

A Praying Life by Paul E. Miller

Chapter 1—What Good Does It Do?

1. Describe the difficulties and challenges there are to have a vibrant prayer life according to the author. Share your own experience about this. Is there anything frustrating to you about prayer?

2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?

Chapter 2—Where We Are Headed

1. Describe the differences between an isolated prayer life and a prayer-intertwined life. What good thing can come out of the prayer-intertwined life? pp. 8-9, 13 (old pp. 21,25)

2. What attitude of the heart is most necessary for a praying life? p. 12 (old p.24)

Chapter 3—Become Like a Little Child

1. In what ways does Jesus want us to become like little children? pp. 17-20 (old pp. 29-32)

2. Why is it so important and so difficult to come to God just as you are? Heading- "The Real You"

Chapter 4—Learn To Talk With The Father

1. Give the main points of the author on learning to talk with our Heavenly Father under the headings, "Asking like a child" and "Believing like a child."

2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?

Chapter 5—Spending Time With Your Father

1. Why did Jesus need to pray?

2. What are some suggestions in this chapter that might help you have a more focused prayer time with the Father? pp. 39-39 (old pp. 50-51)

Chapter 6—Learning To Be Helpless

1. Why is helplessness the key to a praying life?

- 2. Give the contrast between immature Christians and mature Christians on (1) their view of self , (2) their view of sin and (3) how they relate to God. pp. 44-48 (old pp. 56-59)**

Chapter 7—Crying “Abba” Continuously

- 1. The author writes, “We don’t need self-discipline to pray continuously; we just need to be poor in spirit” (p. 54- old p. 66). What does it mean to be poor in Spirit? Why does the kingdom of heaven belong to people who are poor in spirit?**

- 2. Under the heading, "Paul's Example and Teaching," what is the apostle Paul's most frequent description of when he prayed and of how often he wanted the church to pray? Give three verses to back this up.**

- 3. Read and summarize the last paragraph of chapter 7.**

Chapter 8—Bending Your Heart To The Father

- 1. Why is it wrong to allow anxiety to control our lives? What make prayer a much better alternative?**

- 2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?**

Chapter 9—Understanding Cynicism

- 1. Why is cynicism so dangerous? How does it subtly shape how you see God and reality? How is cynicism the opposite of a praying life?**

- 2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?**

Chapter 10—Following Jesus Out Of Cynicism

- 1. List five cures Jesus offers for cynicism and give the author's explanation of each cure in a sentence or two.**

- 2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?**

Chapter 11—Developing An Eye For Jesus

- 1. Chapter 11 offers the last cure for cynicism: looking for Jesus. Explain what “Looking for Jesus” means. Where do you look for Jesus?**

- 2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?**

Chapter 12—Why Asking Is So Hard

- 1. What is secularism and where does it relegate faith? pp. 89-91 (old pp. 103-105)**

- 2. What does “the Enlightenment” do with prayer? How has this given birth to cynicism?**

Chapter 13—Why We Can Ask

- 1. This chapter describes the Lord as an infinite-personal God. The three inverted triangles illustrate three passages of scripture where God is both infinite and personal. Give the essence of each passage. Why do we struggle to pray to such a God as this?**

2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?

Chapter 14—How Personal Is God?

1. The author writes, “Prayer is a moment of incarnation—God with us. God involved in the details of your own life”. p. 109 (old p. 125) When have you seen God involved in the details of your own life? What was it like?

2. What do I lose and what do I gain when I have a praying life? pp. 109-110 (old pp. 125-126)

Chapter 15—What Do We Do With Jesus’ Extravagant Promises About Prayer?

1. Read James 4:2-3, where James comes to the rescue. Then look at the chart on page 116 (old page 132).

a. The first danger is the cliff of “Not asking.” What does James say about this? How does Jesus avoid this danger in His own relationship with His Father? (Mark 14:36) Does this describe your tendency in prayer?

b. The second danger is the cliff of “Asking Selfishly.” What does James say about this? How does Jesus avoid this danger? (Mark 14:36) Does this describe your tendency in prayer?

2. Read John 15:7 and pages 122-123 (old pp.138-139). What is one of the best ways to learn to abide? How does the fine print “if you abide in me, and my words abide in you” affect our asking?

Chapter 16—What We Don’t Ask For: “Our Daily Bread”

1. How does someone who is abiding pray differently from someone who is not abiding? Describe how the “asking” looks different. How does each respond to Jesus as King and Lord?
2. Think of a situation in which you need wisdom. Write down the details, your questions, etc. What would it look like for you to ask God for wisdom with an abiding heart and surrendered will? How would you involve the body of Christ?

