

A GENTLE HOPE FOR THE JOURNEY AHEAD

Even here, especially here, God is not absent. In the quiet moments, in the unanswered questions, in the waiting that feels longer than expected, He remains near. He sees every tear, hears every prayer, and understands every unspoken longing. Nothing about this season is wasted, and nothing about your story is overlooked.

Hope in this season may not always feel loud or certain. Sometimes it is quiet. Sometimes it is simply choosing to trust Him one more day. Sometimes it is resting in the truth that His presence has not changed, even when circumstances have not either. God's goodness is not measured by outcomes we can see, but by His unchanging character. He is still kind. He is still faithful. He is still working, even in ways that cannot yet be understood.

And while the path may not look the way it was once imagined, it is still held by the same God who writes stories of redemption, purpose, and deep, lasting impact. There is still joy to be found. There is still purpose to be lived. There is still love to be given and received in meaningful ways right now.

So, hold on to Him. Not because you have all the answers, but because He is still worthy of your trust. And wherever this journey leads, you're not walking it alone.



INFERTILITY

The Bible does not shy away from the topic of infertility. Its teachings provide stories of hope, faith, and perseverance. Many of the Bible's most prominent figures faced the challenges of infertility, experiencing the same emotions one may feel. Some of these individuals were already central to God's plan, while others became central figures through their journey of faith. In each case, God used infertility to display His glory in ways that often surpassed human understanding.

While one may not fully comprehend how or why God chooses to work through such circumstances, it is important to remember that fertility struggles are not necessarily a reflection of God's favor or blessing. His plan is often unknown, which can be frightening, especially when one disagrees with His choices or struggles to understand the "why."

During this season, learning to trust God's plan while faithfully praying for a child is vital. Leaning on His promises, seeking His presence, and remembering that His love and purpose for one's life remains steadfast are crucial.

EXAMPLES IN THE BIBLE

One of the most well-known stories of infertility is that of Sarah, Abraham's wife, who was barren for many years. Despite God's promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, Sarah's advanced age made this promise seem impossible. However, God fulfilled His word by enabling Sarah to conceive and give birth to Isaac in her old age (Genesis 21:1–7). This story demonstrates that human limitations do not hinder God's plans and that faith in His promises can lead to extraordinary outcomes.

Hannah's story, found in the book of 1 Samuel, provides another example of how infertility is addressed in Scripture. Heartbroken by her inability to conceive, Hannah prayed earnestly and made a vow to dedicate her child



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to God if her prayers were answered. God heard her plea, and she gave birth to Samuel, who would grow to become a great prophet (1 Samuel 1:1–20). Hannah's story highlights the power of persistent prayer and trust in God's perfect timing.

The New Testament also sheds light on infertility through the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah, the parents of John the Baptist. Like Sarah, Elizabeth was advanced in age and unable to have children. Despite their years of waiting, their faithful devotion to God was rewarded when an angel announced they would have a son who would prepare the way for Jesus (Luke 1:5–25). This story underscores that God's purposes are often fulfilled in ways beyond our understanding and that even long periods of waiting can lead to incredible blessings.

Psalms 127:3 reminds us that "children are a gift from the Lord." With this truth in mind, struggling with infertility can feel deeply confusing. Why are some blessed with children while others face such challenges? And honestly, sometimes it is even harder to understand when one sees children born into situations of abuse, neglect, trauma, to those who may give them up, or worse, abort them. If God rewards others with children, it is natural to wonder, "Why not me? Does God despise me?"

Hopefully, one's feelings are not this strong, but if they are, they are real, and God can handle honest questions and emotions. It is important to remember that childbearing is not the ultimate measure of God's favor or love. Why God chooses who and when to bless with children is a mystery that cannot be fully understood. However, His timing and plans are always perfect, even if it is hard to accept in the moment.

During this season, one should cling to the stories in Scripture that remind us God hears prayers, especially the prayers of those longing for children. Seeking contentment in the place where God has placed someone now, trusting that His blessings are present, even if they do not come in the form expected is important. This does not mean one needs to give up the longing to conceive, but it is crucial to remain open to the blessings God is offering right now, so they are not missed by focusing on the right things at the wrong times. Trusting His plan, striving to find peace in His purpose, and resting in the truth that His peace is real, His care is unwavering, and His love is unfailing are essential.

He wants to bless each person in ways that align with His perfect will. Maybe there are other blessings He wants to give first. While this does not promise a child, it does promise that God will use each individual for His glory and purposes.

As a sidebar, one should fight the urge to root identity solely in parenthood. Keeping one's identity firmly anchored in Jesus is important. True

peace and contentment flow from Him and provide the foundation for all other roles and identities. In Christ, one will find the strength, hope, and purpose to navigate this season and beyond.

WHAT STEPS CAN BE TAKEN?

PRAYER

Do not underestimate prayer! Seeking Him first and telling Him one's heart's desire is important. Having others join in prayer (a small group that can be trusted) and being honest with them about feelings is beneficial. Asking their advice and keeping them updated on the journey helps.

Standing on the Word of God daily and reminding God of His Word is encouraged! He does not forget it but loves for His children to remember.

RELAX

Many times, the stress and tension surrounding infertility can make conception even more challenging. Taking a break from the fears, anxieties, and pressures can be helpful. Focusing on nurturing the relationship with one's spouse, enjoying intimacy without the immediate goal of conceiving, can strengthen the bond and reduce the stress that often accompanies this season of life, perhaps with lessened expectations. Who knows what God may do.

There are stories of couples who struggled deeply with infertility. It can be heartbreaking to hear them talk about the IVF treatments, the failed attempts, and the financial toll it took. After much prayer, some have decided to open their homes for foster care. Remarkably, less than a year later, some have experienced a natural pregnancy.

While their story is inspiring, it is important to recognize that not everyone's journey will lead to biological children. For some, the path may involve opening their hearts and homes through foster care or adoption. While it may not be the same as having biological children, it is a powerful ministry and a reflection of God's love. Caring for children in need, whether through fostering or adoption, is an opportunity to live out James 1:27, which calls us to "visit orphans and widows in their affliction."

Parenting through foster care or adoption can be a profound way to fulfill God's purpose in one's life, even if it looks different from what was imagined. Trusting in His plans and knowing that ministry to children, biological or not, can have an eternal impact is important. Placing hope and trust in Him, knowing that He will use faithfulness for His glory, brings peace.