



## Profile:

Jennifer Kennedy Dean  
***A Heart on Pilgrimage***

Author Jennifer Kennedy Dean started her journey of discovery with the power of prayer, when she was 18 and her only brother, Roger, was diagnosed with leukemia. "For the first time, something mattered to me more than my own program," Dean states. "I realized that Christianity is not something in which one 'dabbles.'

If it's true, it demands my life."

Although Jennifer had a conversion experience to the Christian faith when

she was eight, she states that in her teenage years, although she didn't leave the faith, she convinced herself that conforming to modern culture didn't interfere with her Christian beliefs. "Of course, the life didn't fit. It was always a struggle-I had to continually block God's voice, which is wearing. He's so persistent."

When Jennifer's brother was diagnosed with leukemia, Jennifer explained that although she believed the church's doctrine, it wasn't personal to her. "I had faith in my parents' faith," Jennifer said about her spiritual maturity. Prayer was the central focus during Roger's fight

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with leukemia. It was a 12 month fight from diagnosis to death.

"The question that I was left with, despite all that prayer, was: He died anyway. What was the point?"

Jennifer said. "This was the beginning of my quest."

Jennifer went through many stages in coming to grips with her brother's death. It involved asking God the deep, gut-wrenching questions to come up with the philosophies that she shares in seminars today. "As a young adult, I realized that there is only one prayer teacher. To Him, I brought my hungry heart and my inadequacies," Jennifer said. "He set me on a journey, the end of which I have not seen." The conclusions she reached about her brother's illness and death and what part prayer played, were summed up in this statement: "Prayer releases the power of God to accomplish the purposes of God."

"Prayer released God's power to work in that situation (her brother's illness) at numerous levels," Jennifer said. "Since I believe that the power of God was in full operation, then one more day on this earth would not have been a better thing for my brother." Jennifer admitted that this realization came from much soul searching and study of the Word of God. She said that in order to understand such hard concepts a person has to place it in an eternal context, or it doesn't make sense. But it's in asking these hard questions that Jennifer

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shines as a prayer teacher and seminar leader. Questions like:

*What is the difference between belief and faith?*

*What is the source of faith?*

*How does God speak His promises in the present-tense?*

In her book, **Fueled by Faith: Living Vibrantly in the Power of Prayer**, she leads the reader through a step-by-step journey to help sort out the biblical answers to hard questions such as these.

"I'm a left-brainer," Jennifer says. "I can believe in prayer 'just because,' but I also need it to make sense. I don't see any disconnect between logic and faith." Often people feel that spiritual truths and the intellect do not coincide. Jennifer's belief is that Truth can stand up to intense examination. "You can turn it inside out and upside down and the truth will still be true," Jennifer said. "I think sometimes we are afraid to ask the hard questions because we might offend God or catch Him off-guard. But God's invitation is this, 'Come now, let us reason together' (Isaiah 1:18)." When

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Jennifer began her quest it was to answer questions she herself had about faith and as her interest grew and she delved even deeper into the spiritual truths, it grew into a call to share what she had learned about prayer and faith with others. Although some of her observations about prayer may seem like 'discoveries' that are new, she claims they are the same truths that have always been true- just presented in a dif-

ferent light. "I don't introduce 'new' concepts," says Jennifer. "If they were new, they wouldn't be true. I think that they sound new to many people because they are the aspects of prayer not commonly addressed. I think my strength is to take eternal truths and frame them differently-put them into words and illustrations that cause read-

ers to grasp truths that had seemed remote and unknowable. Every time someone says after a seminar, 'I understand things that never made sense before!' then I know someone new has set his heart on pilgrimage. That's my reward."



Jennifer Kennedy Dean  
Author of *Fueled by Faith*