

# DEPTH

Growing Through  
Heartbreak to Strength

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**REDEMPTION**  
PRESS 



## When Your Heart Shatters

*He heals the brokenhearted  
and binds up their wounds.*

Psalm 147:3

**I still remember every detail** like it was just yesterday.

Alone in my car, I started fidgeting with the volume button on the CD player. Not even the worship song could take away how I felt as I drove to my doctor's office for my sixteen-week appointment. Another red light, another delay on the road to finding answers. It seemed like an eternity for the light to turn green. These last couple of weeks had felt the same. My mind started racing once again. *What if something is wrong? What if my gut feeling is correct?*

I hit the gas pedal as the light turned green. I needed to get to my doctor's office as quickly as possible. When I was there four weeks earlier, my doctor confirmed that everything was fine with my baby. But now, I could not get past this persistent feeling that there was a problem. Even though I did not have any negative symptoms, I just sensed it in my core.

Tapping my finger on the steering wheel at every stoplight and stop sign, I counted down the minutes. I thought back to the first time I was pregnant. From high blood pressure during my first tri-

mester to complications that led to bed rest the third trimester, my pregnancy with my oldest son, Kyle, was anything but uneventful. Thankfully, this pregnancy had been different. My blood pressure was normal; the heartbeat was strong. Both the doctor and I were thrilled there were no complications at twelve weeks.

I remember smiling as I pictured Kyle's sweet face when we told him the exciting news weeks earlier. He could not wait to have a baby brother or sister. He wore his new "I am going to be a big brother" T-shirt proudly as I snapped a picture of him in our family room. I attached the picture, along with the twelve-week ultrasound baby picture, to an email sharing our thrilling news with everyone we knew. Our family was growing!

*I wish I felt that same excitement now.*

As I pulled into the parking lot, I could not get my mind to slow down. *If something were terribly wrong, my body would have shown me. I would be cramping or bleeding. Since I have no signs of trouble, then I must be fine. Then my baby must be fine too.* Oh, how I wished this logic would calm my anxious heart. As I put my car in park, I hoped I was about to get some answers.

Lying alone on the bed in the exam room, I could not wait for the doctor to arrive. The room was quiet and sterile. Honestly, it was too silent; I just wanted to hear the sound of my baby's heartbeat. The ten-minute wait seemed like hours.

As the door opened, the doctor asked me how I was feeling. I told her my concerns, so she immediately placed the Doppler, a baby heartbeat monitor, near the top of my belly. We both listened intently as she moved it up and down my stomach. There was no sound from the baby. Moving it to the left and to the right, there was still no heartbeat. Sadly, the only sound in the room was the Doppler picking up my own heartbeat, which was speeding up each second.

Panic began to rise inside me as all my worries and fears were becoming a reality.

After five long minutes, the doctor stopped and calmly told me

she wanted to look at the baby on an ultrasound. I was anything but calm. My heart was pounding, and my mind was spinning out of control. *Oh no! What if my baby stopped growing?* Scared, I realized I probably should not have come to this appointment alone. Tears filled my eyes as I tried to make sense of what was happening.

The doctor led me to the ultrasound room next door. As the technician immediately showed the sonogram, my eyes focused on my precious baby. Knowing where to look for the heartbeat, I stared closely at the monitor. My heart shattered when I did not see a heartbeat flickering on the screen. My whole world changed in an instant.

I was devastated.

My hopes and dreams for this new life were over before they even began.

Tears started streaming down my face.

My heart was breaking.



Have you ever felt heartbreak? Deep heartbreak?

Maybe you have lost a loved one to cancer or suicide, and you miss her every day as you are filled with deep grief.

Perhaps your marriage is ending in a divorce, and you feel intense hurt from the one person you thought would love you the rest of your life.

It could be that you longed to be married, but years go by, and you are still single and feeling alone.

Maybe your heart desires to be a mom, but each month, the same negative answer comes up on the pregnancy test, and you feel disappointed.

Perhaps you've lost a friendship, a job, or a dream for you or your child, and you are feeling discouraged.

Heartbreak comes when life does not end up the way you planned or expected. These disappointments are very real and can

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leave you feeling like there is a deep hole in your soul. What do you do when life takes these unexpected turns and leaves you heartbroken? How do you walk through these storms and come out on the other side stronger than when you entered the storm? How do you handle loss, grief, and disappointment in your life?

I know it is not easy. Grief is the hardest emotion to navigate. For me, it felt like my heart was being shattered into a million pieces, and I didn't know where to start or how to pick up the pieces to move forward. If you are feeling the same way, then I am so thankful you picked up this book. I want to help you heal from your heartbreak in a healthy way. But I also want you to grow deep roots as God redeems your pain. I believe depth in your faith is one of the greatest gifts in the middle of the heartbreak.

