

Dear fellow mommy,

A short time ago, it would have been beyond the realm of possibility to imagine that I would be writing a book like this. I never could have anticipated that I would experience the death of a child shortly after birth. Nor that I would lose two more children through miscarriage in the years that followed. Yet here I sit: reflecting on those things that were once unfathomable, and typing away, comforted by the click-clack of the keyboard and the familiar sounds of my favorite coffee shop.

The unthinkable *did* happen and has become a very real and profound part of the woman I am today. It was impossible for me to experience loss and remain unchanged. I couldn't pretend to be unaffected, despite the messages I received from others who expected me to "move on" or "try again." Perhaps you can relate. Perhaps you're reading this book, the book you never thought you'd read, because you too experienced the unthinkable. You too lost a baby, and for that, I am so sorry. There are absolutely no words of comfort that will ever make the pain go away. There is nothing I can do to magically heal the hole that has been left in your heart. Though I too have experienced loss, we each grieve and mourn in our own unique way. Such differences are to be expected and, what's more, are perfectly okay. The one thing that remains the same, however, regardless of our specific circumstances, is that it hurts.

While I, in my humanness, can understand a taste of what you're going through, having been there myself, the aim of this book is not to assert that I know just how you feel. Sure, you'll learn about my stories of loss and you'll read portions of other women's stories—women who have also been there. You will likely be able to relate to our stories, and you may find comfort in knowing that there are other women out there who have been through something similar and are actually living—not merely existing—in a world that seemingly crumbled to pieces the moment that

their precious babies went to heaven. I pray that our stories bring encouragement as you travel this grief journey.

While our shared experience of loss may produce a bond between us that we possess with no other, the aim of this book is to point you to the One who understands fully and completely the suffering you are enduring. That's right, sweet friend, there is such a person who exists and lives today. This person endured suffering like no other—suffering that included even death on a cross. This person is the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior of the world. His Father, God, knows the pain in each of our hearts as He *willingly* gave up His Son to die for our sins, so that through His sacrifice we can have hope. That's what this book is all about: the promise of God's hope, found only through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus. He is the One who gives and takes away, who conquered sin and death, and who by His grace gathers each of our children in His arms. Jesus is the reason I am a mommy with hope.

—Teske

HOPE *for* Today,
PROMISES
for Tomorrow



HOPE *for* Today,
PROMISES
for Tomorrow

*Finding Light Beyond the
Shadow of Miscarriage
or Infant Loss*



Teske Drake

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Beyond the Shadow of Miscarriage or Infant Loss*
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The stories shared in this book were collected through interviews conducted by the author. The women whose stories are represented have provided written consent for their stories, names, and children's names to be published in this book.

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*For Justin, the father of our five precious children—
three in God's dwelling place, two in our own.
You are the best daddy I know, and it is a miracle
to share this life with you. I love you.*



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Foreword

When a little one slips home to heaven too soon, our hearts ache. I know this pain firsthand and Teske Drake does as well. Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of this kind of loss is the feeling that we are alone in our hurt. Let me assure you, dear sister, that you are not. More than anything else, this is the gift the following pages offer.

As an author, friend, and fellow griever, Teske will take you by the hand and whisper to your heart what you most need to hear. She will also remind you that even in the darkest moments, God has not forsaken you and He offers hope and healing when it seems impossible.

It has been several years now since we lost our only pregnancy to miscarriage. I would never have chosen this path. But looking back now, I wouldn't trade it. Those are words I never thought I would be able to say. I've come to understand that's what real hope means—that the impossible can come true in our lives.

As a writer, counselor, and life coach, I've seen the same happen for many other women. In the darkest circumstances, the deepest sorrow, we somehow find a resilience and strength we didn't know we had. And we discover we serve a God who is a Redeemer, who lets nothing go to waste, especially when it comes to the hurts in our lives.

I ask one thing of you in this moment: *please keep your heart open*. If you're feeling as I did, then right now you probably want to slam the door of your heart shut, lock it, and throw away the key. Yet it's only

by letting love in and allowing gentle truth to find its way to the places inside you that need it most that you'll begin to heal.

Even if you can't open the door to anyone else right now, please let Teske in through the words she's written for you. She's a woman who knows where you are and who longs to walk with you through the next chapters of your journey.

No matter what you've been through, this remains true: you are loved, you have a purpose, you are not alone. I wish Teske and I could both sit down and have a cup of coffee or tea with you today. Until then, know that we're sending our love and prayers to you as fellow travelers on this journey. This isn't what I would have chosen for us to have in common, this hurt, but I'm praying by the end of this book we'll have something else in common too—the *hope* that comes from discovering God's faithfulness in the most unexpected places.

