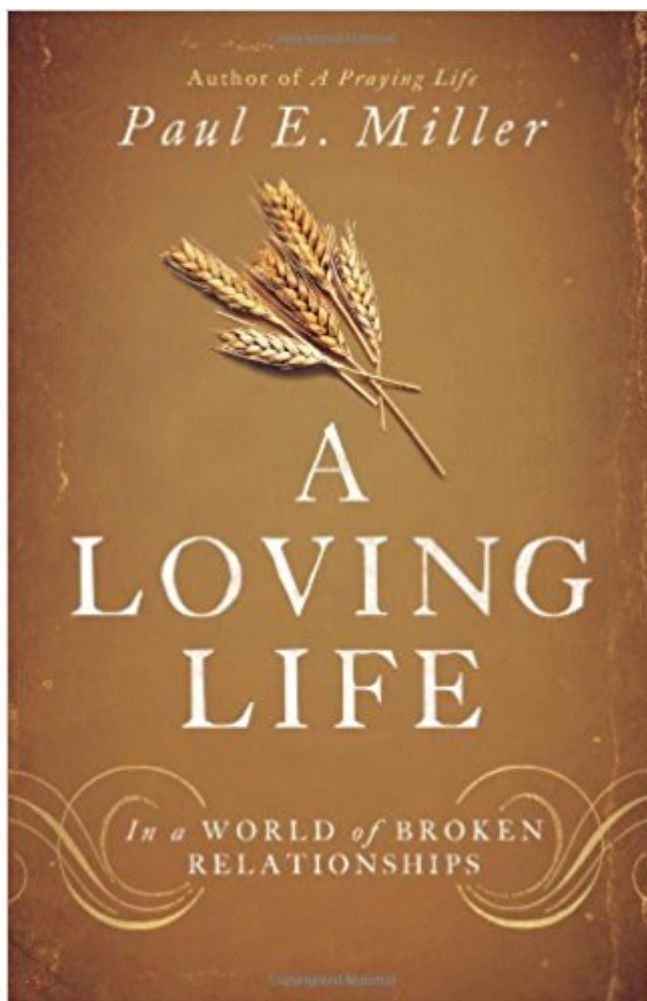


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# A Loving Life: In A World Of Broken Relationships



## Synopsis

How do you love with no love in return? How do you love when no one notices or cares? Best-selling author Paul Miller tackles these tough questions at the heart of our struggle to love head-on. Drawing from the book of Ruth, *A Loving Life* offers the help we need to embrace relationship, endure rejection, cultivate community, and reach out to even the most unlovable around us as we discover the power to live a loving life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"I'm not exaggerating when I say that this is the most honest, timely, and helpful book I've ever read about the costly and exhausting demands of loving well. And at the same time, *A Loving Life* is the most faithful, alluring, and encouraging presentation of God's love for us in Jesus I've fed on in years. These two themes go hand in hand. Through the biblical story of Ruth, Paul Miller gives us hope, not hype—the freedom to suffer well, stay present, and live expectantly in all of our relationships. Thank you, Paul, for making the gospel more beautiful and believable to me."—Scotty Smith, Teacher in Residence, West End Community Church, Nashville, Tennessee

"Every once in a great while one reads a book that is so profound, so fresh, and so life changing that you can't get it out of your mind or your heart. *A Loving Life* is that kind of book. Walk with Paul Miller, Ruth, and Naomi to the place of real love, and you'll never again settle for a substitute. Read this book, rejoice in it, and give it to everyone you know. They will bless you for giving it to them as I bless Paul Miller for writing it."—Steve Brown, Host, Key Life Radio

Program; author, *Three Free Sins: God Isn't Mad At You* "Reading this book nourished me deeply. With caring attentiveness especially to often-overlooked "modern" widows and widowers, Paul Miller gently pastors us through the story of two courageous, hesed-embracing single women, Naomi and Ruth. He invites us to embrace the death at the center of covenant love and to learn it as the downstroke of reality "the upstroke of which is ever the grace of surprising resurrection. In Christ, Christians all, and the world, reap the far-reaching blessing of these unlikely benefactresses. And we do again in this little book."

