

“Eric knows firsthand the confusion, questions, pain, and emotions that can be associated with miscarriage. He writes of the hope that held and comforted him... and still does. *Ours* is theologically rich and offers wisdom, hope, comfort, and healing for men grieving miscarriage. A must-have for clergy too.”

Rev. Dr. Justin S. Holcomb, Episcopal Minister; Seminary Professor

“Miscarriage affects couples, not just mothers. Men convince themselves that they need to be the strong ones and muscle on unaffected. Not so. Eric’s tour of Luke’s Gospel draws out pastoral applications which show real men how to grieve, care, love, grow, and understand following the tragedy of a miscarriage. There’s nothing else like this book for men.”

Adrian Reynolds, Head of National Ministries (UK), FIEC

“A one-of-a-kind resource. These honest reflections ask real questions and provide biblical hope in the midst of suffering. This is a must-read for grieving fathers as they process trauma and loss.”

Emily Jensen and Laura Wifler, Co-founders, Risen Motherhood

“A masterclass for this as well as every other kind of grief. Scripture speaks of how those who have received comfort from Christ in their own sorrows are then able to bring comfort to others in theirs. *Ours* is a shining example of that reality.”

Scott Sauls, Senior Pastor, Christ Presbyterian Church

“I do not wish anyone would need a book like this, but I do not doubt that many men will find it helpful during times of confusion, grief, and despair when tragedy strikes.”

Rev. Dr. Michael F. Bird, Dean and Lecturer, Ridley College, Melbourne

“When we had our miscarriage we were crushed and confused. We did not know how to grieve, or even if we should grieve. I wish I’d had *Ours* at that time.”

Ed Stetzer, Dean and Professor, Wheaton College

“Eric Schumacher comes alongside the grieving with a voice that is as theologically astute as it is tender. It’s a book I wish my husband had had when we experienced our losses, and a book I am so grateful to be able to press into the hands of others.”

Jasmine Holmes, Author, *Mother to Son*

“A profound, helpful book for men walking through great loss. I would recommend it not just to men who are grieving a miscarriage but to anyone who wants to be a better friend for them—and indeed, to anyone who wants to be more of a friend of Jesus.”

Andy Crouch, Author, *Strong and Weak* and *The Tech-Wise Family*

“It is a number of years since my wife and I lost a child through miscarriage, and yet I still found Eric’s book deeply comforting. In this particular and peculiar grief we need to see Jesus Christ in all his close compassion, costly love and kind sovereignty; and it is to Christ that Eric takes us daily. I unreservedly recommend this book.”

John Hindley, Author, *Dealing with Disappointment*

“Imagine if, upon learning of your experience with miscarriage, a wise pastor who had suffered similar grief devoted an entire month to caring for you, opening the word of God with you, and helping your tired mind apply it to your questions, doubts, and shame. That’s what Eric has done in this deeply pastoral, unwaveringly biblical, mercifully candid, and incredibly insightful devotional.”

Abbey Wedgeworth, Author, *Held*

“Finally—a book that deals with the grief experienced by fathers who have lost children to miscarriage. This book will help men to grieve with hope and to minister to their wives and families at the same time. It is honest, biblical, practical, and timely.”

Russell Moore, Author, *The Storm-Tossed Family*

“This is the devotional I wish someone had given to my husband when we went through our miscarriage. It’s so good. So needed. So important. So tender. Eric named so many unnamed things.”

Christine Caine, Founder, Propel Women

“This is the only book I have ever seen that is written for the father of a miscarried child. And it’s a great one. Dig in, allow God to meet you in the pages of this book, and you will find healing and comfort. And share it with every dad you know.”

Dave and Ann Wilson, Co-hosts, FamilyLife Today

ERIC SCHUMACHER

OURS

**Biblical Comfort for Men
Grieving Miscarriage**

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*To Dad,
who taught me to talk
about hard things*



This book has a companion, written especially for women: *Held: 31 Biblical Reflections on God's Comfort and Care in the Sorrow of Miscarriage*. Author Abbey Wedgeworth walks alongside readers who are experiencing the heartbreak of pregnancy loss, using Psalm 139 to help grieving mothers to find comfort, assurance, and purpose.

Foreword

There will be a day when every child of God will be invited to the one funeral that we will all want to attend: we will be invited to the funeral of death. Yes, it really is true—death will die and eternally be no more. Along with it will die all the grief, pain, fear, sadness, suffering, and loss that death always drags with it. The completely righteous life of Jesus, the acceptable sacrifice of Jesus, and the victorious resurrection of Jesus, all accomplished on our behalf, guarantee that the enemy of everyone living—death—will finally and forever die. This is a wonderful hope for every child of God to hold on to.

