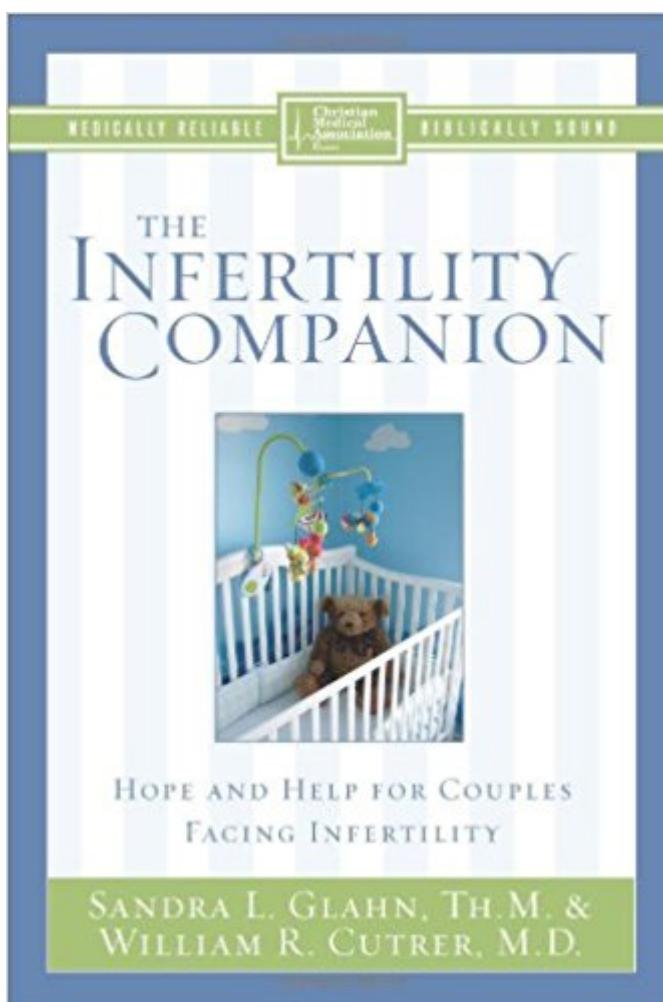


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The Infertility Companion: Hope And Help For Couples Facing Infertility (Christian Medical Association)



Synopsis

Endorsed by the Christian Medical Association. A Comprehensive Christian Guide to the Challenges of Infertility

Medical

Ethical

Emotional

Marital

Spiritual

Biblical Infertility changes everything, shattering dreams and breaking hearts. But hope is available

today more than ever. The Infertility Companion draws on the Bible and on current medical knowledge, including the latest research, to shed light on such questions as:

Can people of faith ethically use high-tech infertility treatments?

How do we make moral, biblical decisions about medical treatment, third-party reproduction, stem cell research, and embryo adoption?

Is God punishing me?

Does God even care?

Will adoption increase our chances of getting pregnant?

How can we reduce the stress of infertility on our marriage relationship?

How can we keep sex from becoming a chore?

These theologically trained authors have taught at a variety of conferences on infertility, pregnancy loss, and adoption, and they have helped thousands of couples to face the future through their message of encouragement. The Infertility Companion includes discussion questions and a workbook suitable for individuals, couples, or small groups. Full of practical tips and true stories, this book will guide couples past the ethical pitfalls of assisted reproductive technologies as they travel the difficult road ahead. An all-encompassing guide for the Christian infertility patient. Where other books fall short, this “companion” aids the patient not only with the physical and emotional aspects of this journey, but also helps answer the tough spiritual and ethical questions that arise in a couple’s desire to conceive.

Julie Watson, *Conceiving Concepts*

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Endorsed by the Christian Medical Association. A Comprehensive Christian Guide to the Challenges of Infertility * Medical * Ethical * Emotional * Marital * Spiritual * Biblical Infertility changes everything, shattering dreams and breaking hearts. But hope is available---today more than ever. The Infertility Companion draws on the Bible and on current medical knowledge, including the latest research, to shed light on such questions as: *Can people of faith ethically use high-tech infertility treatments? *How do we make moral, biblical decisions about medical treatment, third-party reproduction, stem cell research, and embryo adoption? *Is God punishing me? *Does God even care? *Will adoption increase our chances of getting pregnant? *How can we reduce the stress of infertility on our marriage relationship? *How can we keep sex from becoming a chore? These theologically trained authors have taught at a variety of conferences on infertility, pregnancy loss, and adoption, and they have helped thousands of couples to face the future through their message of encouragement. The Infertility Companion includes discussion questions and a workbook suitable for individuals, couples, or small groups. Full of practical tips and true stories, this book will guide couples past the ethical pitfalls of assisted reproductive technologies as they travel the difficult road ahead. An all-encompassing guide for the Christian infertility patient. Where other books fall short, this 'companion' aids the patient not only with the physical and emotional aspects of this journey, but also helps answer the tough spiritual and ethical questions that arise in a couple's desire to conceive.---Julie Watson, *Conceiving Concepts*

