



EPISODE 23 | HOPE GUIDE

Expecting Loss and Valuing Life
with Labor of Hope

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Welcome!

Hello sweet momma. Oh, how I wish you didn't need to be listening to a podcast on finding hope after pregnancy or infant loss. My heart breaks for you that you've experienced the loss of a baby.

I am so incredibly sorry for your loss.

I wish I could give you a big hug right now and tell you that you're not alone in your grief. I am here to walk this heartbreaking journey with you. I know firsthand how devastating, life-changing, and sorrowful it is to lose a baby.

My sweet daughter, Bridget Faith, was born into Heaven at 24 weeks into my first pregnancy in 2014. In my deep grief and sadness, I questioned how a good God could allow this to happen to me. As I wrestled with my faith, I came to a place of absolute surrender.

It's a long story (one you'll hear throughout our podcast episodes), but I learned to trust God and allow Him to heal my heart. In doing so, He led me to start a nonprofit ministry called Bridget's Cradles.

You can read more about what we do on our website (and in this Hope Guide), but our mission is to provide comfort, hope, and healing to families grieving the loss of a baby in Heaven. The Cradled in Hope Podcast is an extension of our ministry with the same mission.

We firmly believe that surrendering our suffering to God will allow us to find joy again. He can heal our hearts and use our grief for good. And most importantly, through faith in His son, Jesus, we have the hope to see our babies again in Heaven. Jesus has defeated death and He promises us eternal life with Him and our babies. Though we may grieve, we do not grieve without hope.

With Hope,

Ashley Opliger

EPISODE 23 HOPE GUIDE



Show Notes



EPISODE 23 WITH LABOR OF HOPE

Join us for a conversation with Ryley Chestnut and Hayley Martinez from [Labor of Hope](#). They are both certified bereavement doulas who have lost children due to a life-limiting condition in pregnancy.

Labor of Hope is an organization that exists to value every life and support couples who have been given a life-limiting diagnosis in pregnancy. Ryley and Hayley advocate for choosing life and making memories with your child. From their own heartbreak experience, they share their grief and healing journey.

In this episode, we discussed:

- Choosing life and carrying a baby with a life-limiting diagnosis
- Cherishing moments in pregnancy even with a grim prognosis
- Leaning on the local church and believers
- Grief during the first year after loss
- Why we experience fresh grief at the three-month mark
- God's grace for each day
- The role of bereavement doulas
- Choices at the hospital and advocating for your decisions
- Having a birth plan and informed consent at the hospital
- How to create memories during pregnancy and at birth
- All about Labor of Hope and what they do
- Sharing our babies' stories and celebrating every life

Find the full episode transcript [here](#).



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Show Notes



KEY VERSES FROM THE EPISODE

- I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. **-Psalm 139:14 NIV**
- So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. **-Genesis 1:27 NIV**
- Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Yet You desired faithfulness even in the womb; You taught me wisdom in that secret place. **-Psalm 51:5-6 NIV**
- But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. **-2 Corinthians 12:9 ESV**
- He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' But now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me." **-2 Samuel 12:22-23 ESV**
- And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. **-Philippians 4:19 NIV**
- Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His, we are His people, the sheep of His pasture. **-Psalm 100:3 NIV**
- Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: 'I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself. **-Isaiah 44:24 NIV**

★★★ BLESS GRIEVING MOMS WITH A REVIEW

If you've been encouraged by our podcast, would you [write a quick review](#) on iTunes? Think of it as spending two minutes of your time to invite a grieving mom to listen in on the message of hope you've just heard. We would be so grateful for your review and 5-star rating. Click [here](#) for instructions/videos on how to leave a review in case you haven't left one before. Thank you so much!

[LEAVE A REVIEW](#)

Show Notes



+ OUR GUEST | LABOR OF HOPE



Ryley Chestnut and Hayley Martinez are bereaved mothers who serve with the nonprofit ministry based in Texas called Labor of Hope. Ryley is their Director of Outreach and Hayley is their Director of Development.

They are both certified bereavement doulas who lost children due to a life-limiting condition in pregnancy. Through their heartbreak and pain, they serve families who have walked the same journey they have.

Connect with Labor of Hope

↙ these are clickable!

Web: www.laborofhope.org

Facebook: [/laborofhope](https://www.facebook.com/laborofhope)

Instagram: [@laborofhope](https://www.instagram.com/laborofhope)

+ OUR HOST | ASHLEY OPLIGER



Ashley is the Executive Director of Bridget's Cradles, a nonprofit organization based in Wichita, Kansas that donates cradles to over 1,250 hospitals in all 50 states and comforts over 26,000 bereaved families a year.

Ashley is married to Matt and they have three children: Bridget (in Heaven), and two sons. She is a follower of Christ who desires to share the hope of Heaven with families grieving the loss of a baby.

