

EMAW Testimonials

Collection for Inspiration

Will Ellis – Grand Rapids, MI



“God put me right where I was supposed to be!”

In September, 2014, I began the EMAW study at Ada Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I was super stoked about the study having heard about it nearly a year earlier but not able to take part at that time. I was placed with a group of guys that I probably would not have selected out of a line-up but the Lord, always knowing what I need, put me right where I was supposed to be.

Our group started off awesome and gelled very quickly. We probably take longer than most groups to get through the material but our discussions go deep on a very regular basis. It's fair to say that each one of the men in our group has seen dramatic and awesome growth.

In November, 2014, my wife and I learned we were pregnant. We were very excited to once again be expanding our family and already looked forward to the ultrasounds, learning the gender, and all the other fun stuff about having a baby.

There were, however, concerns right out of the gate. Our first pregnancy miscarried and our second, though Mayla (daughter) is completely healthy now, was not without complications. Having no advance knowledge, she was born with a congenitive heart defect known as transposition of the great vessels, a disorder where the aorta and pulmonary arteries are switched on the heart. The Lord was with our family and we witnessed miracle after miracle during her time in the children's hospital. At eight days old, Mayla underwent heart surgery to correct and to make a long story short, her surgery and recovery were both nothing short of a miracle.

Fast forward to our third pregnancy. We were referred to a specialist in order to monitor this pregnancy given our history. On Friday, February 13th, we had our first ultrasound with the specialist. It was at this appointment that we learned the fait of our Baby Nani, the name given by our daughter Mayla.

The doctor entered the room after reviewing the numerous pictures taken by the ultrasound tech, quickly scanned my wife's belly herself, and as she set the wand down she said, "Your baby has a serious problem." She went on to say Baby Nani has a disorder known as anencephaly, which is not compatible with life. As you can imagine, we were completely devastated by the news. We cried and grieved, and after some time the doctor returned to

tell us we had a decision to make, terminate the pregnancy or attempt to carry the baby to term; no question there that required any level of decision making on our part.

Having lost our first and almost losing Mayla, before our first ultrasound we had surrendered this baby to God. She is his, not ours. We gave up our rights to this baby and surrendered them to Him. As we sat in that doctor's office crying, praying, talking, a verse I had recently memorized for EMAW came to mind, 1 Peter 4:19, "So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful creator and continue to do good." Since finding out about Baby Nani's disorder, I have clung to this verse.

Over the course of these last months, it is apparent that our enemy is at work in my life, my wife's, and in our marriage. What EMAW has done is two-fold, (1) connect me with a group of men who are walking alongside me, praying with me, loving me, caring for me, building me up, and encouraging me, and (2) given me additional tools to walk this path, and others, with my wife and daughter.

From a medical perspective, the prognosis is certain; we will likely bury our baby girl the week she is born. From a spiritual perspective, the only thing certain is that the story of Baby Nani is bigger than my wife and myself. This is God's story and he will tell it to the world, allowing Baby Nani to do whatever work she has been called to, to the glory of God. We continue to pray for a miracle each and every day, but should that miracle not come, my wife and I will have great peace knowing she rests in heaven with her Creator having completed her work in such a short time.

While I still grieve and have immense pain from what is to come, I have tremendous peace as well. This peace can only come from God and of course reminds me of a second EMAW memory verse, Phillipians 4:5-6, "do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus."

EMAW provides the tools to walk through the junk that the enemy throws at me in life, in work, in my family, in my marriage. My quiet times have deepened, my marriage has grown, I'm intentional about my relationship with my 2 1/2 year old Mayla, and I trust and submit to Christ and what he is doing in my life. He's got this, and I can rest in the peace he provides because of that.

Beyond Baby Nani, I can probably talk for hours about how the EMAW teachings have taken my faith to a new level. It's been an amazing experience and an incredible journey that I'm grateful the Lord brought to my