



31 Reflections for Walking with God
Through Infertility



KELLEY RAMSEY & JENN HESSE

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

© 2023 Kelley Ramsey and Jenn Hesse

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published in Nashville, Tennessee, by W Publishing, an imprint of Thomas Nelson.

Thomas Nelson titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fund-raising, or sales promotional use. For information, please email SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.* Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.*

Scripture quotations marked AMP are from the Amplified® Bible (AMP). Copyright © 2015 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. www.Lockman.org.

Scripture quotations marked CSB are from the Christian Standard Bible®. Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Scripture quotations marked ESV are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are from Holy Bible, New Living Translation. © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Ministries, Carol Stream, Illinois, 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked TLB are from The Living Bible. Copyright © 1971. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Italics added to Scripture quotations are the authors’ emphasis.

Some personal names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

The information provided in this book does not constitute professional advice and is not a substitute for expert medical advice. When a doctor’s advice to a particular individual conflicts with advice provided in this book, that individual should always follow the doctor’s advice.

Any internet addresses, phone numbers, or company or product information printed in this book are offered as a resource and are not intended in any way to be or to imply an endorsement by Thomas Nelson, nor does Thomas Nelson vouch for the existence, content, or services of these sites, phone numbers, companies, or products beyond the life of this book.

ISBN 9780785290384 (Hardcover)

ISBN 9780785290414 (eBook)

ISBN 9780785290421 (Audiobook)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022048774

Printed in the United States of America

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode



Aboard the Roller Coaster

Reflect

- Where are you on the roller coaster of waiting for a child? Are you feeling discouraged, stuck, exhausted, or hopeful? Take some time to name your emotions and consider how they fluctuate throughout each cycle.

- Have you placed your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior? If not, I'd love for you to get to know him. A good starting place is to pick up a Bible and read the Gospel of John, which shares the story of Jesus' life and why he came to earth. See "How to Put Your Faith in Jesus" at the end of this book to develop a relationship that will change not only your wait but your whole life.
- If you do know and follow Jesus, are you regularly bringing your emotions before him and asking him to show you his perspective? Or are you trying to ignore, suppress, or grit your teeth through the cycles of disappointment? What, if anything, would you like to do differently in your waiting season?



The Two-Week Wait

Reflect

- What are your fears on this journey? Be specific. Are you afraid of a certain diagnosis, fertility treatments, having another miscarriage, not ever getting pregnant?

- Do you believe it's possible to be "anxious for nothing" (Philippians 4:6 NKJV)? Why or why not?

- Do you feel cautiously optimistic about your wait? If so, how would you like your mindset to be different?



Who Am I, If Not a Mother?

Reflect

- How do you see yourself right now? Are you focusing more on what you want to be—a mother—or on what you have through Christ—a relationship with God as his daughter?

- In his book *Abba's Child*, author Brennan Manning encourages followers of Jesus to “define yourself radically as one beloved by God.” Would you define yourself this way, or does that make you uncomfortable? If the picture of God as your Father brings up difficult memories, write what you feel. Then ask the Lord to help you see him clearly, convinced that he’s far better than any earthly father.

- Do you feel like your life is on hold or purposeless? Answer honestly, and consider whether you might be attaching your identity to the work of motherhood.



Sighs of Sorrow

Reflect

- What has caused you grief in your journey thus far? How does it make you feel to learn that infertility is trauma?

- Have you taken the time to grieve your losses of infertility and miscarriage (if applicable)? Why or why not?

- How have you shared your grief with others? If you haven't, what step will you take to share your grief with someone?



Freedom from Shame

Reflect

- How have you felt shame during your wait for a child?

- Do you feel the instinct to run or hide if someone knows you're going through infertility? If so, why?

- Ed Welch wrote, "Shame will never surrender its power over you if you are tentative about it. You need to identify it and attack it with hope." How can hope in Jesus help you fight shame?



