



Beyond the Heartache of Infertility

Kurt Bruner, *The Center for Strong Families*
Adapted by *Greenville Oaks Church of Christ*

Infertility is a painful and personal experience for any couple who wants to have children. If you're going through infertility, it may seem like every pregnant co-worker or baby shower at church is a reminder of the pain, making it difficult to have joy for others.

You can feel like your marriage is missing something or you may blame yourself for making decisions along the way that have hurt your chances to conceive. Maybe you've already considered or started some kind of infertility treatment and you're worried about the cost or risks that you'll face.

Whatever feelings you may be experiencing, you need to remind yourself of several important truths.

REMINDER #1: It's Okay To Grieve

Hoping to offer comfort, some may downplay infertility and even point to the things you can enjoy as a couple without kids. If you already have at least one child, some people may not understand why you would be so sad about secondary infertility, ending your hopes for more children.

Whatever your circumstances, it's common to experience a great sense of loss in finding out you can't have a child. Infertility is a tragic reality of our fallen world, one that rightly causes grief. Jesus told his followers that those who mourn are blessed and will be comforted (Matthew 5:4).

A husband may not entirely understand what his wife is going through, especially as her emotions are affected by changing hormones. Likewise, a wife might struggle to understand her husband's complicated feelings about infertility. This can be a vulnerable time for any couple. It's important to share your thoughts and feelings openly, not stuffing them or letting your grief get lost in distractions and busyness.

REMINDER #2: It's Okay To Hope

Because of God's goodness, you are never without hope. Psalm 113:9 says, *He gives the childless woman a family, making her a happy mother.*

You can't know exactly how God will choose to work in your life, but you can know He is able. He can restore fertility when it seems impossible. Or He may help you grieve your inability to have biological children and then cultivate in you a desire to adopt and love a child in desperate need of a Christian home.

Your ability to hope in God begins by releasing everything to Him in prayer. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul wrote:

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:6-7)

REMINDER #3: It's Essential To Be In Community

It's tempting to avoid talking about infertility and all the accompanying struggles. Couples may want to pull away from other families, unsure what they'll think or say.



As awkward as it may be; however, you still need Christian community—a safe place where you can *share each other's burdens* (Galatians 6:2). It's in community that you also can find encouragement from others who have been where you are.

That's the context of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4:

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

There is strength in sharing our stories with each other.

GOING FURTHER - Resources

Recommended Book:

Available for checkout at the Faith@Home Center or for purchase online.

Empty Womb, Aching Heart (by Marlo Schalesky) offers hope and help for those struggling with infertility and encouragement for couples grieving a miscarriage.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

You Are Not Alone!

Couples at Greenville Oaks have experienced infertility and are willing to talk and walk with you during this season of your life. Please complete a Follow-Up Card at the Faith@Home Center or email FaithatHome@greenvilleoaks.org and ask to be contacted by someone who has experienced infertility.

HOPE at Greenville Oaks

HOPE meets at Greenville Oaks on Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. HOPE provides the support for those dealing with emotional pain and loss in relationships by combining mental health concepts with biblical truths in a safe and confidential environment. While the parents are in HOPE, kids are welcome to participate in *Celebration Place* where they will learn about some of the same principles as their parents in age-appropriate ways. For more information, please email hope@greenvilleoaks.org or call the church office at 972-727-2359.

Pastoral Care

Greenville Oaks Shepherds and Ministers are here for you. Please complete a Follow-Up Card at the Faith@Home Center or email FaithatHome@greenvilleoaks.org and ask to be contacted by a Shepherd or Minister.