• "Esther L. Meek, Professor of Philosophy, Geneva College; author, *Loving to Know: Introducing Covenant Epistemology; A Little Manual for Knowing* "The book of Ruth is about hesed, a loyal love, that Ruth shows to Naomi, Boaz shows to Ruth, and, behind the scenes, God demonstrates to his people. Paul Miller not only brilliantly explains the story of Ruth, but also shows how hesed love can transform us and our relationships. I highly recommend this book."

• "Tremper Longman III, Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College "Being married to Joni, a longtime quadriplegic, I know my marriage vows are always in need of polishing. And Paul Miller's new book fits the bill; I've yellow-highlighted nearly every page. A Loving Life reinforces that the best "the only" kind of love is one-way and without an exit strategy. If you are looking to shore up the for-better-or-for-worse, in-sickness-and-in-health promises in your marriage, you couldn't lay your hands on a better read."

• "Ken Tada, Director of Ministry Development, the Joni and Friends International Disability Center "Death is the center of love." Miller's insight comes as he beautifully retells the story of Ruth in terms of the gospel, revealing a path of love more dear and deep than our cultural icons and distractions can create, and more precious than any pursuit of self can dream. Here is love vast, unmeasured, boundless, free, and freeing."

• "Bryan Chapell, President Emeritus, Covenant Theological Seminary; "Senior Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois "The word love is often either a vague sentiment or just another four-letter word. But in Paul Miller's hands, the quiet, compelling reality emerges. You will witness how love is thoughtful, principled, courageous, enduring, and wise "all the things you know deep down it should be. And even more than those fine things, you will be surprised and delighted at how true love is grounded in God."

• "David Powlison, executive director, Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation "Paul Miller reminds us with boldness and insight that a relationship with Jesus Christ means journeying with him to the cross, where we most know of the love of God for us. As such, it is the only path to learning to incarnate that love ourselves "and so to dance to the Spirit's constant rhythm of being loved and loving others."

• "Joseph "Skip" Ryan, "Minister, Park Cities Presbyterian Church; Moderator, General Assembly of the

Presbyterian Church in America I was sure that Paul Miller's A Praying Life had to be his greatest, but A Loving Life is better. How can we care for others much more than for ourselves? How can we escape from the slippery pit of our "feel good" culture? Keep going through the book of Ruth and discover good and godly ordinary life, and how you can live it in an extraordinary way—the way of love, God's way.

—D. Clair Davis, Emeritus Professor of Church History, Westminster Theological Seminary

A Loving Life is a worthy successor to Paul Miller's much-appreciated book on prayer. It is a careful, thorough analysis of the book of Ruth, understanding it as a love story and making good applications to our own experiences and needs for love. Paul here shows not only a deep understanding of God's Word, but also a rich knowledge of human nature, both in the ancient world and today. He offers biblical responses to many of the misunderstandings and problems we have with love of all kinds. May the Lord give this book a broad readership!

—John M. Frame, professor of systematic theology and philosophy emeritus, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando

If there is a message the world needs more to hear and to start obeying than the one Paul Miller brings here, I don't know what it is. Beautifully written and attested by plenty of personal experience, A Loving Life unearths dimensions of the book of Ruth I had never noticed, and will now never forget.

—André Seu Peterson, Senior Writer, World magazine

Paul E. Miller (M.Div., Biblical Seminary) is the executive director of seeJesus as well as the best-selling author of A Praying Life and several other books. With the help of his ministry staff, Miller creates and conducts interactive discipleship seminars throughout the world. He and his wife, Jill, live in the Philadelphia area and have six children as well as a growing number of grandchildren.

