



EPISODE 13 | HOPE GUIDE

Coping with Hope through the Holidays
with Ashley Opliger

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EPISODE 13 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 13 WITH ASHLEY OPLIGER

In this special episode, Ashley Opliger shares a heartfelt message and prayer for mothers who are grieving during the holidays. This Christmas season was supposed to be a time of joy and making memories with your baby, but now is filled with overwhelming sadness and pain.

Ashley shares practical ideas for "coping with hope" through the holidays when grief is magnified and our hearts miss our babies in Heaven more than we can stand. With a focus on grace and communication, Ashley gives advice on how to navigate holiday gatherings and relationships with friends and family. This hope-filled episode will leave you celebrating the reason for the season—Jesus, the baby born in a manger who gives us hope to see our babies in Heaven one day.

In this episode, Ashley discusses:

- How to survive the holiday/winter season
- Giving yourself and others grace to strengthen your relationships
- Protecting your heart and putting up boundaries
- Why it's okay to say "no" or do things differently this year (and why you shouldn't feel guilty about it)
- Creating space to grieve
- How to set up our families for success to support and love us well
- Traditions and ways to honor your baby in Heaven for Christmas
- Allowing yourself to "hold both" and feel both happiness and sorrow
- Scripture and Christmas songs that bring hope in this season

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



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Show Notes



GRIEVING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

Holidays can be difficult milestones to face in your grieving journey. From my own experience after losing Bridget, I've found that celebrating Bridget's life on holidays has helped me in my sadness. By remembering her and having special traditions on these days, I am able to mourn her while at the same time experiencing peace and hope. I pray that some of these ideas below might do the same for you.

-Ashley, Bridget's Mommy



Christmas Cards

Include your baby's name on your Christmas card. We have include Bridget's name as she is a part of our eternal family and we want friends and family to remember her.

You can also take holiday family photos while holding a special memorial item to show your baby's presence in your family (e.g., stuffed animal, picture frame, etc).



Stockings

Hang a stocking for your baby in Heaven on your mantle with the rest of your family's stockings (or ask extended family to consider hanging a stocking in memory of your baby if you do not plan to be at home on Christmas).

[Etsy](#) has many shops that offer personalized Christmas stockings.



Ornaments

Place a memorial ornament for your baby in Heaven on your family Christmas tree.

There are various [Etsy shops](#) that offer remembrance Christmas ornaments. We have several ornaments for Bridget on our tree. We got the [PhotoBlock ornaments](#) in the photo above from [PhotoBarn](#).



Christmas Tree

Decorate a special Christmas tree just for your baby in Heaven. If your baby is buried in a cemetery or other place near you, consider decorating this place with a small Christmas tree. You could also decorate tree that stays in a special place in your home. Decorate the memorial tree with sentimental ornaments (e.g., with their name, initial, or special colors).

[CLICK HERE TO READ MORE](#)

Show Notes



KEY VERSES FROM THE EPISODE

- May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. **-Romans 15:13 NIV**
- At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. **-Titus 3:3-7 NIV**
- The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. **-Psalm 34:18 NIV**
- And while they were gazing into Heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into Heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into Heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into Heaven." **-Acts 1:10-11 ESV**
- Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him." **-Revelation 1:7 ESV**



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 1,100 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
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



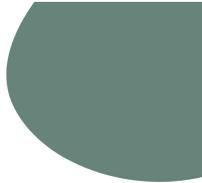
DISCUSSION / APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- Ashley talked about setting up our families and gatherings for success by communicating expectations in advance. What conversations do you need to have before the holidays? How can you communicate your feelings with love and grace so that you can be better supported and also strengthen your relationships with your family/friends?

- In this episode, Ashley shared some ideas on how to honor your baby in Heaven and have special traditions as a family to remember them during the holidays. What traditions do you have that bring healing? What new ideas can you implement this year?

- The reason for the season is Jesus. How does His birth in a manger give you hope for seeing your babies again? How can you choose to focus on His birth and celebrate His life this Christmas season?

Pinnable Graphics



Our Savior entered the world as a baby, born of the Virgin Mary in a manger. He came down as a human to save us. He is our hope. He is the one that defeated death, and He promises us eternity in Heaven with Him and our babies.

Ashley Opliger



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@BRIDGETSCRADLES



Ashley Opliger
@ashleyopliger

It's also okay to keep it simple and easy and to put up some boundaries around what you do and when you do things. Please do not put unrealistic expectations on yourself and do not feel guilty for not being more joyous or wanting to participate in everything that you used to.

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And while they were gazing into Heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into Heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into Heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into Heaven.

- ACTS 1:10-11 ESV

Bridget's Cradles



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Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him.

