

By Julian Woo

## Are you Successful?

that God and his people would take care of us, even if it meant losing Lucas. Death was around us, for we met other believers at the hospital, where two of the families lost their children to leukemia in the few months we were there. It occurred to me that God seemed to choose only believers for this particular trial. I knew that God was (and is) making us a holy people. My anger, in fact, was sinful. It was symptomatic of pride, my so-called control over this life. I hope I have learned my lesson.

The last lifeline is faith in a future. Faith is hoping in the invisible. It is believing in God, even though this life is unfair. We were healthy, clean-living parents! All prenatal tests looked good and normal! We did not take drugs, smoke, or drink, yet we suffered! God chose, in our case, to allow us to go through the trial of cancer, but not to the point of Lucas's death. He heard our cries, and He healed Lucas. I do not exaggerate. The doctors were amazed at how well Lucas fared through the severe chemotherapy drugs. He had no major and debilitating side effects, besides hair loss and a few minor infections.

Lucas now is a normal and energetic toddler with a full head of hair. Now we only have to trust God for our future. Since Lucas had cancer before, he's at a higher risk to get it again in the future. We know God will send more trials that's life, but we also know this: God and His people are with us. Thank you for your prayers and support!

(Julian is the member of the Chinese Christian Church of Greater Washington, D.C.)

By Lillian Man

The notes rang as clearly as a bell throughout the silent auditorium. Every member of the more -than-100 member full orchestra, including myself, strained to find the source of the beautiful music. Over the heads of the other musicians, I caught a glimpse of the concertmaster, or first chair violinist, playing his solo from Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake. He pulled his bow across the violin strings and shifted easily into a high and difficult seventh position with a confidence and ease that displayed unfathomable hours of practice and an extreme amount of talent. On the exterior, this boy was the type of son every parent wished to have, to brag about, the type of boy used as an example for others to follow. Imagine my astonishment when I found out that this boy was also a heavy smoker and drinker! Apparently, he'd even gotten expelled from his highly prestigious summer music camp! I was no less than stunned, asking myself, "How could a boy with this much talent be willing to throw it all away?" Being a successful violinist is not easy, especially in a world where violinists are aplenty. Yet this boy who had already gotten so far on the violin was willing to sacrifice his entire musical career, as well as his years of dedication and hard work, for cigarettes and beer? The mere thought was mind-boggling.

What about us? Aren't we all aiming for success through good grades in school, achieving steady jobs and a comfortable living, marrying a good spouse, or having a satisfying boyfriend-girlfriend relationship? Yet, does our definition of 'success' match that of God's? Unless our treasures are those of the heavenly kind, we, too, are throwing our lives away. Mark 8: 36 asks, "*What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?*"

There is nothing wrong with wanting to go to get your degree from an Ivy League school or wanting to have a comfortable living, but we must be very careful that those things don't become idols in our lives, because "*no one can serve two masters.*" (Matthew 6:24).