

Cling to These Promises When Agonizing Questions Bombard Your Mind

There's one kind of woman that still makes me cry.

She stretches big bows around pink wrapping paper and makes casseroles when the mama is still hobbling the stairs and bleeding afterbirth and she might as well start a Pinterest account just for one-year-old birthday parties—she's been to so many.

But her womb is empty.

She laughs as parents recount toddler antics and celebrates when that gurgling little thing becomes mobile and holds her friends' babies in the back of church... but it's not just her womb that's barren. There's a hollow part of her heart that's been carved with each new month of waiting. She has more questions than answers. The God she knew at 19 seemingly granted her friends health and wealth and happiness, and she wonders what landed her with this curse.

Life isn't like that present anymore—wrapped in a big bow. Hers has been unwrapped. Shucked. And she's not sure what was even underneath it all, anyways.

Her eyes cloud over in worship and she sings the words aloud next to her friends with big bellies all the while asking more questions on the inside.

This friend, this me, this woman who is living one big riddle is wrestling with the question of all of life: *Why would I ever subject myself to hope?*

It was in an email, not in person, that a friend shared these heartfelt, deeply considered lines that could all be

summarized with this one statement: "It's time to accept what you have and not ask for more."

She wrote what so many had thought. She was bold with what others danced around. She cared enough to want my heart to stop bleeding at the hands of forever-uncertainty.

She put words to my own wrestling: *Why keep praying for God to heal my body?*

Why let this shucked life—this unwrapped mess of a story—stay this exposed to the elements? Why hurt this bad, over and over again? Why give myself over to some crazy notion of hope, month after month, only to throw 10 bucks and another plastic test away? Again. Why even ask when the answer 43 times before was "no"?

He is sovereign. He rules over all and is the *only Sovereign*. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. Every part of my story was under His watch and direction and decision. And it was under this authority that my womb was vacant.

As this vacancy moved from months into years—brushing a decade—why did I still buy pregnancy tests and chart my temperature and look at bellies-bursting women with any of sort of longing or desire?

Why did I still pray prayers in secret that God would do the seemingly unthinkable?

I absolutely adored the four children God had given us through adoption. These were *mine*—they were children of my own. They were an answer to years of longing and waiting, and we were and are crazy about them. If this was the case, why did I still pray prayers in secret that God would do the unthinkable?

Because God made me for fellowship with Himself.

He made me so that He could enjoy me.

And He enjoys it when His people ask Him for the unthinkable. Faith for the unseen is His paradigm for relationship that delights Him.

So you—with your womb that has an echo—what if your decision to “accept” where you are and stop asking Him for what you really desire isn’t coming from some stalwart understanding of God’s hand, but is really just an attempt to preserve your bruised self?

What if you’re wrapping yourself right back up, with broken scraps and a tight explanation—clamping down your heart—only to miss the thing for which you were created? What if the nexus of this barren womb and your insides, alive with hope in the God of the unseen, is how He made you to bring Him glory?

What if all this is less about a baby and a plan and a neat-and-tidy life and more about moving the heart of God with your hope?

At 27 or 48—if your womb is still empty and you’ve spent years wrestling through hope—what if it meant that you allowed your heart to remain soft to the God-Man who spends every one of our days calling us into the unseen?

This season, so full of unconventional pain that 90 percent of your world can’t understand, isn’t “just” about a baby. It’s about a Man who witnesses every single tear you cry when no one’s looking and is moved because one more day barren for you meant one more chance that you’d call Him the God of the impossible and ask Him to do what you physically can’t conceive.

You have a chance to walk out what few on the earth can.

You have a chance to believe that who He is is greater than what you can see right in front of you.

Is today your day to live in that uncomfortable nexus of

physical limitations and an internal, steadfast expectation for the unseen God? When you lean into barrenness in any area of life, it invites Him to breathe life into the dark crevices of your heart.

The juncture of barrenness and hope (you know, the intersection we all want to avoid) grows a lost little waif into a daughter who expects good things from her Father.

Barren woman, is today your day to live?

For Your Continued Pursuit: Hebrews 11 | Ezekiel 37: 1-11 | Romans 5:5 | Isaiah 54:1-17 | Psalm 27:13 {eoa}

Sara Hagerty *is the author of Every Bitter Thing is Sweet (Zondervan) and Unseen, which will be released in August.*