But if you're a man dealing with the horrible shock and sadness of miscarriage, you know that we're not there yet. You and I still wake up every morning in a place where death is a dark reality that casts a fearful shadow over us. We all know that somehow, someday, death will burst through our door and shatter the safety of our most intimate places. Death is always hard, but the death of an infant occupies a category of its own. We sort of expect elderly loved ones to die someday; it is hard to let go of them, but their passing is not

beyond the realm of our expectations. But the death of a child still in the womb seems particularly strange and irrational. Babies aren't supposed to die. How is it that life is allowed to grow in the womb, only to be snatched away before life outside the womb is ever given a chance to begin? Death is always hard, but a miscarriage just seems senseless to us.

So, when you face a miscarriage, there is something fundamental to understand. You won't just suffer the miscarriage, but you will also suffer how you suffer the miscarriage. We never come to these shocking and sad moments of life empty-handed. We always carry into them ways of thinking about God, ourselves, life's meaning and purpose, hardship, and what God has promised us, which will shape how we experience the painful thing we've gone through or are now going through. Wrong thinking always deepens the effects of already painful experiences. This is why the book you are about to read is so important and helpful.

But there is more. Being a man who is suffering through miscarriage brings with it a set of seductive, hard-to-resist temptations. Perhaps for you, it is anger, bringing God into the court of your judgment and questioning his goodness and love. Maybe it's the temptation to numb yourself in some way from the pain using busyness, media, chemical substances, or food. Perhaps for you, life seems unpredictable and dangerous in new ways, and you're tempted to give way to fear. Or maybe you're tempted to cope by denying the emotional, spiritual, and relational toll that

miscarriage has taken on you. Perhaps for you, the temptation is envy: to be bitter as you see others enjoying what has been taken away from you. None of these things will produce a good harvest in your heart or your marriage, and all of them will make your suffering even more painful. In my time of loss, I think I have fallen into all of these temptations in some way.

You may be thinking, “Ok, Paul, I am struggling; where can I find help?” My immediate answer to that question is the book you are about to read. This book is a fountain of help for any man going through the dark valley of miscarriage. Let me tell you why.

First, Eric Schumacher understands that biblical faith—that is, trust that is rooted in God and his work on our behalf—will never ask you to deny reality. If you deny the reality of what you have gone through or are going through, you may achieve some temporary peace, but you’re not experiencing the full healing power of biblical faith. This book is written by a man who has walked through the dark valley of miscarriage again and again. So, the painful realities of its hardship and loss splash across page after page. If you’re a man dealing with the emotional, spiritual, and relational trauma of miscarriage, you will find yourself in this book, and you will come to understand your experience of loss more fully and deeply. But even more importantly, you will realize more fully, maybe more than ever before, that God understands every aspect of your suffering, and because he does, he is never put off or disgusted by what you are going through.

You can bring your anguish to him and find mercy and grace form-fitted for that particular moment of need.

There is a second and even more glorious theme in this book. This theme is why I will recommend what Eric has written here again and again. He has come to understand that when we are suffering, God's greatest gift to us is not an answer to all of our questions. No, his greatest gift to us is way better than a set of answers. God's greatest gift to a man going through the pain of miscarriage is the gift of himself. He carries everything you need into this moment of pain and loss in his loving, wise, and almighty hands. If you are God's child, it is impossible for you to be alone in the dark night of miscarriage, and it's equally impossible for you to be left to your little bag of coping mechanisms. In the gift of himself, God gives you so much more than you could ever stretch your imagination to ask him for. The book you are about to read describes in remarkable detail what it means to know that, in hardship, God gives himself to you. It describes how the glorious truth of God's faithful and loving presence changes how you think about and walk through the dark night of miscarriage.

I can give no higher praise than to say that, with all of its helpful insights and answers, the best thing this book gives you is Jesus. No, not in some super-spiritual, otherworldly way, but in showing us a Jesus who lives with wisdom, power, faithfulness, and grace in the dark cracks and crevasses of human suffering. This is a Jesus who gets what you're going through, and, because he does, offers

you just what you need. If you have walked through or are now walking through a miscarriage, I wholeheartedly recommend this book to you. I wish I'd had it when we lost our first child.