I don't know where you are right now on your journey. You could be in the middle of a storm grieving a loss, just coming out of a storm healing from a loss, or facing a storm on the horizon. Wherever you are, I want to come alongside you and let you know that you are not alone. Storms have a way of making you feel lonely, as if no one else has gone through what you have experienced. This is not true.

If you are in the middle of the storm grieving a loss, I am so sorry you are going through this. I know firsthand how hard it is, and my heart is deeply saddened for you. I wish I could reach through the pages of this book and give you a big hug. I know the heartbreak is real, and it deeply hurts.

I am truly sorry that your mom passed away even though your hope was for her to be healed.

I am truly sorry that your marriage ended even though your hope was to grow old with your spouse.

I am truly sorry that you are still single even though your hope is to be married.

I am truly sorry that you are struggling to get pregnant or perhaps have miscarried even though your hope was to have a healthy baby.

I am truly sorry that you lost your job even though your hope was to provide for your family.

Friend, I understand the deep pain you are feeling because I have experienced three great heartbreaks in my life:

- I suffered a miscarriage of my sweet baby girl.
- I endured a heartbreaking divorce that shattered my dreams for my family.
- I held my best friend's hand as pancreatic cancer took her young life.

Each heartbreak challenged me beyond what I thought I could handle. Just like you, I have cried buckets of tears over these losses. Just like you, I have found it difficult to find hope in the middle of the hurt. Just like you, I have cried out to God, wondering how He can bring good out of these difficult circumstances. I have asked the hard questions too. *Why is this happening to me? Where is God in these storms? How will I get through this?*

Throughout these pages, I will share my stories with you, but more importantly, I will give you some inspiring truths God has shown me along my path from heartbreak to strength. I know the road is not easy. It involves intentionality on your part and surrendering to God. It means trusting God through times of refinement and growth even when it does not all make sense. There will be tears, frustrations, and times you want to give up along the way. But there will also be moments when you are awestruck by the God of the universe. I cannot wait for you to see how much He loves you and cares about even the smallest details of your life.

I have created a powerful acrostic for the word *strength*. Each letter presents an important action step that will help you process your loss in a healthy way. We will dive deeper into each of these in the chapters to follow.

Seek God and invite Him into your pain.

Tearfully allow yourself time to grieve and process the emotions.

Replace your finite view with God's infinite perspective.

Embrace God's character development in the midst of the chaos.

Never lose sight of God's grace.

Give praise to God even as your heart breaks.

Trust God is good when your mind is doubting and you don't understand.

Honestly share your story and help another hurting heart.

Please understand that these eight action steps take years to live out; they are not quick items on a checklist. Walking through heart-break is hard, and healing takes time and intentionality. Grief is never

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**Remember that healing is a journey, and the goal is progress.**

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linear; there will be times when you are making good progress, and then a memory or trigger will cause a setback. Remember that healing is a journey, and the goal is progress.

These steps helped me along my journey, and my desire is they will do the same for you.

My prayer is that these action steps will lead you directly into the arms of Jesus, because only He can heal your broken heart and restore your soul. I also pray that the truth statements and prayers at the end of each chapter will offer you comfort and peace as you grieve and heal from your pain. I want to ignite within you a desire to grow into the person God has created you to be so you can live out your purpose. As you cultivate these deep roots, I pray God can use your hurts and pain to help someone else going through the same storm.

Friend, as I wrote this book for you, there were lots of tears shed. Some came from remembering the hurt and grief, but most were tears of hope. Hope that God can turn your pain into His

purpose. Hope that God has a good plan to grow you even when you cannot see how good can come from this. Hope that your broken story will help another hurting heart.

Looking back at my grief, books were a huge part of my healing, so I pray this book is part of your healing too! I have discovered that God never wastes a hurt. As you fully surrender and depend on God in the middle of your heartbreaking circumstance, I know God can take you from a place of heartbreak to strength. Let me leave you with this question to think about as you read through these pages: “What if your greatest heartbreak catapults you to your greatest growth?”

Each chapter ends with a prayer, and I would love to pray these words over you right now.



### **Let's Pray**

*God*, I want to lift up the hurting soul who is reading this book. I know in the midst of the devastation, it is hard to see how You can redeem all of the tears and pain. Please wrap Your loving arms around her grieving heart and remind her she is not alone. Empower her daily as she begins this healing journey. Allow her time to process the hurt as she seeks You and help her develop depth in her faith. Take this heartbreak and turn it into the strength that only You can give. In Jesus's name, Amen.

### **Truth**

Healing takes time and intentionality.

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