

BOOK FUN MAGAZINE



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From Infertility to Triplets (plus two)

"Are you pregnant, yet?" ... "Are. You. Pregnant. Yet?"

By Jeremiah J. Johnston, Ph.D.

My wife's name is Audrey and she is a badass. Not the garden-variety baby boomer, force you into your locker bully-esque badass, but rather the modern, ultra-cool millennial/GenZ, drop-the-mic badass mom of the 21st century. She does it all while making it look easy.

Audrey is a business owner, earned a graduate degree *summa cum laude*, has lived in three countries while I pursued academic and professional dreams. Now she has recently settled down as an "uber-driver" squiring our two (soon to be five) children to all of their activities in the great state of Texas. The reality of our life today is a dream, but not too long ago, it was a multi-year nightmare. We experienced five years of God's silence, unable to conceive a child.

I knew Audrey would be my wife when I first met her on a beach in Panama City, Florida, at a church camp (though it took me over three years to work up the nerve to propose). We always wanted to have children and would have never imagined two healthy people who loved God and each other with all their hearts would be unable to conceive a child. But such was our case.

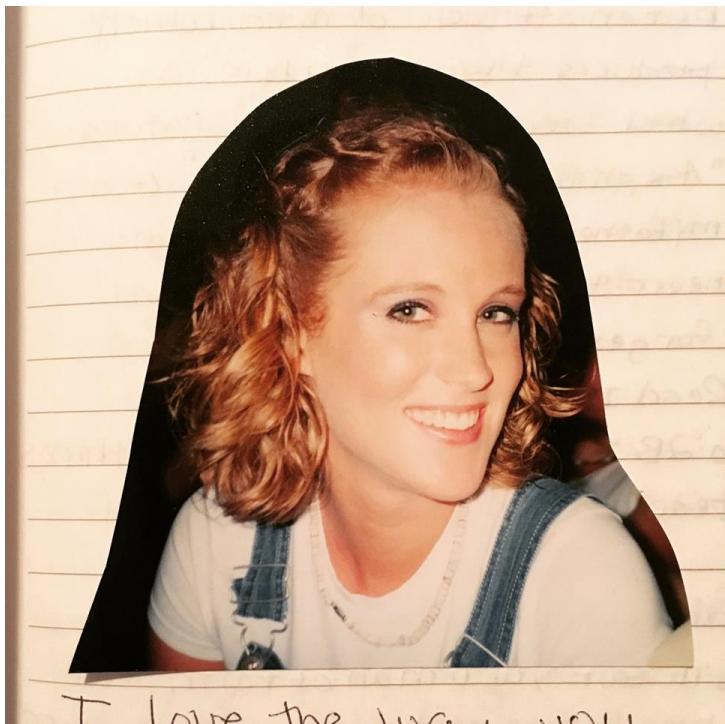
God seemed silent. In fact, it was like God had “unfollowed” us. Our predicament caused us to feel isolated from our friends (many of whom seemed to get pregnant by looking at each other), and ignored by God after what seemed to be years of unanswered prayer.

Audrey bore the brunt of the pain. The rise of social media platforms was not helpful because everyone else appeared to be enjoying a perfect life, while our new marriage struggled through the fallow ground of no after no; first with over-the-counter pregnancy tests, and still more devastating “NOs” in fertility clinics. I quickly learned infertility is a struggle on both people in a relationship, but the emotional pain cuts significantly deeper for the woman. All eyes are on her. Asked repeatedly, “Are you pregnant?” ... “Are you pregnant, yet?” ... “Are. You. Pregnant. Yet?” becomes oppressive, even from the most well-intentioned friends.

We spent what would equate to a small fortune having every hormone in our bodies checked. Every intimate detail of our love life was examined for medical inquiry. The physical stress paled in comparison to the emotional toll infertility was having on our marriage. At the zenith of our infertility it was so stressful we needed a vacation from it all. I took Audrey for a much needed getaway. The only problem was when we finally arrived at the hotel pool, nearly every other woman Audrey’s age was pregnant.

We were in despair. There is a reason why, after successfully having a baby, fertility clinics do not permit you to bring the newborn to visit the staff, nurse, and doctors. So emotional is the toll that even seeing the success of a fellow patient can be debilitating with added anxiety, which can cause further barriers to successful conception.

Audrey Johnston



Audrey and I eventually came to a crossroads, which I am convinced, ultimately defined the positive outcome. We could either come together as a couple or allow the infertility issue to rip our relationship apart. We had a choice to make. Would we play the blame game? It is easy to blame your spouse, someone else, and even easier to blame God when life does not work out as we would expect.

Instead of accepting that God put us in a time-out, Audrey and I decided to take our trust in God, and each other, to a deeper level. We prayed (out loud) through our struggle together every

single day. We studied promises in the Bible and claimed them as our own. We had hope, but ultimately we experienced peace. Audrey led the way with her example of unyielding optimism and faith despite our rather bleak circumstances. Yes, there were excruciating days of self-doubt, fear, and even anger, yet she would not give-up. She would not take “no” for an answer. She became a Christian badass. She would trust God no matter what, similar to Job, who once uttered, “Though He [God] slay me, I will trust in Him” (Job 13:15, NKJV).

Science and faith came together in our quest to become pregnant. Our relationship with God was essential, but we felt inspired to do everything we could to become pregnant, which meant the financial and emotional risk of in-vitro fertilization (IVF), ultimately, having tried everything natural and super-natural, we made the decision to let the chips fall where they would.

After five years of “negative” results, early one October morning, Audrey took her pregnancy test on the day instructed by our reproductive endocrinologist. This particular morning was different! I remember Audrey running toward me in our bedroom, collapsing in my arms, and saying while physically shaking, “It said … YES!” Nine months later, our daughter, Lily Faith was born.

