

PRAY
WRITE
GROW

Cultivating Prayer and
Writing Together



ED CYZEWSKI

Pray, Write, Grow: Cultivating Prayer and Writing Together

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If you want to improve your prayer life, try writing.

If you want to improve your writing life, try praying.

The two require many of the same practices, disciplines, and virtues. If you're already inclined to both write and pray, you may as well figure out how they can help each other. If you're experienced in one, you may find opportunities for personal or spiritual growth by trying out the other.

This book offers life-giving practices that will help you grow in both prayer and writing and show how the two can work together to improve your craft as a writer and your spiritual practices as a person of faith.

Pray, Write, Grow: Cultivating Prayer and Writing Together Details

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Elizabeth says

Excellent book! No matter where you are on your writing or prayer journey, this book will inspire you.

I personally have felt for several years now that writing and praying are inextricably linked, at least in my life which was why I was so drawn to this book. This relationship between prayer and writing is not easy to explain unless you experience it but Cyzewski not only explains it and explains it well, but he also gives many tips and ideas on how to enhance the interrelationship between praying and writing.

I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys writing whether it be professionally or just occasional journal writing, for writing is a powerful way to connect with God.

I look forward to reading more from Ed Cyzewski and I'm delighted that he has a blog:
<http://edcyzewski.com/>

Brenna says

I was lucky enough to get a copy of this book from Ed and it couldn't have come at a better time. I think I was supposed to give feedback, but never got around to it. About 2/3 of the way through the book I stopped reading it. Why? Because I found myself in a long-awaited, but never realized, habit of morning prayer and writing. It seems obvious, that prayer and writing are somehow woven together, but it wasn't until reading this book (I have since happily finished!) that something clicked inside me and I was able to find what I had been searching for.

It's a quick, but quality read that has the ability to make lasting change. I highly recommend it!

Lydia Leigh says

As the author explains, the content of what we pray and write stems from the same thoughts and experiences, and the discipline and effort required for both to be sustained is also alike. In true Cyzewski style, this book is a fairly short read (reflected in the low price) but packed full of insightful reflections and practical advice.

This book is a mix of observation on the processes involved in both and practical tips on growing. As Cyzewski points out himself, this isn't a precise science but rather something which each writer and prayer will find their own take on. It's not something that we can short-cut either, however we can take on board the tools he provides and apply them to our own situations.

Some of the key points he makes are about freeing up space in our lives to focus on prayer and writing. He also talks about creating an atmosphere that we are comfortable working or praying within. What's going on

inside of us can be a barrier to action, or can be a rich source of topics.

A lot of the reflections on his own life really resonate with me. In particular, the things we ruminate on or seek to resolve are what we use as a basis of our prayers and writing themes. One very interesting point he makes is about the power of being vulnerable - not only about our fears of it not having an effect, but on the effect it often does have in connecting us to God or the reader.

Some other ideas he discusses are how our physical state not only effects us but informs us, how faith is an essential part of our writing and prayer, and how writing and prayer are both discernment tools which can help us to discover and grow in our passions. He also talks about the place of writing and prayer not only in helping others but in finding our own healing for past hurts. What we struggle with, whether mentally, emotionally or spiritually, is something which many others struggle with too. The book ends with some practical resources to help with specific situations, which are definitely worth checking out.

Throughout the book I found myself picking up on ways I could improve my writing and work. He has real insight into what can help us be effective and motivated, things like how we define success or whether our expectations are actually discouraging us from trying. Conversely, he also knows all about the fears and anxieties inherent in both writing and prayer which can become a barrier to us taking the step of faith we need to start in either area.

I would recommend this book to writers and prayers who are looking for new ideas to grow, or are maybe feeling a bit stuck even if it's just in a small area. It's not the kind of book that you're going to read and suddenly everything will be easy - but rather, it's the kind that will spur you on to make some small but effective changes. That's much more realistic in my view!

I was given an free review copy of this book.

