

## Walking in Love: Why and How?

**Suzanne Miller**

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*Walking in Love is a thoughtful text that encourages personal transformation via cultivated relationships with God.*

Suzanne Miller's *Walking in Love* is a progressive Christian guidebook designed to help audiences follow Jesus's teachings.

Miller's approach to Christian living is built upon becoming more righteous, or better aligning one's "thoughts, words, and deeds" with the divine and learning to walk in love. The bases of its teachings are close readings of the Bible that connect the wisdom of the Deuteronomy and Moses's covenant with God to the teachings of Jesus in the gospels, all in line with established, mainline perspectives.

Organized as a spiritual development guidebook, the book's first chapter sets the scene, nodding to Moses as representative of a traditional, authoritative tradition before suggesting a different path. The book then undertakes a close reading of the gospels in consideration of its chosen themes, including kenosis, or emptiness: "God emptied himself in the form of Jesus. He did it so that we could learn by example how a human with limited capabilities can ask, receive, and carry out God's guidance and grace on how to speak and act to make this world a better place."

Each chapter is thoughtful in its approach, helping to represent walking with God as a four-part process involving the cultivation of core beliefs. These include the ideas that God is good, that God communicates to people, that love is people's primary calling, and that one should choose life over death. The book asserts that choosing life over death is the most critical of these four beliefs, one that helps believers to build spiritual discipline and trust in God.

Personal anecdotes amplify the material, including expressions of love toward babies and a story about the purchase of a new puppy, which is used as an example of the love that God feels for all of creation. Complex theological ideas are addressed in a gentle manner, showcasing everyday human interactions in a meaningful way. Further, Miller is direct in addressing her audience, making her text a companionable guide for deepening Christian faith.

Because the book is so brief, though, its topics are treated with speed. The thorny topic of God's goodness, for example, is allotted just a couple of pages, and some conclusions seem superficial as a result. While the arguments are persuasive at first glance, they also deliver established progressive theological answers; not much of what is here feels like new information. Sermon-like in tone, the chapters more represent meditative reflections based on familiar notions.

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JEREMIAH ROOD (August 7, 2020)

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