Chapter 17—What We Don’t Ask For: “Your Kingdom Come”

1. What stages does God take the husband through as he begins to pray for his wife? How does he become the gospel for her?
2. What makes it hard to pray for change in ourselves? p. 135 (old p. 153)

3. **What is one thing in our culture that disturbs you? Talk to God about it: explain to Him why it bothers you. Ask Him to bring change.**

Chapter 18—Surrender Completely: “Your Will Be Done”

1. **Paul unpacks an incident with Andrew. What did self-will look like in this situation? How might Paul have thought and acted if he’d been depending on Jesus? pp. 137-139 (old pp.155-157)**

2. **In Matthew 5 to 7, Jesus closes the doors on our own self-will. What are the seven doors He closes and what should be the proper response to each door in order to close it?**

Chapter 19—Watching A Story Unfold

1. **In the middle of page 151 (old page 169), Paul writes, “Until you are convinced that you can’t change your child’s heart, you will not take prayer seriously.” What does prayer do that all other methods can’t do?**

2. **At some point, we give up our ability to change others. When this happens, what is the difference between giving up while on the road of “Good Asking” and giving up off the cliff of “Despair”?**

Chapter 20—A Father's Love

- 1. What does it look like to pray in faith? p. 156 (old p. 174) How can staying on the road of “Good Asking” p.152 (old p. 170) help us move toward the person for whom we are praying? Illus. Paul's praying for Emily.**
- 2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?**

Chapter 21—Unanswered Prayer: Understanding The Patterns Of Story

- 1. Paul gives three pictures of where we can go in the desert: denial, determination and despair. Explain what he means by each one. Do any of these three describe your life situation now or in the past? Please share with us.**
- 2. What does God do for people in the desert? What has God done for you when you were in the desert? pp. 165-168 (old pp. 184-186)**

Chapter 22---Hebrew Laments: Relearning Desert Praying -

- 1. Explain and illustrate what the author means by laments.**
- 2. Why are laments important?**

Chapter 23---Understanding How Laments Work -

What was Jesus' lament on the cross and how did the Father answer it?

Chapter 24—How God Places Himself In The Story (old Chapter 22)

**1. Read Matthew 15:21-28. How does Jesus enter the Canaanite woman's story?
What does he do for her? pp. 191-192 (old pp. 181-183)**

2. What is our reward when we hang in there with God during ambiguity?

Chapter 25—Praying Without A Story

- 1. The author differentiates between “making an isolated prayer request and praying in context of the story that God is weaving.” What does he mean by this? pp. 202-203 (old p. 201)**

- 2. What three things do we need to keep in mind as we live in our Father’s story? Of these three, which is most challenging for you?**

Chapter 26—Hope: The End Of The Story

- 1. Reflect a little on the chart on page 211 (old page 209) The author writes, “As we wait and pray, God weaves his story and creates a wonder....We are learning to watch for the story to unfold, to wait for the wonder.” How did Kim’s story of getting a job fill her family with wonder?**

- 2. Dream big before God right now. Record your dreams below(and back of page if necessary). Personal**

Chapter 27—Living In Gospel Stories

- 1. The author writes, “The gospel, the Father’s gift of his Son to die in our place, is so breathtaking that since Jesus’ death, no one has been able to tell a better story. If you want to tell a really good story, you have to tell a gospel story.” What are the key themes in the gospel story? p. 217 (old p. 213)**

- 2. How does living in a gospel story make us more authentic people? How do we become people of integrity?**

Chapter 28—Using Prayer Tools

- 1. What might some of the benefits be for writing down our prayer requests?**

- 2. According to our author, why do we need a prayer system? pp. 226-227 (old pp. 222-223) In what ways should we be careful about systems?**

Chapter 29—Keeping Track Of The Story: Using Prayer Cards

- 1. What are some overall guidelines in creating a prayer card?**

- 2. Take time this week to build a small deck of prayer cards, beginning with your closest family members and friends, picking Scripture for each person you pray for and list specific needs and ways you want to see God bring change. Use the “Building a Sample Deck” for giving you ideas for writing your deck of prayer cards. pp. 235-236 (old p. 232)**

Chapter 30—Prayer Work

1. What is the three-step pattern for God answering our prayers? Give the details of how this pattern worked in the relationship between Paul Miller and his friend Bob.

2. How might God be involving you in answering your prayers?

Chapter 31—Listening To God

1. What do we miss when we focus on “Word Only”? What happens when we divorce the Word of God from His Spirit? pp. 248-249, 252 (old pp. 242-243, 246)

2. What do we miss and confuse when we focus on “Spirit Only”? How is this dangerous? pp. 249-252 (old pp. 243-246)

- 3. How do you cultivate a listening heart? Why can't you learn to listen while living a life that is not surrendered to God?**

Chapter 32—Prayer Journaling: Become Aware Of The Interior Journey

- 1. How does journaling help us to see the story God is writing for us?**

- 2. The author writes on page 260 (old page 254), "Writing in a prayer journal helps us to articulate the state of our hearts." How did journaling help the author discover the state of his heart?**

Chapter 33—Real-Life Praying

- 1. What do you appreciate about the author's real-life praying? What about it particularly encourages you?**

- 2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this chapter?**

Chapter 34—Unfinished Stories

1. In your own words, list what God did for Israel through their unfinished story, their captivity. Which of these things might God be doing for you in your “captivity”, your unfinished story? pp. 270-272 (old pp. 264-266)

**2. What insight or takeaway did you receive from reading this entire book?
In what way has this book changed your thinking about your own prayer life?**