

An interview with Tanika Fitzgerald, author of *Miscarried Joy: Moving Beyond Incredible Pain to Extraordinary Faith*



According to the March of Dimes, somewhere between 15-25% of known pregnancies end in miscarriage. Despite the fact so many women share a common loss, they endure the grief of miscarriage alone and in silence. Many feel a sense of guilt or shame, as though what happened was somehow their fault. Others simply don't want to burden others with their pain. No matter the reason, the dark season following the loss of a baby can shake the faith of even the most faithful believer. In *Miscarried Joy: Moving Beyond Incredible Pain to Extraordinary Faith* (Nyree Press/November 15, 2016), Tanika Fitzgerald offers hope for those dealing with incredible pain of loss, providing help to conquer discouragement and discover new purpose.

Q: We don't often see the words *miscarried* and *joy* together in the same sentence. How and why were you able to marry them as the title of this book?

When a woman is pregnant, she is often referred to as someone who is carrying a bundle of joy. When she miscarries, I believe that bundle of joy goes to be with Jesus Christ in heaven. When I was writing the book, the phrase "miscarried joy" came to me as something I had just lost — a miscarried bundle of joy.

When we miscarry, it is a devastating event in our lives. Our happiness fades, but our joy can be everlasting if we choose. So although I have lost three babies due to miscarriage, I am still able to reflect on the joy I had in those moments of expecting and the joy I still have as I wait for God to work another physical miracle in my life.

Q: What was the turning point for your faith amidst the pain of three miscarriages in a short period of time? Was there a Bible verse that opened your eyes to see your relationship with God differently?

The turning point for me happened when I began to dive into the Word concerning my situation. I looked up scriptures related to miscarriage, and I studied the lives of Sarah, Rebekah, Elizabeth, Rachel and Hannah. What I noticed is God allowed the waiting season in their lives for a specific purpose. I also realized in each of their situations, God's timing was absolutely perfect. Had Elizabeth had John the Baptist any earlier than God planned, he would not have been born at the set time to fulfill his purpose of leading the way for Jesus Christ.

The Bible verses that really opened my eyes to see my relationship with God differently were:

"There will be no miscarriages or infertility in your land, and I will give you long, full lives." (Exodus 23:26)

This scripture helped me see the heart of God in the midst of my pain. If these miscarriages did not come from Him, then it had to be Satan attempting to destroy my faith and trust in God. That was when I decided to stand strong in what I believe God to do and to trust fully in His plan.

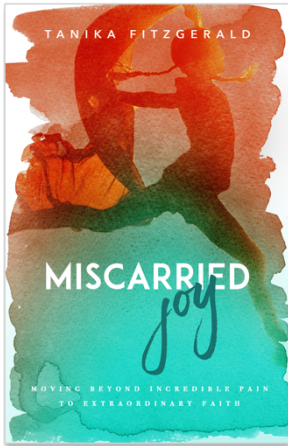
"In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:6-9)

This scripture helped me still see God as a loving Father. He was allowing this pain to develop and prove the genuineness of my faith.

Q: In the book, you talk about a purpose for losing your babies. What do you think that purpose is?

It is not a purpose for losing my babies but rather a purpose for experiencing the pain. Think about Jesus Christ and His death of the cross. Without a death, there would not have been a resurrection and none of us would have the privilege of receiving the free gift of salvation. It is the same with us. Every pain God allows into our lives is for a purpose. For me, I think the purpose of this pain was for me to develop a more personal and imitate

understanding of who God is in my life and what He is able to do. Throughout this season of waiting to become a mom, I have truly experienced God as my comforter, the lover of my soul and my provider. Having knowledge of God is very different than actually experiencing Him in your life. This pain has taught me to trust and believe in Him completely in ways I never have before. Many things have come easy in my life, but becoming a mom is something I am going to have to fight for spiritually to conceive and birth naturally. If I am able to take my prayer life to the next level here, then surely I will be able to extend that to other areas in my life. So this pain has definitely caused me to grow and mature spiritually.



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. Every woman is not going to 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 just 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, then 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 non-traditional methods. My husband and I have discussed adopting a child after having our own. But for me, I still believe God will perform a physical miracle in my life.

Q: How does the message of *Miscarried Joy* move beyond the loss of a pregnancy and offer application for all areas of life for men and women?

Every single person has to wait for something at some point in his or her life. It could be a baby, a spouse, an open door of opportunity, healing or a variety of other things. Regardless of what a person is waiting for, it becomes frustrating! *Miscarried Joy* touches on principles of faith that can be applied in every area of our lives. Faith is all about trusting God's plan and timing above our own. It is not how long we wait that matters, but rather what we do while we are waiting. We can build our character or destroy our confidence in Christ. My book will equip all readers to push aside the disappointment and implement these faith principles in their lives — not just for the blessing, but because we want to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ.

I talk about facing and overcoming discouragement as the first step to move beyond the pain and begin walking in extraordinary faith. The book also talks about the power of prayer, contentment and the dangers of doubting God. These are all things that can help men and women expect a move of God in their lives.

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, then 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 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, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 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, it was then 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.

Q: You say our thoughts and words are powerful, particularly in times of crisis. What role does Scripture play during the difficult times of waiting, and how can we make sure our thoughts are aligned with God and His word?

A very crucial one. When you are in the midst of a waiting season, Scripture has the power to inspire, edify, equip and encourage you through the tough seasons of life. It will remind you of God's care and concern for you through a display of how He's worked in the lives of others. It is so important to focus on what you believe your outcome to be; confess that in your prayers and think about what you believe God will do. To confess His Word, we must know it. So in the difficult times, Scripture is where we should go when we are feeling discouraged and depressed. If you don't know where to go, start with the Book of Psalms. The Holy Spirit will lead and guide you from there.

We must increase our knowledge of the Word so we can continue to confess His Word. Preventing our natural mind from wondering about the "what ifs" is difficult, but if we keep our mind focused on what God says about our situation — regardless of how the circumstances look — we will be able to align our thoughts with His Word.

Learn more about more about *Miscarried Joy* at www.miscarriedjoy.com, on [Facebook](#) ([tanikafitzgerald](#)) and via [Twitter](#) ([TR_Fitzgerald](#)).