The Infertility Companion: Hope and Help for Couples Facing Infertility (Christian Medical Association) is a book that is part almanac, part dictionary, part personal testimony and part Bible teaching and study. It's written by a Christian Infertility Doctor and a Christian Infertility Patient. I'll start with my critiques because they're pretty minor. My biggest complaint about the book is that for

some reason I've not quite put my finger on, DH and I both found it visually hard to read. I can't decide if the text is smaller, the leading is smaller, the characters are closer together, the lines are longer or if it's because the pages are gray and not white, but I found it hard to read more than 20 pages in one sitting before my eyes were too tired. I've never experienced that with a book before and I'm quite confident it wasn't the content that made it hard to read so I'm quite befuddled. At times I was frustrated because I wanted to continue reading but couldn't comfortably do so. My other critique is that the book is littered with one paragraph personal anecdotes from various people that I found distracting on almost every occasion. I struggle to see their purpose and at times, was frustrated by the incongruence that occurred when the anecdotes interrupted the primary authors' train of thought, with little explanation as to why they were offered in the first place. The primary text is stronger when one skips the interruptions (though for thoroughness' sake, I did read them all). However, those two, minor things encompass the totality of my complaints about this book. What I love about this book is how straightforward it is. This is not to be confused with authors who are insensitive. This book just lacks the emotional aspect of a lot of the other books, which my husband especially appreciated. He felt much more comfortable reading this book than reading some of the others I speak highly of, including ones I've recommended here. The book reads largely like a textbook on infertility, if such a thing could exist given the diverse nature of individual experiences. However, it is very conversational and approachable in tone-not at all dry and difficult to read like the mention of a "text book" would suggest. The authors write with one voice and do an excellent job at it, which I think lends itself to the "neutrality" of this book. It's not a book by women for women, or men for men. It's a book for a general audience, which I think is rare in this particular genre of texts. The book spends some time on the interpersonal aspects of infertility, including the patients' relationships with themselves, with each other, with God, with their friends and family, with Christendom and with the general public. It also address such things as parenting after infertility, secondary infertility, childlessness by choice, and responding to well meaning advice. Perhaps one of the most instrumental things I've read in any book on the subject was in the authors' chapter on myths of infertility. In response to the myth "If you adopt, the pain will go away," the authors cited another author who identified six key losses that are rooted in infertility: 1. Loss of control 2. Loss of individual genetic continuity 3. Loss of a jointly conceived child 4. Loss of the pregnancy and birth experiences 5. Loss of emotional gratification surrounding pregnancy and birth 6. Loss of an opportunity to nurture and parent a new generation pg 29 How freeing it was for me to read that it is perfectly normal to mourn the loss of pregnancy--a need that will never be met through born-child adoption! I've already shared this with a few other people because it was so instrumental to me to

identify the various types and sources of grief and loss. I wish I could put it on a flyer and distribute it to the world and maybe then people would cease looking for trite things to say or ways to help their infertile friends "get over" this loss! The rest of the book, however, is what I found most useful. It's an explanation and bioethical exploration of the tests and procedures common in the treatment of infertility. It covers everything ranging from sample collection to examinations to medications to surgical procedures. The authors are quick to confess their own limits and biases, but even with the procedures with which they don't agree, they highlight the benefits along with the risks. I appreciated this neutrality. They are also careful and responsible to state that their opinions on anything that falls outside the bounds of clear scriptural teaching and/or does not jeopardize innocent life is their own opinion and not gospel truth. On the other hand, where something does violate clear scripture or the sanctity of life, they are firm in stating its inappropriateness for the committed Christian (examples would be fornicating to produce fluid samples or children, selective reduction abortion, etc). In some cases (IVF for example), they are very helpful in helping the reader understand the limits they should place in order to keep the procedure one that honors God and human life. Where Catholics and Protestants might differ, they offer information and resources for both world views. I appreciated how respectful the authors are of opinions that differ from theirs when it comes to matters of interpretation. There is no condemnation-only simple, undecorated statement of their opinion and where applicable, medical and scientific facts. They do not pressure the reader to come to the same conclusions and as I mentioned, are generous in even offering the benefits of procedures that they would not choose for themselves. They offer a very useful grid for evaluating the ethics of reproductive technology. They have borrowed the framework from a secular textbook and offer it as being both useful and consistent with a biblical worldview. The four principles are: Beneficence-to do good. Thus, we ask, "Does it do good?" Nonmaleficence-to do no harm. We ask, "Does it avoid doing harm?" Autonomy-the patient has the right to make decisions about care rendered to him or her. We ask, "Does it respect self-determination, the patient's right to decide for him- or herself?" Justice-fair, equitable, and appropriate distribution of social benefits and burdens. Our own definition of justice goes beyond this definition to ask whether something seeks what is right or due the patient in a given instance. So we ask, "Does it give what is right, due and equitable?" pg 171 So long as the reader retains honest careful grounding in scripture when answering the questions posed in this construct, I found this to be a very useful and practical framework. The book also has quite a few extra curricular resources. The end of each chapter has discussion questions for the reader. I suppose with some moderation, they could be good prompts for a group discussion as well. The appendices of the book include a scripture-based workbook of

