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## **EPISODE 18 | HOPE GUIDE**

Strengthening Your Marriage after Pregnancy  
Loss with Matt & Ashley Opliger

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## EPISODE 18 HOPE GUIDE

# 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*



# Show Notes



## EPISODE 18 WITH MATT & ASHLEY OPLIGER

**In this episode, Ashley Opliger is joined with her husband, Matt, for a conversation about strengthening your marriage after pregnancy loss.** Together, they discuss the struggles they faced in navigating complications in Ashley's pregnancy with Bridget and how they walked together after her death. Matt shares his perspective, as the father and husband, of what grieving has been like for him.

The loss of a baby is one of the most heartbreaking experiences a couple can face in their marriage. However, even in the pain and sadness, there are opportunities to grow closer together. Matt and Ashley's prayer for couples is that they would draw near to God and learn to love and support each other through their grief.

### **In this episode, Matt and Ashley discussed:**

- Personality differences and struggles with different perspectives
- How men and women grieve differently
- Supporting each other in the way we grieve
- How Matt bonded with Bridget and what his grief has looked like
- The importance of communication and grace in marriage
- Using a Marriage Journal to make communication intentional
- Questions you can ask your spouse to support them in grief
- How the 5 Love Languages helped us love each other better
- Why Heaven has given us so much hope
- Finding meaning in your baby's life
- The impact Bridget has made on our parenting with our boys
- Advice for grieving couples from what they've learned

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



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# Show Notes



## KEY VERSES FROM THE EPISODE

- Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" **-John 11:25-26 NIV**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. **-2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NIV**

- Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **-Colossians 3:12-13 ESV**

- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **-Ephesians 4:32 NIV**

He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds. -Psalm 147:3 NIV

But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. **-2 Peter 3:13 ESV**

- And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." **-Revelation 21:3-4 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 HOST | ASHLEY OPLIGER



Ashley is the Executive Director of Bridget's Cradles, a nonprofit organization based in Wichita, Kansas that donates cradles to over 1,090 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.ashleyoplinger.com](http://www.ashleyoplinger.com)  
[www.bridgetscradles.com](http://www.bridgetscradles.com)

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

## + MORE FROM ASHLEY

### Writing & Videos

- [Bridget's Cradles Blog](#)
- [Grotto Network Documentary](#)
- [Living Loved Today](#)
- [SHARE Pregnancy & Infant Loss](#)
- [Women \(re\)Purposed](#)

### Podcasts (as a guest)

- [Bless It or Block It](#)
- [Coffee & Bible Time](#)
- [Devoted Dreamers](#)
- [Do The Thing Movement](#)
- [It Is For Freedom](#)
- [Millennial Mission](#)
- [Mimosas with Moms](#)
- [Ready to Thrive](#)
- [Straight Talk with Hope](#)
- [Truth Be Told in 10](#)

# Show Notes



## MARRIAGE RESOURCES



The **Together Marriage Journal** is a marriage tool to help you communicate with, pray for, and encourage your spouse. The journal is designed to be flexible and can be used by one or both spouses. You can either talk through the pages and record the answers together, or you can use it on your own as a way to intentionally plan to encourage and pray for your spouse throughout the week.

[BUY THE JOURNAL](#)

### The 5 Love Languages:

People have unique personalities and give and receive love in different ways. By learning to recognize these preferences in yourself and in your spouse, you can learn to identify the root of your conflicts, connect more profoundly, and truly begin to grow closer. Take the quiz to discover your primary love language, what it means, and how you can use it to better connect with your spouse.

[? TAKE THE QUIZ](#)



# Show Notes



## DISCUSSION / APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Matt and Ashley share their struggles in personality differences as well as how men and women grieve differently. What differences do you and your spouse have in the way you grieve? Write out a list of how each of you experience and express your grief.

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- Matt and Ashley talk about the Marriage Journal and how it's helped them open up communication in their marriage by asking intentional questions every week. Do you feel this would help you? What questions would benefit your marriage? Write them down below or consider buying the Daily Grace Co. Marriage Journal (featured above).

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- Matt shares that learning Ashley's Love Languages helped him better support Ashley in her grief, and vice versa. What is your love language? What is your spouse's love language? Write them below with tangible ways you could show your spouse love in their grief. If you don't know your love language, take the quiz (see link on page above).

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# Pinnable Graphics

"Bridget's Cradles"  
Cradled in Hope



with  
**ASHLEY  
OPLIGER**

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#CRADLEDINHOPE  
@BRIDGETSCRADLES



The marriage journal makes communication more intentional. We communicate every day about what's going on with our lives, about daily activities, how our day went and what we're going to be doing in any given week, and that type of communication.

*Matt Opliger*

*Bridget's Cradles*



It's important that as husband and wife we can ask each other and say, "How can I help you? How can I support you in your grief or what you're going through?"

*Matt Opliger*

*Bridget's  
Cradles*

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But according to His promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

- 2 PETER 3:13 ESV

*Bridget's Cradles*

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Although her body is there under the ground and in the casket, her soul is in Heaven.

*Matt Opliger*

Episode 18 | Cradled in Hope Podcast

Grieving, for me, was more internal and less outward and visible. Being a man, I think we tend to process grief differently. And knowing that difference between us, I think that was important in our marriage to know that although I may not be outwardly grieving didn't mean that I wasn't grieving.

*Bridget's  
Cradles*

*Matt Opliger*

*Bridget's  
Cradles*

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Understanding how your spouse needs to be loved and showing love in the way that they want to be loved is important. Not necessarily the way that you think they should be loved or the way that you feel loved.

*Matt Opliger*



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



# More Resources



## CATCH UP ON PAST EPISODES



**EPISODE 1:**  
**Welcome to Cradled in Hope**  
*with Ashley Opliger*

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**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 Balentine*

[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*

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

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**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*

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# More Resources



## CATCH UP ON PAST EPISODES



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

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

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

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

[LISTEN NOW](#)



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

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**EPISODE 15:**  
**Grieving with the  
Gospel**  
*with Casey Nestor*

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**EPISODE 16:**  
**Courageously Expecting  
After Loss**  
*with Jenny Albers*

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**EPISODE 17:**  
**Real Talk on  
Pregnancy Loss**  
*with Rachel Lewis*

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# More Resources



## ✚ FIND HOPE + HEALING

Please visit [www.bridgetscradles.com](http://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.

✚ ✚ ✚  
CLICK HERE  
TO READ  
MORE ✚ ✚



### Important Dates & Holidays

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

✚ ✚ ✚  
CLICK HERE  
TO READ  
MORE ✚ ✚



### Grieving & Healing

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

✚ ✚ ✚  
CLICK HERE  
TO READ  
MORE ✚ ✚

# More Resources



## ✝ FIND HOPE + HEALING



### Recommended Books

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

CLICK HERE  
TO READ  
MORE



### Quotes & Bible Verses

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

CLICK HERE  
TO READ  
MORE



### Helpful Resources

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

CLICK HERE  
TO READ  
MORE

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

**SIGN UP NOW**

# 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](http://www.bridgetscradles.com/hopeonline).



## JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

**Join our Cradled in Hope community of Grieving Moms:**



# Our Organization



with  
**ASHLEY  
OPLIGER**



## 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 1,090 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](http://www.bridgetscradles.com/givehope).





# Let's Connect

## CONTACT

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

[info@bridgetscradles.com](mailto:info@bridgetscradles.com)

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