Your story, and the story of the child you lost too soon, isn't finished yet.

—Holley Gerth, author of the best-selling book
*Rain on Me: Devotions of Hope and Encouragement
for Difficult Times*, www.holleygerth.com

Introduction

No Broken Promises

hope for today _____

He has given us his very great and precious promises.

2 PETER 1:4

I promise. Each of us has likely uttered that phrase more times than we care to recall. In fact, if we're honest with ourselves, we've likely made such a vow quite recently. If we were to take inventory of our conversations in the past week, I bet we could call to mind several promises that we've made. Some of us may have made assurances to our husbands, our family members, our friends, or ourselves. Some of us may have even made commitments to God in prayer. These vows we've made could be anything from a simple, "I promise to do the laundry first thing in the morning," or "I promise to call you right back." On a more serious note, such promises could have looked something like, "Lord, I promise to turn away from my sin of _____." You fill in the blank.

By the same token, we've likely had others make promises to us. Perhaps you were the one who was promised to receive a call back.

Maybe a friend promised to meet you for coffee, or perhaps your husband made a promise to pray for a particular need you have in life right now.

Whatever the case, we can each relate to what it's like being both the giver and the receiver of a promise. In light of this, how many of us can say that we've never been the recipient of a broken promise? Sadly, I don't think one of us could make such a claim. Let's look inward. How many of us can declare that we've never broken a promise? As for me . . . guilty.

In my own experience as well as the experiences of the many women I have ministered to who have endured miscarriage or infant loss, I have found that people fail us over and over. *Can you relate?* We tend to place certain expectations on those who surround us—friends, relatives, and loved ones in particular. We expect that they will come alongside us and support us in our grief. We expect that they will have just the right words to say at just the right time. We expect them to know when to ask and when not to ask about our baby who died. We expect them to know when to hug, when to talk, and when to just sit and listen. We are full of expectations, promises of sorts, and sadly those around us fail to meet our expectations time and time again. Such failure lies in the very nature of our humanness. Let's admit it; we fail miserably at keeping promises, don't we? So how then can we expect any other human to fulfill the expectations we have at hand? The truth of the matter is that we can't.

I pose such questions not to be a discouragement, but to provide a basis for understanding the promises of God, particularly in light of our shared experience of loss. With God, there are no unmet expectations. He is fully capable and faithful to fulfill each and every promise He makes. The character of God is such that He cannot lie. Thus, if He makes a promise, we can trust that He will fulfill it. Let's take a look at a passage of Scripture from 2 Corinthians. In the apostle Paul's letter, we see a comparison between the words of men and the words of God:

Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both “Yes, yes” and “No, no”? But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. (1:17–20)

Let me reiterate: “For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Christ.” What an encouragement to know that God’s promises, however many He has made, are always, always, always a “Yes” in Christ! For those of us who belong to Him, who have put our faith and trust in Jesus, His promises are a “Yes!” And to that I say, Amen!

Let’s turn our attention to another passage of Scripture that also addresses God’s promises:

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Peter 1:3–4)

God, in His unfathomable power, gives us everything we need! He is sufficient and His grace is enough. Still, if you’re like me, you wrestle with the feelings of overwhelming grief after the loss of your precious baby. This is to be expected and you are not alone. Continue to walk through your grief one day at a time, at your own pace. Some of you may put unrealistic expectations on yourself to “be strong,” as I have struggled with over the years. I caution you and urge you to remember

that when we are weak, we are strong (2 Cor. 12:10) and we make ourselves ready for God to do His work, relying on His strength and not our own. Despite all the complexities of our grief, the heartbreaking loss of our baby, and the ugliness of the circumstances we find ourselves in, we're comforted by the fact that God has given us "very great and precious promises" (2 Peter 1:4). We will delve into these promises together in the pages to come.

How to Use This Book

Each chapter of this book focuses on a promise of God and is applied to the experience of miscarriage and infant loss. Woven throughout are aspects of my own stories of loss, as well as other women's stories. You will find "Hope for Today" Scripture verses interspersed throughout your reading and will also have opportunities for prayer, journaling, and a challenge to "Live it!"

verses to live by ---

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

2 PETER 1:3



For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:20

Before you begin, you will want to have a "Hope Journal" handy. This can be a notebook of your choosing, used for writing in response to the journal questions that are posed within the text of each chapter.

Whenever you are prompted, you should pause to journal your thoughts in your Hope Journal.

If you are working through this book in a small group format, leaders can find additional resources on the Mommies with Hope website at www.mommieswithhope.com. Mommies with Hope is a support group ministry for women who have experienced miscarriage and infant loss, based out of Central Iowa, providing biblically based support, both online as well as in face-to-face support group settings.