questions and exercises for each chapter, an infertility medical workup worksheet, the Christian Medical Association Statement on Reproductive Technology, an IF glossary with common vernacular explanations, a list of resources and complete citations for all of the studies, interviews and writings cited in the book. The book is very well cited. Each time the authors mentioned a clinical study, a public statement by a group or committee, a medical fact, and even in some cases a hermeneutic explanation, there was a corresponding citation. This set me at ease that the things that I was reading were true, or at least easily verifiable. It also gave me a place to go if anything piqued my interest to the point of wanting to seek out further information. I appreciated this responsible treatment of a lot of things that are offered as "fact" in a world full of questions and controversy. I will confess that I did not complete the workbook or discussion questions yet, and am not sure if I plan to. However, I did read through them and found them relevant and thought provoking. The book is like an encyclopedia insofar as there may be portions (even large ones) that are not relevant to you if you are not considering a certain procedure or class of procedures. I did read the entire book so as to have a firm understanding of it, but I admit to times when I had trouble staying interested in subjects that are not a part of our journey. I will say that the book can easily be read in sections or chapters. If you skip a section that is not relevant to your journey, I do not think it will make the rest of the book unreadable and I think you would still benefit. Each chapter can stand on its own and be contextually accurate and understandable. However, the book also feels unified enough to be read through as a traditional chapter book. There is a ton of clinical information in this book, which distinguishes it from other books in this genre. For that reason, it's a lot more difficult to retain all of the information in the book than it is with other books that are more narrow in subject. For that reason I think this book is most useful when consulted many times, especially the subjects of particular relevance to the reader. I know I shall have to read through the details of some of the Reproductive Technologies several times before I feel I have a firm grasp on them but again, that selective reading is very possible in a book structured this way. This book is an excellent resource for infertility patients. I'm not sure it's useful for pastors, friends and family or doctors, but I suspect it was never intended to be. This is not your typical infertility Bible or personal enrichment study, so I would not add it to my library in lieu of books that are more personally challenging, but it is an excellent academic reference resource, which is especially useful in a world where the sheer volume of facts and anecdotes can be overwhelming.

Let me start by saying I have not dealt with infertility. However, I have faced pregnancy loss & stillbirth, so I understand a small part of this type of grief. I have a friend that has just started this

infertility "journey" and I wanted to be able to understand the terms and types of emotions and decisions she would be facing. I found this book extremely informative. I thought the duo of authors (doctor & a woman battling infertility) was a perfect touch. The reader could learn of (or identify with) both the emotional aspects as well as the options and decisions of treatment. It adds in an ethical debate over some of the options for treatment, which gave me a deeper look at what couples truly do have to decide and wrestle with.

My husband and I had been trying for so long and we were so discouraged. I purchased this book based off reviews I read. It was such a good read. I couldn't put it down and it was exactly what I wanted to read while going through infertility issues. Especially now that we went through so much reproductive assistance and have twins, I am eager to pass it on as a comfort to my friends or anyone else going through the same thing.

This book was recommended to my husband and me since we are struggling with infertility. We love that it is written from a Christian perspective, and that it is a joint effort by a male infertility doctor and a female patient. This book gave my husband an excellent perspective into what I am going through emotionally during this time, and it gave me better insight into how I can continue to support him since he does not grieve the same way that I do. It is also a great tool in coping with friends and family who unknowingly make insensitive comments. I cry tears of joy every time I read this book because I am comforted in knowing that I am not the only woman who has ever gone through this, and my husband now knows that I'm not the only crazy woman out there! :)

This book provides good ethical advise; however, some of the information is now outdated. For example, they now have very successful methods for freezing embryos, that didn't exist at the time that the book was written. I think it is still a good resource as long as you do a lot of research on your own about current day treatments and technologies.

This book is both medically accurate & spiritually encouraging. It describes all medical options in detail, diagnostic procedures, as well as adoption options. It's also spiritually encouraging as the authors speak candidly about many common misconceptions that many people who are going through infertility have, such as thinking they have done something wrong to deserve this, etc. They refer to several stories from the Bible to refute these misconceptions. Very helpful and encouraging book for anyone suffering from infertility.

Very thought provoking and well organized material. Provides perspectives from doctor and patient. Easy to read and organized in such a way that it's easy to skip over information that's not relevant to your particular situation (though you will want to go back and read it just out of curiosity).

A great resource to have for anyone facing infertility treatments and who wants biblically sound advice on the ethical aspects of it. Just very informative in general about all the treatments available. It explains what the treatments are so couples can have a better understanding of what is out there but, then adds what treatments are biblically acceptable. Very helpful to my husband and I as we underwent treatment for infertility.

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