Too Weak to Carry On

Reflect

- In what ways have you felt weak and weary from your journey? Tell God where you're hitting the wall.

- What does God's Word say about your weaknesses in 2 Corinthians 12:9? It's helpful to compare different versions such as Amplified and The Message in your observation.

- How can you find strength in the Lord instead of yourself?



Why Her and Not Me?

Reflect

- How do you usually react to a pregnancy announcement?

- Have you talked to God about your grief triggered by someone else's pregnancy? Or are you bottling up your pain until it fills you with resentment?

- When you think of your friend, sister-in-law, coworker, or another woman who is pregnant, what are your feelings toward her? What would you like your feelings to be?



Outside the Mommy Club

Reflect

- Describe a time when the words or circumstances of a friend made you feel like a have-not. Do you think the person meant to hurt you? Spend a few minutes writing down your feelings.

- In what ways have you isolated yourself or put up a wall against others?

- Consider the Scriptures used in the chapter, especially Psalm 23. What do you think about Jesus being your Shepherd who walks with you?



Inside the Pit

Reflect

- What has caused you to feel like you're in the pit? What seems to be keeping you there?

- What questions would you like to ask God right now?

- What do you think about the idea of speaking truth to your feelings? Does it sound doable or impossible? Which specific truths would you tell your feelings?



How Long, Lord?

Reflect

- Have you ever shared laments of sorrow like David: “How long, LORD?” Explain.

- Describe how you've been angry during your journey. Consider whether your anger has been directed at someone or something; then write about it.

- What do you think about the concept of directing your anger toward God? How can lamenting to God be helpful in your pain?



Not a Punishment

Reflect

- How are you viewing God? Do you see him as a heavenly judge pounding his gavel on the clouds? A mean dad who's sending you to your room? Journal your thoughts and feelings toward him.

- Can you accept that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross covered your sins completely? Or do you think you've made mistakes that are unforgivable or require further punishment?

- How do you view God's discipline? Is it different from what you consider to be his punishment?



Praise Him Anyway

Reflect

- What do you focus on when you pray? Be honest. Though God already knows, it can help to take a step back and look at what's capturing your attention.

- In his book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”² What’s your first thought when you think about God? Don’t worry if you haven’t given him much thought before your fertility struggles. He welcomes your seeking now.

- How hard or easy is it for you to worship the Lord as you wrestle with grief? By worship, I mean giving God honor in what you do and where you find ultimate joy.



Waiting Is Worth It

Reflect

- How have you been waiting? What will make this waiting worthwhile for you?

- In what ways would you like your waiting season to be different? How can you find purpose right now in your wait?

- How has your waiting pushed you to greater dependence on God? If this hasn't happened yet, ask him to show you your desperate need for him.



Ready for Battle

Reflect

- Do you believe you are in a spiritual battle? Why or why not?

- From what you learned in this chapter, is there anything the Lord is prompting you to try or change?

- Is there someone you've been fighting instead of being on defense against spiritual attacks?



The New You

Reflect

- How do you think about the pain of infertility? Are you a “no pain, no gain” person, or do you see pain as an obstacle that you need God to remove?

- Have you thought much about the inner transformation God might be doing through your waiting? Why or why not?

- What are some ways you can clothe yourself with Christlike qualities?



My Story, His Story

Reflect

- What has your story looked like so far? Do you see purpose from any of it?

- In what ways have you seen your story being used for someone else?

- Have you shared your story with others, publicly or privately? If so, explain how and why.



What a Miracle Looks Like

Reflect

- What comes to mind when you hear the word *miracle*? Be as specific as possible.

- What do you think of the concept of God as your healer? Do you think that he owes you healing if you have enough faith, that he no longer heals supernaturally, or that he only cares about your soul and not your body? How has this chapter affected your perspective?

- How often do you think about your need for spiritual healing? What work has God done in your heart?



Eyes on Eternity

Reflect

- What do you envision when you think about heaven?

- Did this chapter give you a new picture of eternity? How so?

