

Infertility: Leave It All at God's Feet

Editor's Note: The following article contains material that is a bit graphic, but is a common medical issue among heterosexual couples.

For couples who struggle with infertility, the emotional pain and the hopelessness can sometimes appear unbearable. The last thing a husband and wife who are having trouble conceiving want to hear is advice from someone who has children.

It can even get to the point of annoying to hear the words, "Everything will be all right. I know what you are going through." How could a person who has received his or her godly gift (of children) dare to try to console someone who has yet to feel that joy?

The resentment is a legitimate emotion for those who desperately want children but have encountered difficulties along the way. Bitterness, anger, discouragement and even jealousy are not uncommon, either. There are days when you simply don't believe you're going to make it through.

So, with two beautiful, healthy children of my own, how I am qualified to comfort and advise those going through the pain of infertility? It's a subject that is near to and dear to both mine and my wife Patty's hearts. She and I endured more than three years of the despair and anguish that surrounds it.

Like many other couples, we did not want to hear it from anyone—family or friends—who were parents. "It's all in God's will," some would say. "Let go and let God," others chimed in. For Patty and I, they just didn't understand.

Granted, neither one of us were "spring chickens" through all of this. When we got married, I was 31 and she was 35. Plus,

we waited a year to even start trying because we were in the process of building a house. Along with our highly stressful jobs, that's a lot to put on yourselves.

After the first year, we began to try. Weeks turned into months, and months turned into a year. Discouraged but not deterred, we continued to pray about it and believe (although I'm not sure just how strong our faith was at that time). After seeking God in prayer, we decided to see an infertility specialist.

The specialist suggested that we try something called intrauterine insemination (IUI), defined by the American Pregnancy Association as a "a fertility treatment that uses a catheter to place a number of washed sperm directly into the uterus. The goal of IUI is to increase the number of sperm that reach the fallopian tubes and subsequently increase the chance of fertilization."

As you might imagine, the process was quite involved, and quite invasive, at least for Patty. She took pills and gave herself shots to boost her fertility chances. Indeed, she was a trooper.

It was only a minor inconvenience for me, yet still it proved aggravating. Both of us had to go through a process each month before Patty's "cycle," and we had to be at the clinic sometimes at the most inconvenient times.

And, with me working for NASCAR at the time, I was, at times, on the road at the most inopportune moments. I was forced to cut short my weekends at the track in the name of trying to have a baby.

Fortunately, most of this was covered by our insurance, so the cost was minimal. Praise God.

After another year or so, joy came, or so we thought, when Patty became pregnant. It all turned out to be worth it.

However, after seven weeks, we went in to try to get the baby's heartbeat. Nothing. We came back the next week. Nothing. The despair in Patty's eyes was more than unbearable.

"Why God?" we wondered. "Why would you give us the promise of a child, and then take it away from us? How can a loving God put us through all of this?" Angry at God? You bet we were.

But then we realized, of course, we aren't the only ones who had been through a miscarriage. We even knew some that had been through more than one.

Having miscarried, the next step was a D&C (dilation and curettage). We couldn't start trying again for another two months afterward, but we went back to the routine. Another few months passed by, and nothing happened. The option of in vitro fertilization was presented to us—an option at \$10,000 a pop. Uh, next.

We began to attend an "infertility support group," which didn't do much for my psyche. The desperation in that room could be cut with a knife. There were some couples who had been trying for more than five years and had spent nearly \$100,000 on in vitro. I always left those meetings feeling worse than I had when I went in.

We began to think about adoption as well, but knew it would be a long, drawn-out process. Finally, in what we should have done in the first place, we simply went back to God in prayer and laid the problem at His feet. We had done that before, but we had taken it back from Him, and nothing came to fruition.

We told ourselves, this time, we simply were going to give it to Him and never take it back. We didn't allow ourselves to get stressed over the situation, and whatever happened was going to happen. We went to the Word and found Psalm 113:9 that says, "I will make the barren to keep house as a joyful mother of children." We put that Scripture on the bathroom mirror for both of us to see and confess every day, along with

Mark 11:23, which says “Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be *granted* him.”

How could God promise those things and not come through? We simply began to confess and believe. And, it happened.

In a matter of two months, Patty was pregnant again. Ever cautious, we didn’t tell anyone for a few weeks. Patty had some early complications, but we believed that the Lord would bless our child and see her through the pregnancy.

While we had some adventures at the end, we did have a baby girl, “our miracle child,” in 2002. Rachel is now 12, and she’s grown up to be a beautiful young girl.

Two years later, Joshua came along. This time, it didn’t take so long because we did “let go and let God.” Joshua is now 10 and he is an incredible joy for both Patty and me.

I honestly believe that God waited—obviously in His timing—to allow us to become parents. He wanted our hearts to be right and to really be prepared. Perhaps that wasn’t the case in the beginning.

I read an article recently in which a study said one in six couples in America face infertility. That rate, according to the study, is rising. Some of the factors involved are the possible effects of environmental toxins, and that women are waiting longer to try to have children and thus reducing their chances.

For those faced with the issue of infertility, I want to say to you: Don’t give up. Don’t let your worries and fears make you question God. Remember, with God, all things are possible.

But also, however, pray in earnest before you begin any infertility treatments and investigate the process by studying

up on it. Allow God to show you in your heart the right path to take. He put doctors on this earth for a reason, and let Him guide you to where you need to be and which ones you need to see.

If it is your desire to have children, believe it and receive your blessing in the name of Jesus. Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” Don’t doubt God’s Word for one second. Thank Him every day for keeping His promises. He will not disappoint you.

If this is something that you and your spouse are struggling through, know that you’re not alone. Please share your comments with us, or with me at @. I will be happy to listen and perhaps refer you to a local support group.

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