

INTRODUCTION

LET'S TAKE A WALK



Not long ago I was in a place where I suspect you may be right now. My heart was broken. It was as if I were wandering through a dark tunnel and couldn't see the way out. For three long years, my husband and I were separated. For two years before that the tension in our home had kept me continually off balance. I struggled to make sense of what was happening in my life. Eventually the winding roads brought me to the end of that dark tunnel—and I found that the sun was actually shining. Our marriage was healed; we reconciled in 1998.

Now I want to walk through some of those valleys with you. I know how lonely it is. Let me be your friend. Together we will search the corners of possibilities, cry when the shadows seem to overtake us, and celebrate when we find answers.

Broken Heart on Hold is meant to be a friend to walk beside you through the labyrinths of your confusion and pain. It is not a quick fix or a prescription for how to solve your problems. It is intended to be a daily companion in your crisis. It is not a book to be picked up and read through once and then set on the shelf. Rather, I suggest you read one selection each day and let the devotional thoughts sink into your heart and mind. Mull it over. Chew it up. Then the following day go on to the next.

But that suggested pattern is not a formula or system. You may want to just keep reading. That's okay. I know you are hurting, and you must choose your own pace and rhythm. But if you do read ahead and take it in all at once, go back later, start at the beginning, and reread one selection

each day. When we pour water over hard, crusty ground, it runs off and little is absorbed into the firmly packed earth. It takes time to sink in. Similarly, when we are hurting and our spirits are dry, we must give words of healing time to soak in and soften up the soil of our souls. Reading each entry one at a time—either initially or later—will gradually bring you to a place of peace and strength.

When a particular issue crops up and you need help immediately, use the topical index at the back of the book to find a selection that fits your needs. A resource section provides recommendations for books and programs that offer more in-depth help for your particular situation.

In each of the other sections are true stories of women who struggled with marriage crises and made it through, not only with their marriages intact, but with better marriages. And throughout the book you will meet many women (and some men) who wrestled with different marital issues and arrived at a variety of results. Their struggles are transparent and their stories are true, but to maintain privacy, names have been changed and identities slightly obscured.

Because focusing is often difficult in the middle of crisis, I invite you to visit my Web site at www.brokenheartonhold.com where I have individually formatted a number of Bible verses for your strength and encouragement. From my Web site you can download full-color pages of whatever Scripture you choose and post it on your wall, mirror, or refrigerator so you can see it regularly and be encouraged. When our minds are spinning in different directions, being reminded of a Scripture can lead us to a more peaceful and healthy path.

There is hope at the end of the tunnel, and I believe that you can find it. I'd like to accompany you on this journey. Let's set out to find the light.

A Note to Men: Although *Broken Heart on Hold* is addressed mainly to women, if you are in marital crisis you are welcome to join us. Feel free to look over my shoulder as I talk with the woman walking beside me. Men as well as women have already found comfort and hope in the material on the following pages.