "preaching to the choir". Had it only been humorous anecdotes and stories of his life experiences as a pastor, I'd have

given it a 2.5. Now when you put a book out with a name like that, one doesn't expect the book to use passages from the Bible as proof of all of its conclusions. Maybe a 1 star is too high...

Robert Sutherland says

I think there are two tiers of Ortberg--the really good ones and the pretty good ones. This one goes in the upper tier. This is a book about community. What does it mean to connect with others? Exploring themes including forgiveness, inclusion, and confrontation, Ortberg writes accessibly about connecting with others. Recommended for individual or group study.

Sage says

Had a number of things to take away and think upon. The book is about living in community, the overall theme was great. It wasn't one of my favourite books of his though. Wasn't as engaging as some of his other books and I've never felt unsure about his content before however there were a few things I wasn't sure about with this one.

Barry says

This is an easy to read book, entertaining, and contains some thought provoking parts, but Mr. Ortberg's liberal license with Scripture is a tad disconcerting. Additionally, he often overwrites his point which instead of adding clarity or wisdom merely adds verbosity and murkiness. Still, this book is a quick read that highlights the importance of living together in community.

Rich says

I have to admit, I was surprised at how much I enjoyed this book. It really made me think about my own faith and life in ways that I haven't done in a while. I enjoyed the stories that he shared and the personal way he did so. On some level I feel as though I know John Ortberg now. Of course, I have no idea if the guy who comes across in the book is the real deal, but I like the guy who I got to know in the book!

I have decided to do a sermon series based on this book. I believe there is enough good material here to really touch people.

Lisa says

I absolutely LOVE John Ortberg. I know probably the most mainstream Christian writer is Max Lucado, (and I like Max too!) but John Ortberg is the best! He has a way of writing that makes this stuff so accessible. This book is about community -- how to deal with conflict, exclusion, forgiveness, etc. in a Christian framework. I love his sense of humor and how he makes each subject so darn relevant. I wish he'd

write 1,000 more books!

Jerry George says

Thought-provoking to say the least! John Ortberg aptly injects humor into this book without taking away the significance of the subject. This book was both enjoyable and intriguing. I can definitely see myself re-reading this again some day....most likely with a pen, notebook and a highlighter in hand!

Homeschoolmama says

Read a wonderful excerpt from this book... truths ring out in every sentence.. I've never read John Ortberg, but I think I might look at his other books..

Here's a bit of what I read:

"We are tempted to live under the illusion that somewhere out there are people who are normal...When we enter relationships with the illusion that people are normal, we resist the truth that they are not. We enter an endless attempt to fix them, control them, or pretend that they are what they're not.
..Everybody's Weird (yup)..Because we know in our hearts that this is not the way we're supposed to be, we try to hide our weirdness. Every one of us pretends to be healthier and kinder than we really are; we all engage in what might be called "depravity management."

I can't wait to read more...