- How would your heart be different if you began seeing heaven as your eternal home? Would it cause you to wait differently?



Counting It Joy

Reflect

- Do you believe God can give you joy even amid infertility? Why or why not?

- How has waiting stretched your faith and matured you?

- What would it look like for you to persevere in this season? What would need to change?



Desires of Your Heart

Reflect

- How do you feel about your desire for a child? Do you see your desire as good or as something to be removed?

- Has your desire for a child become the ruling desire of your heart? How? Be honest with God. When you admit that your desires are out of order, God can redirect your heart to seek fulfillment in him above everything else.

- What's your gut reaction to the thought of surrender? Could you give over your desire for a child to the Lord right now? Or do you need to start by asking him to help you want to want his will?



Love Your Beloved

Reflect

- What is your definition of *family*? How does the story of Adam and Eve affect your view of what it means to be a family?

- How has infertility affected your relationship with your husband? In what ways might you need to apologize, clear up any misunderstanding, and/or seek restoration?

- (*For the wife married to an unbeliever*) How can you show your husband love in a way that he may “be won” to faith (1 Peter 3:1)? Who are some godly people you can go to for support?



Redeeming the Bedroom

Reflect

- How has infertility affected your intimacy in marriage? Write down what sex was like in the past, how it is now, and how you'd like it to be different.

- How could you adjust or place safeguards in trying to conceive, to put God and each other first?

- Do you believe God can redeem your intimacy and make your bedroom a loving, enjoyable space again? If God can create from nothing, if Jesus can heal people and rise from the grave, then he can restore what infertility has damaged.



One Happy Family

Reflect

- How have your family members reacted to your fertility struggles? If they've hurt you, take time to process what they said or did and why it hit you so hard.

- In what ways have you responded to your family's reactions? Consider how you might have treated them unkindly, and come up with ideas for different ways of responding to them next time.

- How can you use your waiting season to represent Christ to your family?



Friends Again

Reflect

- Do you have a hypersensitive attitude toward your friends? Be honest. Your emotions are valid and often hard to face. But through Jesus, you can take ownership of your actions.

- Whom do you need to forgive? Whom do you need to ask for forgiveness?

- In what ways can you extend grace to your friend? Instead of expecting your friends to say something hurtful, look for whatever is good, true, lovely, and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8).



Sharing the Comfort

Reflect

- Do you struggle with wanting to isolate yourself from other people?
What motivates you to consider others' needs and hurts?

- Is it easy or difficult to believe your infertility could provide an opportunity to comfort someone?

- Does sharing the good news of Jesus sound intimidating to you? How can you remind yourself that the Holy Spirit will give you the courage to show your wounds?



Should We Do IVF? (and Other Decisions)

Reflect

- When you pray about fertility decisions, what are you expecting from God? Are you pursuing his wisdom or hoping for a direct, “burning bush”-style answer about what you should do? (Read Exodus 3 for the story of how God called Moses through a burning bush.)

- Which tools have you used to gain wisdom? Is one tool more difficult than another for you to apply? If so, jot down ideas for how you can start tapping into that resource.

- How are you trusting God with your decision-making? This *doesn't* mean that choosing to go through fertility testing or treatment shows you lack faith. To walk through infertility by faith, we pray for wisdom, discern the most God-honoring option before us, and then take the next step, surrendering the outcome to him.



At What Cost?

Reflect

- Do you recognize the woman in the mirror? Have you been treating your body in a God-honoring manner? Take a moment to assess your pain level, physically and emotionally.

- Does your current path fit in your budget? Have you or your spouse had to work extra hours or jobs to make ends meet? Describe any stress brought on by the financial burden of infertility.

- Are the actions you're taking God-honoring? Are they moving you toward deeper connection with the Lord, or pushing you away from him? Ask him to search your heart and reveal anything that needs to be realigned toward him.



Two Pink Lines

Reflect

- If God has done a mighty work and you are pregnant, do you feel able to celebrate, or are you cautious, fearful, or feeling guilty comparing your situation to those of infertility sisters?