You can read my more in-depth review on my website: <https://biblioflection.wordpress.com/...>

Trent says

Good Resource

I really enjoyed reading a quick book on how prayer and writing go hand in hand. I think we who are educated and have the ability to read and write take it for granted. We should and ought to not only pray verbally or in the stillness of our own minds, but also through writing. Through this practice will come healing and creativity and inspiration in other avenues of life be that as a writer, teacher, preacher, engineer and so on.

There is a few formatting errors towards the end of the book that can cause people to miss out on the last chapter, the afterword, and other useful content. Hopefully a future fix will happen.

Natalie Hart says

This is a wonderfully encouraging and generous book. It isn't a list of easy rules to follow in order to become

a prayer warrior and also a best-selling author. This is about your life, your development as a person. It is one of the most deeply pastoral books I have read. Cyzewski is open about his own struggles with both writing and prayer and how threatening it was, at times, to let go of his ideas of what he should be doing, of what progress should look like, of what work should look and feel like. I really appreciated this aspect of the book. I also really appreciated that this is a book about writing, not about publishing. It focuses more on what writing can do to deepen your self-understanding, your understanding of the world. It also doesn't assume that everyone reading the book wants to be a professional writer; it doesn't assume that everyone reading it has or wants a white collar job. It just assumes that you want to grow as a person, and shows how writing and prayer work together to help you do that -- even when you are the one throwing up the blockades. (I meant, me, even when I am the one throwing up the blockades. I'm sure you'll settle into a regular practice. Me, I'm being ridiculous, and the generous and welcoming tone of this book has really showed me how ridiculous I'm being in repeatedly avoiding developing a regular practice, even though I've had one before and loved it.)

Anne Bogel says

I heard Anne Lamott say once that everything she knows about writing also applies to faith, and everything she knows about faith also applies to writing. She wasn't the first writer to make that connection and she certainly won't be the last. Cyzewski explores the interweaving of writing and faith, and specifically prayer in this thought-provoking and genuinely useful little book. The book is written from a Christian perspective (albeit a generously inclusive one), and as the author himself says, "if you're already inclined to both write and pray, you may as well figure out how they can help each other." Indeed.

It's worth noting that at 92 pages this book is exactly as long as it should be, and wonderfully free of the padding that authors employ so often these days to stretch their books towards the 200-page range.

Tanya Marlow says

Last night I found myself saying to a friend, 'Ed Cyzewski has just written a book on this exact topic – you should read it'. It's a sign of a good book when you find yourself recommending it to others without meaning to. I always think of Ed Cyzewski as a pastor to writers, and a writer to pastors, and this book encapsulates his dual ministry perfectly. In the first chapter he says this:

“If you want to improve your prayer life, try writing.
“If you want to improve your writing life, try praying.”

The rest of the book explores how both of these things can be spiritual disciplines and how they combine to make us more whole and healthy. It's engaging, encouraging, and easy to read, and I wore out my highlighter with all the memorable quotes. As soon as I finished it, I downloaded the app he suggested and it's already changing my prayer life. It's a nice short book, about the length of a Kindle single and can be read in one setting.

This is a must-read for all pastors and writers, but I'd say it would be a help to anyone, even if you've not thought much about praying or writing before – it's really gentle and wise with lots of helpful tips. Highly recommended

Shawn Smucker says

A gem of a book that pulls me irresistibly towards a simple life of regular prayer without making me feel guilty in any way.

Michelle Woodman says

Much to mull over and let settle into me from this book, I think. And I'm thankful for that.

Marie Moreton says

I found this book empowering, encouraging, revealing and challenging, all in very positive ways.

It showed very clearly how prayer and writing really do go hand in hand. It showed how prayer and writing together can help you grow as a writer and grow in your prayer life and grow as a person too. It also showed you various ways in which you can achieve all this growth and for me, reading this book felt like I was being set free to grow into the person and writer that I was meant to be. I'm sure it will have the same effect on you.

