

Simple Ways To Bless a Friend Suffering the Tragedy of a Miscarriage

Faith over Fear. Patience over Frustration. Pain with a Purpose.

In *Miscarried Joy* (Nyree Press), Tanika transparently shares her deeply personal and disappointing experiences of losing her babies due to miscarriage. There were times when she felt God was the cause of her pain. However, her journey through the lives of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah, Elizabeth and Naomi revealed quite the opposite—God had allowed her pain for a much greater purpose. Each of these women had something in common: They learned to surrender their will and trust God's plan beyond the pain. They were pushed to a posture of prayer that led them from questioning God to have total confidence in Him. Tanika discovered this season of waiting didn't show up simply to challenge her, but to change her.

Q: Why do you think so many women suffer the pain of miscarriage and infertility in silence? How can the church foster an atmosphere in which these women feel safe to share their grief and find support?

Pregnancy and miscarriage are both very personal experiences. When something you are expecting is all of a sudden not a reality anymore, it is not news we run to post on social media or shout to the world. Losing a baby is devastating. It has the potential to make a woman feel defeated, ashamed because she is blaming herself and even jealous of other women. We have experienced the loss of a child without being able to mourn openly.

The church does a great job celebrating the coming bundles of joy, but I believe a great opportunity presents itself for the church to minister to women who have experienced miscarriage

or stillbirth or are having challenges conceiving. For some women, including me, the pain can be as severe as losing a loved one with whom you have spent a significant amount of time. The church can foster an atmosphere for women to share simply by creating opportunities to have the conversation. Not every woman will want to share, but she will listen to others encourage her through their experiences. I also believe churches should have ministries or small groups to cater to this need. When I had a miscarriage, I didn't know where to go to simply talk. If churches had groups or even events to help women to heal in this area, I think it would free so many women.

Q: You believe God will give you biological children one day. However, what if the manifestation of His plan comes in the form of foster care, adoption or another non-traditional method of having children?

I do believe God will give me the desires of my heart to have biological children. If I doubted in any way, I would be exhibiting a lack of faith. I know God placed the desire to conceive and birth children in my heart, so I stand strong in faith, believing it will happen. There is absolutely nothing wrong with becoming a mom through nontraditional methods. My husband and I have discussed adopting a child after having our own. But I still believe God will perform a physical miracle in my life.

Q: Why does the absence of conflict and spiritual wrestling often result in weak and shallow faith? Shouldn't it be the other way around?

I believe faith is like a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes. The less you rely on it, the weaker it is when you need it. If you rarely encounter spiritual wrestling or conflict in your life, you won't have the opportunity to build resilience and elevate the level of your faith.

Fighting this spiritual battle to have children is equipping me with the armor to be the victor in future battles God allows in my life.

Q: Sometimes, as in the case with the thorn in Paul's flesh, we ask God to change a painful situation and His answer is no. How can believers keep their faith strong in those situations?

I believe the Word of God is the best place to go to keep your faith strong in these types of situations. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." God is the ultimate Comforter, and since He and His Word are one, the Bible is a good place to start.

I would encourage people to find their situation in the Bible. Study it, pray and ask God to give you fresh revelation from the Word and how you can apply it to your life. No one would voluntarily go through suffering. Even Jesus said, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39b). We have to remember we serve a strategic God who will not let us be pushed beyond what we can bear.

The other thing I would tell people is to find others who are going through something similar. Suffering is always a bit easier when you have support. If you are a mommy-in-waiting, connect with other women who are currently in the same season or with women who went through it. Find people you trust to pray with you and who will allow you to vent when you need to. God did not build us to walk through this life alone. He gave us family and friends for a purpose. Lean on them when you need to. God may not immediately remove the thorn, but ask Him to make it tolerable.

Q: Share with us how you were able eventually to view your sufferings as a gift rather than a curse.

What really helped me is to think about the purpose of Jesus Christ. He went through the greatest suffering of all, and though it wasn't anywhere near pleasurable for Him, His pain served a purpose that benefited God's children. The Bible tells us we will suffer for Christ. Every test has a testimony, and when you share yours, it isn't for you. It is to encourage and build the faith of those that hear it. It is how God uses you to build and equip His people. Being chosen

as a vessel for the glory of God is a gift. When God instructed me to share my story with the world, I knew this suffering was not just to build my faith but to help women who are also in a season of waiting. To be used by God is a gift, and if that requires suffering, I will submit joyfully to His plan.

With its biblical depth, heart-filled transparency and a voice of passion, readers of *Miscarried Joy* will:

- Understand God's heart in the midst of incredible pain
- Discover the importance of trusting God's plan over their own
- Arm themselves with the strength to let go of bitterness and comparison to appreciate the beauty of their stories
- Learn and implement spiritual principles and strategies to walk boldly in faith
- Embrace God's delay and birth contentment in their seasons of waiting

What have you miscarried? What purpose have you had difficulty conceiving? Is it a calling you fear stepping into? A vision that has not yet come to pass? *Miscarried Joy* has something for anyone who needs help pushing through incredible pain to conquer discouragement, walk in faith and birth their purpose. God's delay in your life could be a set-up for your greatest calling to be fulfilled. {eoa}

Learn more about more about *Miscarried Joy* at , on Facebook (tanikafitzgerald) and via Twitter (TR_Fitzgerald).