Paul David Tripp

December 2021

Introduction

Friend, I wish you and I could sit together. I wish that I could see your face and hear your voice. We could be silent or talk. We could share stories or pray. We could discuss our sorrows, our disappointments, and the questions we've faced as men walking through miscarriage. I'd rather be with you in person than through the pages of this book.

My wife and I have experienced four miscarriages. Each was unique, just like yours. I remember so much confusion over what to do, think, feel, and say. I found no miscarriage resource designed specifically for the father. I had nowhere to turn for answers and shared experience. It wasn't something that men talked much about.

Writing this book, I had mixed feelings. I know that every copy sold will represent one or more miscarriages and countless tears. But I wrote to help you grieve, process, and find hope in Jesus. To that end, I'm glad to spend the next 31 days with you—or however long you need in order to finish reading.

I love the opening of the Gospel of Luke:

Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.

— Luke 1:1-4

It seems that Theophilus, the recipient of the book, had already been told about Jesus. But he didn't have total certainty. Luke had "carefully investigated everything," even talking to the original eyewitnesses. So he decided to write an orderly account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, so that Theophilus might know the certainty of these things. That's my hope for you: certainty about who God is for us, even (or especially!) in our suffering.

I could write you an orderly account of my experience with miscarriage. It might bring a sense of solidarity, but that would not bring certainty. My story is useless to comfort your soul and guarantee a future life in which all sadness is wiped away. The only place to turn to for that kind of certainty is the word of God. The story we need is the story of Jesus.

So, I invite you to read and think with me about the story of Jesus as it is told in the book of Luke. We'll find Jesus to be a powerful and compassionate, faithful and surprising companion in our trials. In Jesus, we have a

friend who understands the whole of the human experience, from being a baby in the womb to weeping over a loss. In Christ, we learn how to face temptation, anger, and despair. We'll see what it means to be blessed in his kingdom. We'll discover how he helps us to serve and to be served in our grief.

Each chapter is headed by a Scripture reference which identifies where in Luke we'll be, followed by a question common to men walking through miscarriage, which orients us to the topic of the devotional reading. Like most books, this one is designed to be read from front to back—and one chapter per day, for 31 days. However, don't hesitate to skip around if there are pressing questions you need some help with immediately, or to go more slowly if you need.

I suggest setting aside a certain time each day to read. Start by reading the Scripture passage—reading God's word is the most important part. Pray that God would give you understanding. On days with particularly long passages, I will offer a “focus text” reference. The devotion will focus on these verses. So, if you're pressed for time, you may want to read only those.

Then, with your Bible still open and a pencil in hand, read the chapter. As you read, feel free to highlight portions or to write your thoughts in the margins or a notebook. Stop and think or pray as needed.

At the conclusion of the devotion, you will find some reflection questions. You may wish to write out your responses in the journaling space provided or in a notebook.

It may be helpful to write out your prayers along with your reflections. I encourage you to keep a list of your prayer requests somewhere in the book—at the end of each chapter or inside the cover. I think you'll find encouragement a month from now when you can look back over your thoughts and prayers and see what God has done and is doing.

At the end of the book, you'll find appendices containing some practical help on a variety of topics. They're written by wise and experienced friends. Take advantage of these.

I prayed for you, friend, as I wrote every chapter of this book. I'll pray for you regularly as I see this book on my desk. You're not in this alone. Jesus loves the broken and downcast. He suffered so that he could help us in our suffering. Go into this next month with confidence that God will give you grace.

*Because of our God's merciful compassion,
the dawn from on high will visit us
to shine on those who live in darkness
and the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

— Luke 1:78-79

A note on language: throughout the book, I will refer to the mother who miscarried as your “wife.” I realize that you may not be married to the mother of your child. In fact, it is possible that she is no longer in your life. Please know that I use the term “wife” for the sake of consistency, not to make you feel sadness or shame. While there

may be chapters that offer little application to your circumstances, know that whatever your situation, you're welcome in the pages of this book. Even better, Jesus welcomes you to come to him.

Eric Schumacher

1. LUKE 1:5-25

Am I the Only One Who Has Experienced This?

I was a teenager the first time I heard of someone having a miscarriage. I don't recall another mention of it for a decade—not from anyone, and certainly not from a man. I was in seminary the first time I listened to a man share openly about miscarriage.