- Can you relate to any of the fears listed? Write down your specific worries.

- Fighting fear requires us to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). What thoughts, emotions, or impulses do you need to take captive and surrender to Christ’s authority?



Born in Your Heart

Reflect

- What have you done to address your infertility grief? Do the hard work of naming the dreams you're grieving.

- What may be causing you to consider adoption? Are you out of medical options? Are you feeling drawn toward vulnerable children? Your answers don't have to be mutually exclusive. It's important to examine the "whys" of your process.

- What aspects of adoption scare you? What makes you excited? Your answers could provide insight into how God might be shifting your desires.



Different Can Be Beautiful

Reflect

- Are you wondering if you're near the end of your wait? It's better to confront your fears head-on than to stuff them inside.

- What areas of life do you wish you could control? Name the things you're holding on to, then pray and ask God to help you loosen your grip.

- Author and speaker Jill Briscoe said, "Your mission field is the area between your own two feet at any given time." How are you serving God right now? Think about where he placed you and ways you can share your faith there. Turning your focus to the opportunities in front of you can help you resist worries about the what-ifs of considering childlessness.



How to Wait in Hope

Reflect

- How have you seen God move in your wait? Spend time celebrating what the Lord has done through this journey.

- If we had to pick three words for you to take away from this book (besides *waiting in hope*), they'd be *seek*, *trust*, and *share*. Which words would you choose?

- How can you wait in hope today?

Glossary

See the Waiting in Hope Ministries website (www.waitinginhopeinfertility.com/terminology) for more information on these words and phrases.

Abnormal sperm: sperm with defects that may affect their ability to reach and penetrate an egg.

Clomid: medication used as a first-line fertility treatment to induce ovulation.

Ectopic pregnancy: when a fertilized egg implants and grows outside of the uterus, usually in a fallopian tube.

Embryo adoption: when a family adopts embryos remaining from a donor's in vitro fertilization, and the embryos are transferred to the adoptive mother's womb.

Endometriosis: a condition where endometrial tissue grows outside the uterus, which can cause pain and infertility.

Human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG): hormone made by the placenta during pregnancy. Health-care providers look at HCG to confirm pregnancy and evaluate how a pregnancy is progressing.

Hysteroscopy: procedure where a health-care provider checks the uterine lining and takes tissue samples as needed.

Infertility: inability to conceive after a year of frequent, unprotected sex.

Intrauterine insemination (IUI): procedure in which sperm are placed in a woman's uterus at the time ovulation is expected.

In vitro fertilization (IVF): fertility treatment in which eggs and sperm are combined outside a woman's body in a laboratory. If fertilization happens, embryos are either transferred to her uterus or frozen for transfer later. Mini IVF involves the same process, but uses lower doses of egg stimulation medication.

Male factor infertility: caused by low sperm count, abnormal sperm shape or function, or physical problems that block sperm delivery.

Miscarriage: spontaneous loss of a pregnancy before the twentieth week of gestation.

Ovarian cysts: fluid-filled sacs in or on an ovary. Most ovarian cysts are harmless, but some can cause pain and affect the timing of a planned fertility treatment.

Ovulation: process in which a mature egg is released from the ovary. In normal conditions, the released egg moves down the fallopian tube where it can be fertilized by sperm.

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS): hormonal imbalance that can lead to infrequent or longer menstrual cycles, which may cause infertility.

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS): symptoms that happen prior to menstruation, including mood swings, tender breasts, food cravings, fatigue, irritability, and depression.

Secondary infertility: when a woman can't get pregnant or carry a baby to term after having been pregnant before.

Stillbirth: death of a baby in the womb after twenty weeks' gestation or during delivery.

Two-week wait (2WW): phrase describing how long a woman should wait to take a pregnancy test after sex, IUI, or IVF.

Unexplained infertility: when a couple can't get pregnant and no specific cause is found.