The IVF procedure was so successful that we were blessed to have extra embryos, which we froze, and used again with success. Lily Faith has a little brother, Justin! Most recently, once again we returned to use our remaining frozen embryos, but this time we were shocked with the outcome!

After our third successful conception, we returned to the OB for the customary confirmation sonogram. “One, two, three,” said the ultrasound tech. No, he was not singing a Jackson 5 song – he was counting the **BABIES** appearing on the screen – announcing to us, “You are having triplets!” It was and is epic. Most recently, we learned that two of the triplets are identical and they are all boys (much to Lily Faith’s devastation because she wanted a sister!).

Reality is still setting in, but we are enjoying living in the moment. We are thankful for God “entrusting” us with this blessing of triplets +2. Most of all, I am thankful for my wife’s leadership. I wanted to quit a thousand times because infertility causes emotional paralysis. Hindsight is clear, Audrey’s example of perseverance kept us going. She moved forward with unwavering faith and Rock of Gibraltar-like resolve—and now we are a party of seven!

Five years of God’s *apparent* silence ultimately led to five children. I learned watching Audrey when we cannot see the hand of God, we must trust the heart and character of God – and *that* is my definition of an ultra-cool Christian bada**.

Babies
3.4.5

gulations

Let's
WILD
RUMPKUS
START

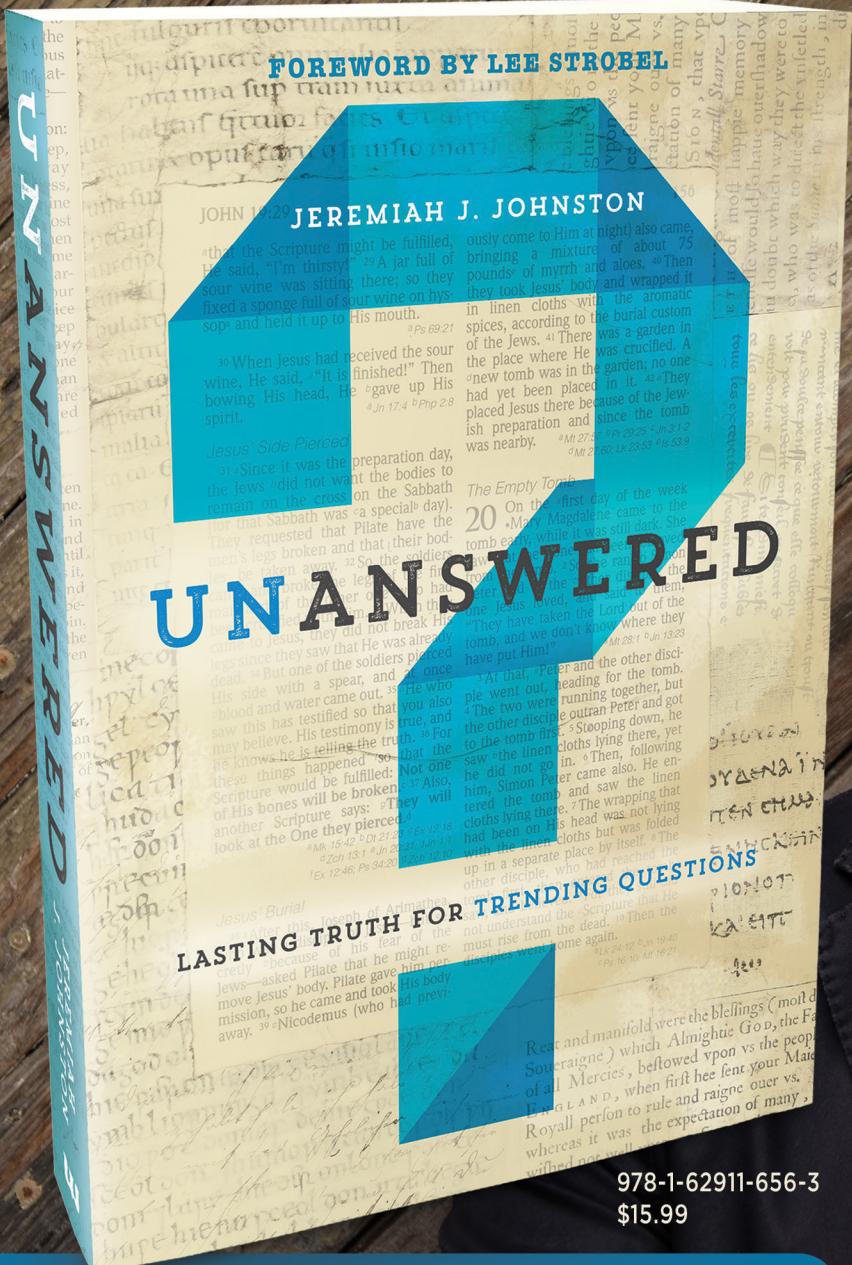


Jeremiah J. Johnston, Ph.D., New Testament scholar, apologist, and sought-after speaker, is president of *Christian Thinkers Society*, a resident institute at Houston Baptist University where he serves as associate professor of early Christianity. Johnston is the author of “*Unanswered: Lasting Truth for Trending Questions*” (Whitaker House, November 3, 2015) and accompanying *Bible Study*. He and his wife, and soon-to-be five children live in the Houston, Texas area.



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- What Christians must understand about suicide and mental health
- Understanding spiritual darkness and the paranormal allure among Christians
- Why most Christians know just enough about the Bible to be dangerous
- Why suffering, a me-centric Christianity, and a Concierge-God don't mix