Miscarriage is common: 10-20 percent of known pregnancies end this way.¹ Talking about miscarriage, especially among men, is much less common. It is a painful and emotionally complicated experience that deals with personal and sometimes private matters. There are multiple reasons why many people choose never to talk about it.

But that can make miscarriage seem incredibly lonely. We may ask if we're the only ones walking through this experience. Do our friends see us? Does God see us?

At the start of Luke, we meet Zechariah and Elizabeth.

¹ www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pregnancy-loss-miscarriage/symptoms-causes/syc-20354298 (accessed Jul. 7 2021).

We learn they could not have children and were beyond the age of childbearing (Luke 1:7). In their culture, couples did not choose to be childless. This means they had been married and trying (and praying) to have children for decades.

It's remarkable, isn't it? A book about Jesus opens with a story about a couple that could not have children. God is well aware of suffering like yours.

In fact, the Bible's storyline includes endless stories about the struggle to have babies. Israel's patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—were each in (unintentionally) childless marriages. Women of faith such as Ruth and Hannah were childless despite many years of marriage. These years of “barrenness” likely included miscarriage—maybe multiple miscarriages.² So these are not just stories of childlessness but of hidden pregnancy loss. Whether you despair of ever

² I posed the question of whether “barrenness” could include miscarriage to Dr. Sandra Glahn. This was her answer (printed here with her permission):

“The word ‘barren’ comes from an agricultural metaphor. In first-century physiology, the woman had a ‘garden,’ and it either produced or did not produce. (There was no concept of male infertility or sterility.) A woman might suspect she was pregnant when she missed what seemed to be about the right time for her period or experienced nausea. But until she felt the baby kick, she did not know for sure she was carrying a child. We do not find miscarriage mentioned because the concepts of trimesters and miscarriages probably were not even a thing. For example, all my eight miscarriages happened before the sixth week. Without HCG tests and sonograms, I never would have even known for sure that I was pregnant. Such a woman would be considered barren because there was no child.

“‘Barren’ meant ‘not giving birth.’ However you got there, whether via never conceiving or via miscarrying, the reality was the same. No baby = barren. The garden was not flourishing.”

having children at all or you are grieving a miscarriage while caring for older kids, the Bible is not unfamiliar with your suffering. You are certainly not alone.

It's common to wonder, "Is this miscarriage the result of something I did wrong, some sin I've committed?" or "Is this a sign that God is angry with me?" The answer is no. Biologically, the majority of miscarriages occur because the baby is not developing correctly. Spiritually, we have no reason to believe that miscarriage indicates God's anger or results from a particular sin. Zechariah and Elizabeth are proof.

Elizabeth spoke of her barrenness as a "disgrace among the people" (v 25). People in their day likely assumed childlessness indicated something shameful. *I wonder what they did to cause God to withhold a child? They must be cursed!* people may have whispered. But not so, Luke tells us! Did you notice verse 6? "Both were righteous in God's sight, living without blame according to all the commands and requirements of the Lord." God saw them as righteous and looked upon them with "favor" (v 25). Their barrenness was not the result of God's displeasure.

After a lifetime of childlessness, Zechariah had a son—and not just any son. John the Baptist would prepare people to meet the Lord (v 17). Likewise, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew many years of undesired childlessness and pregnancy loss—but through their family line, the Messiah arrived. These stories do not just remind us that God sees us in our suffering. They also point to the hope he has provided for us.

Don't mishear me: these stories aren't guarantees that any of us will have a living child one day. They highlight the way that when all human hope is lost, God miraculously delivers his people. The ultimate miracle is Jesus. The message for us in this passage is that our God saves suffering, shamed, and sinful people like you and me.

Zechariah and Elizabeth's son signals the promise of mercy and hope. The angel said of him, "Many will rejoice at his birth" (v 14). John the Baptist would announce the arrival of Jesus, our Savior. It is through him that Elizabeth's words can become our own—*the Lord has looked on us with favor and taken away our disgrace!* May we, like Elizabeth and Mary (and, eventually, Zechariah), receive this good news in faith.

Friend, God sees your suffering. He's provided mercy and hope through Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit, God walks with us through this darkness. Let's ask him to provide much comfort as we journey through the Gospel of Luke these next thirty days.



Father, you know my sorrow. You know every hurt of my heart. Be merciful to me in this suffering. Show me who Jesus is. Help me to trust in him to lead me through the valley of the shadow of death to the green pastures of life. Amen.

REFLECT

- What do you have in common with Zechariah and Elizabeth?
- How many reasons for hope can you see in what you've read?

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