Connect with Ashley

Web: www.ashleyopliger.com
www.bridgetscradles.com

Facebook: [/ashleyopliger](https://www.facebook.com/ashleyopliger)
Instagram: [@ashleyopliger](https://www.instagram.com/ashleyopliger)

Show Notes



ABOUT LABOR OF HOPE



LABOR of HOPE

Labor of Hope is a faith-based non-profit organization that exists to celebrate and value every life. They accomplish this by supporting and equipping families who have received a critical or life-limiting diagnosis during pregnancy.

In action, they serve their clients by providing:



RESOURCES
to support your journey



PHYSICAL
labor support from a
professional birth doula



COMMEMORATIVE
support from a
professional birth doula



HOW TO RECEIVE SUPPORT

One: Intro & Intake

Please [click here](#) to contact them. They will setup a time to talk with you and hear your story. As they gather more detailed information they will assess your specific needs and determine how their Hope Team can best serve your family.

Three: Birth & Hospital Preparation

Their doulas will support you in collaborating with your providers to develop birth and NICU plans that meet your goals. Their Hope Team will help you understand what standard care looks like, will equip you to advocate for yourself and your child, and will help make suggestions to create birthday memories for your entire family, and more.



Two: Connect & Comfort

Based on your circumstances they will match you with trusted members of their Hope Team including a professional doula and photographer.



Four: Continued Connection

Labor of Hope will continue to provide ongoing support & resources as your family adapts to living in your 'new normal'. Labor of Hope also aims to foster community among our clients through seasonal events to enable connection with others who directly relate your journey.



Show Notes



DISCUSSION / APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Ryley and Hayley share their experiences in navigating a life-limiting diagnosis in pregnancy. They both chose life and to carry their babies. Have you experienced a similar diagnosis in the past or recently? Does this decision feel hard? It's a delicate dance of grief and joy. What about Ryley and Hayley's stories gave you hope?**
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- Ashley talked about how the three-month mark after loss is a big milestone in which grief can come back in fresh waves all over again. Did you experience this? Describe your journey in the first year. If you're still in the first year, describe what each month has looked like and defining moments in your grief journey (both the peaks and valleys).**
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- Both Ryley and Hayley mentioned how the support of their local church, family, and friends played an integral role in their healing journey. Hayley said that grief was an opportunity to see the beauty in other people. In your life, who has been an encouragement to you? List names of people who have made a difference in your journey and send them a text to thank them.**
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Pinnable Graphics



EPISODE 23
#CRADLEDINHOPE
@BRIDGETSCRADLES

Our photographers are really good at capturing all the little toes and the hands, and making certain that we're getting molds and we're getting footprints and handprints, just every single little piece so that they can look back on their child's birthday as, yes, a hard day but also a really sweet day. And all they remember are not the moving parts of the day--they don't remember the chaos of the four doctors in the room--they just remember their baby.

Ryley Chestnut

Bridget's Cradles

EPISODE 23 CRADLED IN HOPE PODCAST

LABOR of HOPE

“

My husband and I were the first family that Labor of Hope served and they changed our lives. I don't know that we would be in the same spot that we are now, and we got there so much quicker because of them and these beautiful pictures.

Hayley Martinez

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Losing our son was the first time in our marriage where we leaned into each other the way that we did and we needed each other.

Hayley Martinez

Bridget's Cradles

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Our faith was a lot stronger. I had never felt God more than I did in her pregnancy. Our prayers were answered in ways that maybe I wouldn't have chosen initially but ended up being the biggest blessing.

Ryley Chestnut

Bridget's Cradles

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And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

-PHILIPPIANS 4:19 NIV

Bridget's Cradles

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Grief and sadness, it's also a really beautiful time because you've never shown more love and you've never received more prayer and more hugs than you do in those initial months or days or years. You really get to see the beauty in other people.

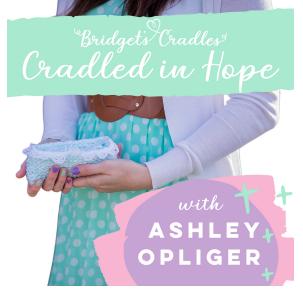
Hayley Martinez

Bridget's Cradles



View and pin episode graphics from our Pinterest board [here](#).

More Resources



HOPE GATHERINGS ONLINE



Ashley Opliger
BRIDGET'S CRADLES

Join our Christ-centered monthly online support group led by Ashley Opliger, Bridget's mom and Executive Director of Bridget's Cradles. The group is focused on finding hope and healing through God in community with each other and is open to any mom in the United States who has lost a baby due to miscarriage, stillbirth, or infant loss. For upcoming dates, please visit www.bridgetscradles.com/hopeonline.



JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

Join our Cradled in Hope community of Grieving Moms:

The image shows a woman from the waist up, wearing a teal dress with white polka dots and a light-colored cardigan. She is holding a small, blue lace item, possibly a keepsake or a piece of clothing. To her left is a graphic for the 'Cradled in hope' Facebook group.

Cradled in hope
CONNECT | GRIEVE | FIND HOPE
JOIN NOW

Bridget's Cradles

More Resources



CATCH UP ON PAST EPISODES



EPISODE 1:
Welcome to Cradled in Hope
with Ashley Opliger

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 2:
Finding Peace After Miscarriage
with Alisha Illian

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 3:
Navigating Pregnancy Loss
with Sarah Philpott

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 4:
Grieving a Life-Limiting Diagnosis
with Amy Valentine

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 5:
Wrestling Well with God
through Recurrent Loss
with Kristin Hernandez

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 6:
Raising a Rainbow Baby to
Remember Their Sibling in Heaven
with Ashley & Branton Opliger

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 7:
Improving Hospital Experiences
for Grieving Families
with Lori Beth Blaney

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 8:
How to Nurture a Grieving
Mother's Heart
with Johanna Mutz & Denise Wolfe

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 9:
Anchored by the Gospel after
Losing My Baby to Cancer
with Jess McClenahan

[LISTEN NOW](#)

More Resources



Microphone icon CATCH UP ON PAST EPISODES



EPISODE 10:
Walking through the Valley of
the Shadow of Death
with Anesha Stanley

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EPISODE 11:
Pressing into the Pain
after Infant Loss
with Lindsay Johnson

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 12:
Renewing Your Mind after
Pregnancy Loss
with Alicia Michelle

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 13:
Coping with Hope
Through the Holidays
with Ashley Opliger

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EPISODE 14:
The Power of Community
for Grieving Mothers
with foreknown Ministries

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 15:
Grieving with the
Gospel
with Casey Nestor

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 16:
Courageously Expecting
After Loss
with Jenny Albers

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 17:
Real Talk on
Pregnancy Loss
with Rachel Lewis

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 18:
Strengthening Your Marriage
after Pregnancy Loss
with Matt & Ashley Opliger

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More Resources



CATCH UP ON PAST EPISODES



EPISODE 19:

When Wishes
Change
with *Fricia Roos*

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EPISODE 20:

Holding on to Love After
You've Lost a Baby
with *Candy McVicar*

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 21:

Grieving Differently After
Pregnancy Loss
with *Moriah Rooney*

[LISTEN NOW](#)



EPISODE 22:

Bible Prophecy for
The Grieving Mother
with *Jessica Speas*

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More Resources



FIND HOPE + HEALING

Please visit www.bridgetscradles.com to find resources for hope and healing after the loss of a baby. We pray that something there will be helpful to you and provide hope as you grieve and remember your precious baby in Heaven.



Memorial Ideas

Ways to honor your baby in Heaven by remembering them in your home and daily life.



Important Dates & Holidays

How to face difficult milestones and holidays in ways that bring peace and remembrance.



Grieving & Healing

Ashley shares practical ideas that she found helpful in her grieving and healing journey.



More Resources



FIND HOPE + HEALING



Recommended Books

Christ-centered books that provide hope and healing after the loss of a baby

Quotes & Bible Verses

A list of quotes and Bible verses to offer hope and healing for families who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss

Helpful Resources

A list of organizations and websites focused on providing healing to families grieving the loss of a baby



SIGN UP TO RECEIVE HOPE-FILLED EMAILS
+ PODCAST UPDATES + FREE RESOURCES

SIGN UP NOW



Our Organization

ABOUT BRIDGET'S CRADLES



Bridget's Cradles is a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in Wichita, Kansas. It was founded after Matt and Ashley Opliger's daughter, Bridget Faith, was born into Heaven on October 22, 2014. Ashley's mom, Teresa, had knit a small cradle for Bridget, and it allowed them to hold her in a special and dignified way.

Since then, Ashley and a team of amazing volunteers have been passionate about comforting bereaved families across the country. Bridget's Cradles now donates cradles to over 1,100 hospitals in all 50 states, hosts support groups & remembrance events, and provides hope-filled resources online.



WHAT WE DO



DONATE CRADLES
TO HOSPITALS



PROVIDE SUPPORT
& RAISE AWARENESS



HOPE GATHERINGS
SUPPORT GROUPS



WAVE OF LIGHT
OCTOBER 15TH EVENT



GIVE HOPE

Together, we can provide comfort and hope to more grieving families. Your support will allow us to carry out critical program services so that together we can comfort bereaved families now and in the future. Visit www.bridgetscradles.com/givehope.



let's Connect

CONTACT

If you'd like to be in touch, please email us directly at:

info@bridgetscradles.com

FOLLOW US

Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram so you'll stay up to date on podcast and ministry updates!

@bridgetscradles
@ashleyoplicher
@cradledinhope



Bridget's  Cradles

