

WE ARE CALLED TO BE EXPLORERS

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A review of *In Case You Were Wondering* by Travis Miller

One of life's most unfortunate truths is that we must make the most important decisions of our lives—a career, a spouse, a family, a ministry—when we are least qualified to make them. These big decisions would be much easier if we could make them in our forties or fifties, having learned wisdom and integrity after decades of living, but we are forced to make them in our early twenties as young people barely old enough to be considered adults. These decisions can seem paralyzing to the unprepared, and as a result more and more young adults are wandering through their twenties, unsure of when and how to make life's big decisions.

Fortunately, there are those like Pastor Travis Miller who have already been through this stage of life who can assist those of us still trying to find the way. In his book *In Case You Were Wondering: Waypoints for Twentysomethings*, Pastor Miller addresses the problem of young adults (or “twentysomethings” as he refers to them) aimlessly wandering through and subsequently wasting their most crucial years of life, making poor decisions that affect them forever. Pastor Miller, who has served in ministry for over twenty years, as well as in several executive positions in the UPCI and the General Youth Division, has recognized that something must be done to help young adults find their way, and his book seeks to do just that. Within the pages he addresses those burning questions that every young adult must make: What will I do for a career? Who will I marry? What is God's plan for my life? Pastor Miller strives to give direction to those who seem to have none. He writes that we are not called to be wanderers roving to and fro with no goal in mind, but explorers setting out with some deliberate purpose in mind.

Pastor Miller begins by affirming that every individual has value, both to God and to other people. He reminds the reader that God made us for a reason and that He has a unique plan for each of our lives. He then argues that because God has a unique plan for each of us, it is important that we don't waste our lives, which leads to a discussion about making good decisions. In the rest of the book, Pastor Miller discusses how to apply good decision-making, starting with the most important decision we will ever make: to serve God. He then goes through the process of discovering God's plan for our lives in our relationships and careers, touching upon subjects such as accountability, making the most of one's time, dealing with frustration, and getting a good education.

One of the most impressive aspects of the book is that it does not shy away from content that some might consider to be controversial or sensational. The kid gloves are off. As stated, one of the issues the book deals with is that of finding the right spouse, but Pastor Miller also discusses what happens if things go wrong. This includes a pointed discussion about sex and how it affects a relationship both inside and outside of marriage. He also doesn't shy away from topics like judgment, relational stability, true love, and “hyper-spirituality.” This is not a book for “young people,” but for young adults. Some of the content in the book could have gotten out of hand if the wrong person had tried to write it, but Pastor Miller handles everything in an appropriate, insightful manner. His words convey a wisdom that is at times unconventional, but is exactly what every twentysomething wanderer needs to hear.



In Case You Were Wandering is an easy read. At 142 pages, it is relatively short, but what contributes most to its easy reading is its simple, straightforward, almost conversational style. I have had the privilege to hear Pastor Miller preach several times and interact with him on a personal level. His manner is laid back and personal, and he speaks in a direct manner without frills or fluff or big words, but most important, he meets you at your level. Reading his book is a lot like listening to him speak. The book isn't pretentious or heavy handed (and it certainly could have been), and it doesn't pretend to have all the answers. It has no in-depth scriptural or spiritual analysis (though it does have plenty of Scripture), no advanced vocabulary, no moving passages of poetic brilliance. It isn't revolutionary or awe inspiring, but neither does it pretend to be. Rather, it meets the young adult on his or her level; it's thought provoking but not intellectual; easy to read but not simple.

In Case You Were Wandering isn't a deep book, but neither is it shallow. Rather, it is exactly what it strives to be: an earnest, insightful book for any young adult (sorry, "twentysomething") to read. The wisdom found within its pages would be helpful for twentysomethings at any stage in life, whether in college, graduate school, the workforce, or starting a young family. The book also has the potential to be useful as a small-group resource. Each chapter ends with discussion questions, and there is a companion DVD structured into lessons that could be helpful for a campus ministry or a college-age cell group. Whatever way it is used, there is sure to be some direction in it for everyone wandering the roads of life, searching for a waypoint and some clue of where to go next. As Pastor Miller writes, we are not called to be wanderers. We are called to be explorers.

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