

*Where  
is my  
Baby?*



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A Mother's Message of Hope and Healing

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## *Dedication*

This book is dedicated to all who have babies in heaven. May we rest in the hope of a coming “family reunion” and spread our message to others who have yet to find healing.





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## *Introduction*

**I**s there someone missing from your family picture? Sometimes years pass in between those infamous afternoons when everyone scrambles to find the right clothes and puts on a nice smile for the “click” of the camera. A moment becomes frozen in time and added to our scrapbook of memories. The photo often remains on our wall long after the subjects have grown and changed, almost beyond recognition.

The replacement for our family portrait is long overdue. Each holiday when the boys return from college, I promise myself that we’ll get to it. Before I know it, they are on their way back to their dorms, and the opportunity is lost once again.

Some family photos retain their place of honor in our homes even after the camera captures more

recent smiles. We have one at our home that always brings bittersweet memories when I slow down long enough to look at it. It doesn't grace the living room anymore. It hangs on the wall in the upstairs hall, in a spot I can see clearly from my work desk. The photo shows my precious boys, so much younger and more innocent. Doug looks so young, and my expression brings me to tears when I remember what took place that day in 1989.

Our church was producing yet another pictorial directory that year, and we needed to select a time for our photo shoot. I had signed us up for an early evening appointment so that Doug could join us after work. We waited nervously that night for our turn to come. Finally the receptionist called for the Ferrins. Ready for that moment, Doug and I walked in with our three adorable little boys. Two had matching shirts and navy knitted vests. I had combed their hair just right and removed all the dirty smudges from their faces. The photographer arranged us in a cozy family pose, chins lifted and backs straight.

Then without warning it began.

"Is this your whole family?" the photographer called over to us.

"Yes," we replied.

"Are you sure this is everyone?" he badgered us.

"Yes, this is our whole family."

"Isn't there someone missing?"

I couldn't believe my ears at his last question. My heart wanted to explode. Yes, someone was missing, but how I wished he had left the matter alone. I decided he probably wanted to be sure he had everyone so that he could sell us more prints. Photos with a missing family member just don't compare to those with everyone present.

It finally dawned on me what had caused his concern. I had signed us up as a "family of six" weeks earlier. I knew that the arrival of our fourth son would occur a few weeks before the photo session. But we had arrived that day as a family of only five, and he was not going to give up without a fight. That young man behind the camera had no idea we had recently lost our precious son, Stephen.

Our infant son was indeed missing, but not just from the photo about to be taken. The truth hit me hard. Stephen was no longer with us—not in my womb and not in my arms as expected. Relief and comfort came when my thoughts rested on the reality that he was in a place far more wonderful.

Well, what do you say at a moment like that?

I fought back the tears as Doug briefly explained what had happened. A deafening silence fell upon that room. But soon the routine had to resume, and we were all asked to "smile for the camera." When I see that picture now, I marvel at the smiles. Yes, we were all smiling. But the expressions only hid broken hearts. We ached because someone very precious was missing from our family, and, oh how deeply we missed him!

What about you? Is someone missing from your family picture? Is a baby in heaven waiting for you? So many people can relate to this pain for a number of reasons. Some have lost babies soon after birth like we did. Other babies have been lost due to miscarriage or abortion. Some have been given as precious gifts to anxious, loving families while birth mothers grieve with empty arms. In every case the pain and loss are real.

Moms and dads need healing, but they often find so little available help. Well-meaning friends and family want to offer words of comfort, but they often struggle with what to say. Pastors, doctors, and counselors can be an enormous blessing. Yet sometimes it helps to share the pain with someone who can relate on a personal level.

This book is my attempt to reach out to those who have experienced the painful loss of a baby. I want to share my story with you and challenge you to allow God's Word and His healing touch to change your life. I care deeply, and I know that God is faithful. He has touched my heart and restored my hope. He wants to embrace you and give you a renewed focus and reason to live. A wonderful reunion awaits you. Don't you want to be ready? Read on . . .

One more thing . . . the routine pattern of life doesn't stop very often, does it? Schedules must be kept, tasks completed, photos taken . . . "Life must go on," we are told. Few are given the time or tools to adequately process grief such as this. In my case

I returned to a house full of little boys who needed my immediate and daily attention. I marvel that somehow God broke through and allowed me to see His hand and His love very early on.

I knew one day I would write this story, but it has taken years for the Lord to open this door. His timing has allowed you to have this tool in your hands right now. Please take the time to read, reflect, and respond to the questions at the end of each chapter. Whether your loss occurred a long time ago or only recently, the pain is real. Determine today to stop the treadmill of life long enough to allow the deep healing to begin. It will be my great privilege and joy to help you on this journey.





## CHAPTER ONE

### *A Dream, a Desire*

### *...a Surprise!*

Shock, fear, overwhelming joy, complete surprise, disappointment, delight, excitement, dread—such a wide range of emotions can accompany the news of pregnancy. When I first learned I was carrying my fourth child, I felt great joy and anticipation because I believed this baby was the fulfillment of a specific promise from God. My dream had come true! God must be sending my little girl! I felt joy and confidence, quite unaware of what the future would hold.

