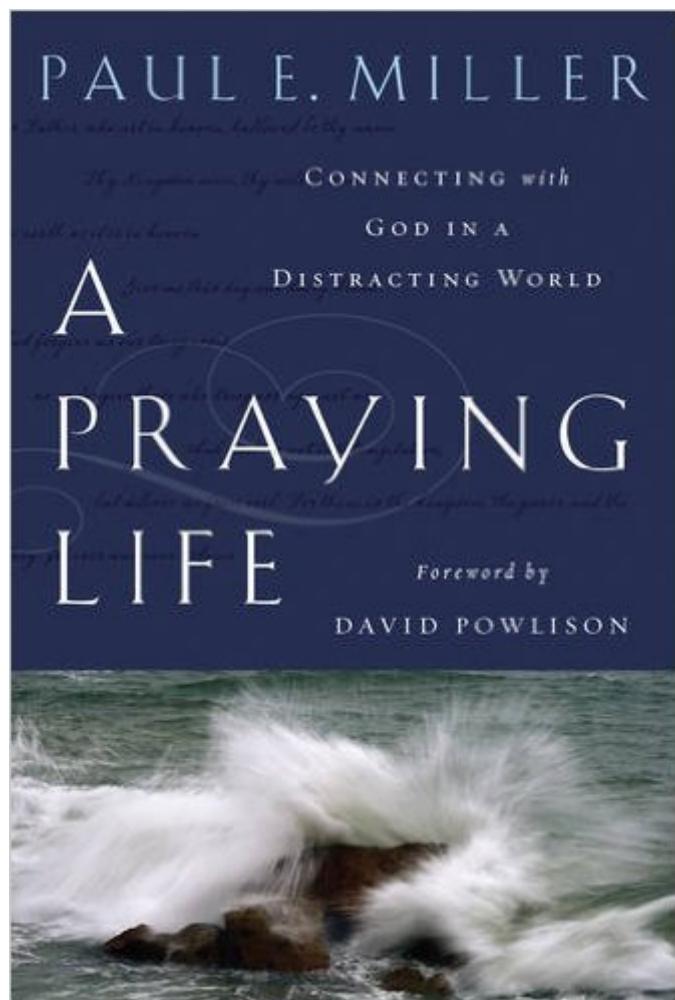


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# A Praying Life: Connecting With God In A Distracting World



## **Synopsis**

Author Paul Miller shares his insights and conclusions about how to connect the broken pieces of your life and allow prayerâ "even poorly deliveredâ "to fill the gaps with meaning and substance. Miller's down-to-earth approach and practical nature will help you see that your relationship with God can grow and your communication with Him can get better. Parents will find Miller's family-life experiences especially helpful. Includes bonus chapter from Prayer Begins with Relationship by Cynthia Hyle Bezek.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Any time I write a review of a book dealing with prayer I feel the need to point out that bookstore shelves are already groaning under the weight of such books. There are hundreds, thousands probably, of books on prayer. A new one is going to need to be good--very good--to supplant the excellent resources already available. Paul Miller, perhaps a bit reluctantly, takes on this challenge in his new book *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World*. I was drawn to this book by David Powlison's Foreword in which he gives it his highest recommendation and says, "A Praying Life will bring a living, vibrant reality to your prayers. Take it to heart." And what Christian does not want to learn to pray better? What Christian would claim that his prayers are as powerful as ever he would want them to be? The vast number of books on this subject testifies to the Christians' desire to pray more and to pray better. *A Praying Life* is the fruit of the prayer seminars that Miller has led scores of times over the years. And in the structure, in what it teaches, it has the practical, real-life feel of a seminar. The meat of the book is family stories--not dramatic tales, but

just small vignettes of daily life and survival. These stories do not only offer that personal touch that takes the book out of the abstract, but they also provide a measure of cohesion, tying chapter-to-chapter and part-to-part. The book begins with a brief reflection on why Christians struggle so much with prayer. Miller says rightly, I'm sure, that many people fail to pray properly because they are pursuing prayer rather than God. Ironically, they make prayer their focus instead of focusing on the one to whom they are praying. Prayer becomes an end in itself rather than the means to relationship with God.

I'm somewhat ambivalent about this book. Partly because many raving reviews led to high expectations on my part and partly because this is an odd book. The phrase that kept coming to my mind while I read it was "A Praying Memoir" for that's what it felt like. Though perhaps more often than necessary, Miller gave dozens of personal stories that gave the book a helpful, earthy feel. I appreciate the author's grittiness and willingness to take all the frustrations of a praying life seriously. The book was a strange mixture of really helpful thoughts followed by too many antidotes and personal details. I can however, see how this would appeal to some readers. Using the Lord's prayer in the Garden as the primary model, Miller's treatment of Biblical teaching on prayer was very sparse and thus widely assumed. This is not to say that he did not have some helpful observations, just that this work lacked a Biblical treatment of prayer. His focus was much more on how to fit that practically into life. It should also be noted that there are several places where it is evident that Miller has been influenced by the Mystics. His mystic streaks detract some from the value of this work. The most helpful parts of the book to me included his thoughts on what it means to become like a child in prayer, praying 'in God's story,' and his prayer card system. While reading "A Praying Life," I simultaneously read C.S. Lewis' "Letters to Malcolm: Chiefly on Prayer" Though I wasn't expecting many similarities, these books couldn't be more different.

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