



***Death Swallowed Up By Life* by Gene McCoy**

On Sunday morning, June 24, 2007, Eva Elise Gregg entered the world, the daughter of Frank and Sonja Gregg and sister of Tim (5) and Ella (3). The family knew, however, that their time with this precious baby would be brief.

Several weeks before, Sonja's doctor detected that the baby she was carrying was anencephalic. Anencephaly is a neurological defect that occurs between the 23rd and 26th day of gestation in 1,000 to 2,000 pregnancies annually. The result is the absence of a major portion of the brain, making survival rare. Most babies die within hours or days. Eva Elise survived six days.

Sonja had been raised in a church and home that instilled within her a strong respect for human life. With a lingering sense of perplexity and in an apologetic tone, she recalls those fleeting moments of rationalizing consideration when her doctor offered the information that he could arrange for the pregnancy to be terminated. She admits that her consideration was "cowardly selfish." She recalls thinking "the baby is not going to survive anyway, so why not spare us the pain and anguish?" But her faith in God, along with Biblical teaching, quickly overruled such rationalization. She and her husband were committed to the will and way of God.

Based upon passages like Psalm 127:3 and Psalm 139 that affirm that children are a gift from the Lord and that each is fearfully and wonderfully made, Frank and Sonja accepted their situation and prepared for God's blessings. They persevered in the conviction that you should rejoice in

and accept God's gifts.

Sonja acknowledges, "We would never have asked for this, but God knew what we needed." She continued, "I'll keep receiving from this gift throughout life and others will be impacted." Although Eva Elise was in this world less than a week, her life continues to be a blessing.

The Gregg children have learned a lot about God and heaven. Frank and Sonja maintain their conviction that God has a purpose in everything and for everyone. They are satisfied that their lives are better because of Eva Elise. "God showed me so much about love," testifies Sonja. Speaking of her baby girl, she says, "She was beautiful. I loved her for who she was."

Sonja hopes that her baby's life, though brief, demonstrates to all that life is so important and precious. She insists that we should not give up on someone because we detect imperfection, because God makes everyone. "God had a plan and purpose for me," Sonja states. "Who am I to say God didn't have a plan for her?" It is the Gregg family's conviction that God gives life. So it was for Him to determine the length of her life.

Sonja delights in the fact that the baby's heart rate increased whenever Sonja spoke. She cherishes the photo album that chronicles the birth and life of their precious Eva Elise. With abounding joy and gratitude to God, the Gregg family considers her life as an answer to their prayers and a living testimony to God's promise that death is swallowed up by life. ♥

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