One year earlier I attended a women's retreat at beautiful Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire. Retreats offer such blessings: gorgeous surroundings, a time to build friendships, wonderful food—prepared and cleaned up by someone else!—and much needed encouragement from God's Word. By God's

design this special time away came at a low point in my life.

My marriage was buckling under the weight of some difficulties, and I secretly wondered if it could survive. Alcoholism had invaded my home as an unwelcome guest. My husband struggled with his addiction, and I did what I could to maintain the home, work part-time, and raise our three young sons. I poured myself out to face the daily challenges of life and didn't even realize how empty I had become. I desperately needed something to keep me going.

### MY DEEP DESIRE

At that retreat, quite unexpectedly, God spoke to my heart during a time of personal prayer and Bible reading. I was a fairly new believer in Jesus Christ, and my relationship with Him grew slowly but steadily during those early years. I knew a lot of facts about the Bible, but I didn't grasp how personal God wanted our relationship to become.

While reading a portion of Scripture, I sensed Him speaking directly to my heart, not with an audible voice, but with a calm assurance of His presence. He knew my heartaches and fears, and He had a plan. He knew the deep desire of my heart, and I sensed that He actually planned to fulfill it. This type of thing had never happened to me before. Was I really hearing from God, or was this only wishful thinking? Suddenly my eyes filled with tears, and



peace flooded my soul. God cares about me! But things seemed beyond repair.

Nothing is too difficult for God. He saved my marriage, and within a year my doctor confirmed that I was pregnant. I joyfully planned for the arrival of the “deep desire of my heart”—a daughter. All I could see was pink! My little girl danced in my dreams and moved into my heart.

I prepared a counted cross-stitch wall hanging declaring, “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” How appropriate that it included lovely pink flowers since it would have a prominent place in the frilly, pink nursery. For my next project I sewed a white eyelet crib comforter and bumper pad set. A finishing touch of pink ribbon would be added once we knew for sure the baby was a girl. What a delightful time of preparation. God was so faithful!

## EARLY EMOTIONS

What emotions did you experience when you first learned that your baby was on the way? Maybe you were overjoyed because the news had been long anticipated. Some couples dream of and desire a baby for many months or even years. Infertility has broken the hearts of many who desire to be parents. For them, the news of pregnancy or of an imminent adoption brings incredible relief and a flood of emotions.

Sometimes couples are blessed with a baby later in life, and the news comes as a delightful surprise. Unfortunately for many, pregnancy is not only unexpected but undesired. It might have been a huge inconvenience to discover that you were pregnant. Fear about the physical changes awaiting you and the inevitable delivery may have disturbed you. Perhaps you worried about bringing a child into this sin-filled world with so many dangers and unknowns. Joy can also be squashed if the news comes during financial stress or in the midst of other demanding life situations. If that is the case, and now your baby is gone, the guilt can be significant.

In order for healing to begin, you must work through the early emotions and seek God's peace. It is important to take an honest look back and acknowledge your emotions, especially if they were less than positive. While initially I was doing well emotionally with the thought of a fourth child, I was about to take a sudden downward turn.

### EMBRACING GOD'S SURPRISE

I finally had an ultrasound during the last trimester of my pregnancy. In those days doctors didn't routinely order them. In fact, I never had one for any of the three previous babies. Since I wanted so desperately to know if this was my daughter, I prayed that I would need an ultrasound.

Sure enough, on one visit the doctor became concerned with the baby's size, and he directed me

to schedule the procedure. My sister accompanied me that day, and we couldn't wait to hear if the baby was a girl or a boy, knowing that sometimes it wasn't possible to tell. This one proudly let us know that he was "all boy."

I was shocked and confused. I left with the fuzzy picture and returned home somberly. For the next few days I wrestled with God. Why had He promised me a daughter only to send a fourth son? I wrote a long letter to a dear friend, pouring out my heart and candidly expressing my disappointment with the news. Once I released my emotions, the acceptance began.

During the remaining weeks of the pregnancy, God replaced my negative attitude with renewed joy. I continued preparations for the baby's arrival and tried to imagine what life would be like as the mother of four active boys! God allowed me to release my initial disappointment, concluding that life is seldom predictable. Relief flooded me as my husband, Doug, was doing much better and our marriage was strengthening. As for the rest of the promise, I decided that I must have misunderstood. We often have no idea what God is up to, and perhaps it is best that way. My little boys could hardly wait to meet their baby brother. And I had fallen in love with my precious Stephen.

If you are a child of God, your journey through life can be compared in many ways to the birth experience. Was your decision for Christ the result of diligent searching and a desire to know Him?

Or did it come as a complete surprise at an unexpected moment? Perhaps you resisted making the decision because it seemed so inconvenient. In any case, your decision to trust in Jesus for your salvation began a wonderful growth process within you. Just like the new life forming within the womb of a mother, your new life in Christ is by God's design and often requires some major life adjustments. How good to know that God is faithful to keep all of His promises. What He has begun in you He will bring to completion.

## JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. What emotions do you recall surfacing at the news of your pregnancy?
2. What kind of support did you have from the father and other friends and family?
3. Was this baby long anticipated or a complete surprise?
4. What lifestyle changes (if any) did you make once you knew that you were pregnant?
5. If your initial emotions were less than positive, have you had to wrestle with any guilt? If so, please explain.