You see, until I read this book (paper back version), I had only ever used prayer and writing together for personal purposes, so it was liberating to be shown how prayer and writing together could do so much more for me as a person, as a writer and in my prayer life. The challenge or me in this book was to do something in my writing that I always felt I should do but had been too scared to do, write about my pain. The author's challenge was such a gentle, encouraging and thoughtful one, as he also showed me how to do this properly and safely. I genuinely did feel challenged, encouraged and empowered during and after reading this book.

So, if you want to grow as a writer, as a person, as a person of faith and grow in your prayer life too then you must read this book.

Violet says

Each year I choose a word or phrase as a focus for the twelve months ahead. My word for 2015 is "pray." So when I saw the title of Ed Czerwski's latest book, I knew I wanted it.

Czerwski's premise is that prayer and writing are similar in many ways. In the first six chapters he shows how they both:

- require space in our lives. We may need to jettison something else to fit them in.
- benefit from our undivided attention.
- help us find healing from painful experiences and aid us in helping others.
- have a physical component and grow stronger through exercise and a regimen.

- guide us toward our life's purpose.
- need a great deal of faith.

The seventh chapter is lists of prompts, resources, and links under the headings “Writing Quick Start” and “Prayer Quick Start.”

Cyzewski's voice is encouraging. When he gives advice and suggestions he does it with a subtle, not commanding tone. He shares transparently about how prayer gave him insight into the childhood roots of his fear and anger. He tells about his struggles with worry when he quit his job to freelance full time. The awareness he gains through prayer and journaling opens his eyes to his passions, which then become his writing topics.

My two top takeaways from this book are:

1. An introduction to the Examen prayer practice (developed by Ignatius Loyola) that Cyzewski uses, explains, and recommends. His experience of how this daily discipline fosters spiritual intimacy with Christ in him whets the reader's appetite to try it for him/herself.
2. The picture Cyzewski paints of an integrated writing life. In it prayer and writing intertwine to braid a trellis that aids growth in both areas.

Highly recommended for Christians writing in any genre.

Andi says

I kind of what to be dismissive about this book because, well, it seems so obvious - now that I've read it - that part of what my struggles have been over writing are directly linked to the struggles I have with prayer (or not praying at all.) But I can't dismiss this book because, in a very true way, it has reset my course and brought me back to the way of being in the world that has always given me joy - the path of a woman who knows (most days) that she is loved by God and called to write.

If you struggle with finding time to write or pray, if you find you are anxious or fearful or stressed out, if you just need to settle in with practical wisdom and soft words, pick up this book. I'm so glad I did.

(Note - I received my copy as a galley because Ed and I are friends. That said, the book really is awesome; I'm not just saying that because I love Ed.)

Claire says

Some great thoughts in this book—but much too repetitive! It's already a short book, but it could have been cut in half by a good editor. Maybe the topic would've been better suited to a long essay. The thoughts didn't seem to build on each other or have a clear progression, they just sort of swirled around. And I found myself thinking, "Didn't I just read this same swirl one paragraph up? Or one chapter back?"

Lisa notes says

Author Ed Cyzewski ties two things together in this book to make a greater whole: Praying and Writing. He not only helps you see the connection between the two, but he shows you practical ways to use one to enhance the other.

"If you want to improve your prayer life, try writing. If you want to improve your writing life, try praying. The two require many of the same practices, disciplines, and virtues."

Pray, Write, Grow includes advice on how to create space (physical and spiritual) for praying and writing, how to explore more ideas, what to do with wounds you uncover, how community can help, and more.

Even though writing nor prayer are "safe" practices, Cyzewski encourages you to take leaps of faith into both anyway, and helps you see potential benefits that may follow.

In the back of the book, Cyzewski includes two Quick Start Guides, one for prayer and one for writing, for some simple ways to break through common challenges.

Don't let the size of this short book fool you; it's still packed with inspiration and doable practices to enhance your individual prayers and writings.

(I received an advanced review copy of this book, but the opinions are my own.)

Fred says

This short book is great motivation for both of the disciplines of praying and writing. It is very readable and genuine coming from a place of humility of conviction.