Paul Miller has found a remedy for broken lives in the Book of Ruth, a part of Scripture often relegated to the annual Women's Retreat. Men take note - you have to read this book. I mean it. There is a remedy for our bitterness and search for respect that shows us how to be a "Real Grown Boaz" man. Paul Miller has slowly peeled back the layers of a story written in an almost primordial age, and discovers that Ruth provides a crystal clear example of how to love like Jesus. Its "hesed" love. Love without expectations. Love because we commit to another. With this truth you can re-calibrate. You can trust God because He does not have to meet your expectations to be loved. Once applied to our own relationships, we realize that we do not grow in and out of love. We can simply love. We can live a loving life that is not dependent upon the other person, free to love without the cynical cycle of expectation and let down. Our "me" centered ugly side dissipates, and

we begin love others like they need to be loved, not like we want to love them. If you are tired of insipid relationships, or in a broken marriage, this book will help. If you are struggling to be a loving parent, or taking care of your aging parents, this is the roadmap. The final bonus is that this book will put you in touch with a Savior who loves you because he has made an unbreakable promise to love you--and that is worth its weight in gold.

*A Loving Life: In a World of Broken Relationships* by Paul Miller is a journey through the book of Ruth that examines the following themes: Love, Gospel, Community, Lament, Prayer, Femininity, and Masculinity. Paul Miller walks through the book of Ruth in a way that is part exposition, part practical commentary and fully focused on *Hesed* love. The first thing that we must understand is what hinders love. "The great barrier to love is ego, the life of the self. In long-term suffering, if you don't give in to self-pity, slowly, almost imperceptibly, self-dies. This death of self offers ideal growing conditions for love." When we look at Ruth's sacrificial love we see this dying of self that naturally produces *Hesed* love. We see this love on display when Ruth refuses to leave Naomi. Miller makes Ruth's example to us very practical when he says, "*hesed* is one-way love. Love without an exit strategy. When you love with *hesed* love, you bind yourself to the object of your love, no matter what the response is. So if the object of your love snaps at you, you still love that person. If you've had an argument with your spouse in which you were slighted or not heard, you refuse to retaliate through silence or withholding your affection. Your response to the other person is entirely independent of how that person has treated you. *Hesed* is stubborn love." Miller focuses on the fact that dying to self is at the center of this type of love. "In order to give Naomi comfort, companionship, and food. Ruth gives up friends, family, and the possibility of a husband and children - in fact, her entire future. Ruth embraces hopelessness in order to give Naomi a measure of hope. She out-*heseds* Naomi. Death is at the center of Ruth's love." What an example for us to follow! Those of us who know how the book of Ruth ends can often times miss these truths about how much Ruth sacrifices to love Naomi. "We've not been taught that to love someone means we enter their suffering. We don't realize that the normal Christian life is to 'share [Jesus's] sufferings, becoming like him in his death.'" Ruth models *hesed* love for us in her un-ending love for Naomi and we would do well to meditate on the truths of this type of love. I was really blessed by this book and would highly recommend it. I received a free digital copy of this book from Crossway in exchange for an honest review.

A few years ago, Paul Miller's book, *A Praying Life*, earned nearly universal praise for his

theologically rich and immensely practical prose of the subject of prayer. Now, Miller has brought those same qualities to bear in his new book, *A Loving Life*. I expect the praise will be wide-ranging for this book as well. Focusing on the book of Ruth, Miller uses this woman's story to unpack much of the Biblical meaning of hesed, the Hebrew term typically translated steadfast love or something similar. It combines the ideas of love and loyalty, and Miller spends page after page showing the superiority of hesed love over and against what our culture typically thinks of when it thinks of love. The beautiful story of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz shows us how God loves and how we are to love. Miller writes: "Hesed is opposite of the spirit of our age, which says we have to act on our feelings. Hesed says, 'No, you act on your commitments. The feelings will follow.' Love like this is unbalanced, uneven. There is nothing fair about this kind of love. But commitment-love lies at the heart of Christianity. It is Jesus's love for us at the cross, and it is to be our love for one another." The book is saturated with this kind of wisdom, along with real-life, practical examples of people both failing and succeeding in living out hesed. For marriages, friendships, family relationships, business relationships, etc., the Christian is to love with this kind of outward-looking, self-forgetting, loyal love. The vision painted in this book is absolutely beautiful, and it will inspire many to change how they view the people God has placed around them and seek to love God and others more in line with the Biblical view of love—hesed.

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