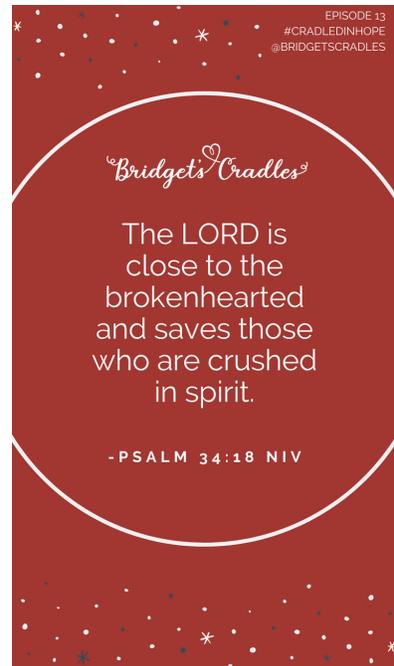
- REVELATION 1:7 ESV



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Give yourself grace. It's okay that you give yourself permission to grieve and you set aside time to reflect and mourn. It's important to create space for grieving.

Ashley Opliger



Bridget's Cradles

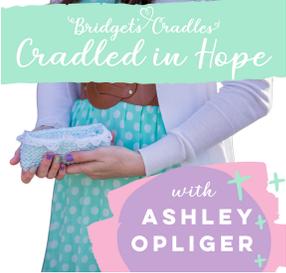
The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

- PSALM 34:18 NIV



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

Ashley shares her heart behind starting the Cradled in Hope podcast and reads the first chapter of her book.

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EPISODE 2:

Finding Peace After Miscarriage

with Alisha Illian

Alisha discusses how she learned to rely on God, surrender her plans for her life, and find peace after miscarriage.

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EPISODE 3:

Navigating Pregnancy Loss

with Sarah Philpott

Sarah shares how she grieved with hope and found joy in the perfection of Heaven, even after experiencing multiple miscarriages.

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EPISODE 4:

Grieving a Life-Limiting Diagnosis

with Amy Balentine

Amy shares her journey of receiving a life-limiting diagnosis for her son, Simon. She discusses how grieving Simon and her other three babies shaped her faith journey.

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More Resources

"Bridget's Cradles"
Cradled in Hope

with
**ASHLEY
OPLIGER**



CATCH UP ON PAST EPISODES



EPISODE 5:

Wrestling Well with God through Recurrent Loss

with Kristin Hernandez

Kristin shares her story of losing five babies and how she turned to her faith in God and embraced the suffering.

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EPISODE 6:

Raising a Rainbow Baby to Remember Their Sibling in Heaven

with Ashley & Branton Opliger

Ashley shares four practical ways you can help your living children honor their sibling in Heaven.

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EPISODE 7:

Improving Hospital Experiences for Grieving Families

with Lori Beth Blaney

Lori Beth shares her story of losing her daughter, Rachel, choosing forgiveness, and why she started a nonprofit to support grieving families and train hospital staff on bereavement care.

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EPISODE 8:

How to Nurture a Grieving Mother's Heart

Johanna Mutz & Denise Wolfe

Johanna and Denise share their story of starting a company to offer beautiful gifts for women who have experienced loss.

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More Resources

Bridget's Cradles
Cradled in Hope

with
ASHLEY
OPLIGER



CATCH UP ON PAST EPISODES



EPISODE 9:

Anchored by the Gospel after Losing My Baby to Cancer

with Jess McClenahan

Jess shares how the Gospel anchored her to hope after the loss of her 11-month-old daughter, Cora.

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EPISODE 10:

Walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

with Anesha Stanley

Anesha, shares about walking through anxiety and depression after recurrent pregnancy loss.

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EPISODE 11:

Pressing into the Pain after Infant Loss

with Lindsay Johnson

Lindsay, founder of Aspyn Arrows, shares about pressing into the pain after tragically finding her one-month-old daughter, Aspyn, unresponsive in her crib.

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EPISODE 12:

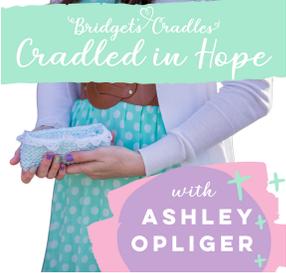
Renewing Your Mind after Pregnancy Loss

with Alicia Michelle

Alicia shares her journey after losing her son in an early miscarriage. She teaches us how to manage our thoughts and get out of the negative spirals that we get stuck in so that we can draw closer to God in our grief.

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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.

✝ ✝ ✝
[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



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

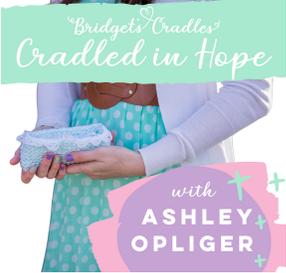
A list of organizations and websites focused on providing healing to families grieving the loss of a baby



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

SIGN UP NOW

More Resources



HOPE GATHERINGS ONLINE



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:**



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

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