

The Secret Sorrow Women Carry

"We can't find a heartbeat."

"The fetus did not implant in the uterus."

"The fetus isn't developing properly."

You may have heard these words from an ultrasound technician or from your physician during a routine prenatal exam. I am certain you cried plenty of tears, because I surely did. Day after day, I ran into my husband's arms and just cried. We had suffered so great a loss, but not many could understand the depth of our heartbreak. After hearing those words, how did you truly feel and who did you tell? If you are like most women, you probably only exposed your miscarried bundle of joy with a chosen few.

Miscarriage is the most common type of pregnancy loss, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Studies reveal that anywhere from 10-25 percent of all clinically recognized pregnancies will end in miscarriage.

Pregnancy loss is a very common yet unspoken event that many women experience. Maurice and I chose not to share it with many people, but it definitely became a major focus of our conversation and prayers with God. It is a loss that touches more women around us than we often realize. After our first pregnancy loss, I did extensive research on the causes to see if there was anything I could have done to prevent it. I questioned if it was my fault. Did I exercise too much, not get enough rest, eat or drink the wrong things? I placed the blame on me and for a moment, also on God. I began to search the Scriptures to learn about what God said about miscarriage. Here is what I found in the Word of God:

"You shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless your

bread and your water, and I will remove sickness from your midst. No one shall be miscarrying or be barren in your land. I will fulfill the number of your days" (Ex. 23:25-26).

"So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish" (Matt. 18:14). God is concerned about every human being that He has created.

"And all these blessings will come on you and overtake you if you listen to the voice of the Lord your God. You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the field. Your offspring will be blessed, and the produce of your ground, and the offspring of your livestock, the increase of your herd and the flocks of your sheep. Your basket and your kneading bowl will be blessed. You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out" (Deut. 28:2-6).

How could something so common in the world be the opposite of what God has promised to His children? If God promised His children that there would be no miscarriages or barrenness in the land, then why has it happened to so many women that serve Him? Is this a contradiction of His Word? How could a God that is so loving take away our heart's greatest joy? Isn't He the God who is faithful to fulfill what He promised? Isn't He the God who will fully equip our bodies to function according to His design?

It is a great disappointment to desire to have a child and feel there is a possibility that you will be unable to be fruitful and multiply. It can be one of the deepest levels of pain for women. It affects our confidence, potentially shatters our dreams and makes some regret that we haven't yet been able to give our husbands the sons or daughters they desire.

It is a wound that is opened over and over again every time someone asks that dreaded question, "When are you going to have a baby?" I don't know about you, but whenever someone

mentions “baby” in regards to me having one, the pain of my losses returns and I mentally—and sometimes emotionally—relive the moments of losing our angel babies. I celebrate those around me birthing their bundles of joy while still dealing with the current reality that having the children we desperately desire has proved to be one of the greatest mountains that we’ve ever had to climb. “Lord, when are you going to do this for me?” is a question many childless women bring to the feet of Jesus in their private prayer time.

Why is it that so many struggle with repeated miscarriage and infertility, but it’s such a taboo topic to discuss? We don’t talk about it with most of our family, our close circle of friends, our pastors, or mentors, and it’s certainly not a social media announcement. Instead, behind closed doors, we remember. We remember the cold ultrasound room, the tears that left our eyes as the news was delivered, the outline of a baby on the screen with no heartbeat, the missing fetus who never developed or the repeated pregnancy tests that were all negative. The growing belly, gender reveal and baby shower would not be occurring within the next nine months. We know all too well what it’s like to go from cloud nine excitement to the deepest depth of discouragement. The shoulders of our husbands, and maybe our pillows, are the only ones that really know the suffering we are encountering. We wake up in the morning, get dressed, go to work, run businesses, smile and celebrate others while silently, we are suffering. We are crying on the inside while glowing on the outside. We are dealing with death without being able to openly mourn.

Miscarriage is a silent suffering. It’s a private matter that we dare not discuss publicly. I am choosing to break the silence in hopes that my story will transform the faith of so many women who are still waiting for their children to manifest on this side of heaven. Maybe one day, you will do the same. You are not alone, and you should not have to suffer and heal alone. {eo}

Excerpt adapted from Miscarried Joy by Tanika Fitzgerald © 2016 Nyree Press. Tanika Fitzgerald is a daughter of Christ, a wife to her husband, Maurice, a loving daughter, sister and friend. She is passionate about equipping women to grow spiritually, live balanced lives and helping them to become armed for victory in every area of their lives. Tanika is the visionary behind *ARMED*—a publication created to “Spiritually Equip YOU for Victory in Battle.” She enjoys spending time at Lake Michigan, creating memories with her loved ones, reading a variety of books, writing and traveling the world with her husband.

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