

Walking by Faith, Not by Sight: One Man's Journey



by Lisa Horan

He sat there stunned. Questions raced through his mind as he wandered through the office door and into the bite of the November air. "How am I going to pay for this?" "What will I do for income if I can no longer work?" "Who's going to take care of my family back home if I don't make it?" Jonathan's thoughts were closing in on him, and he was becoming dizzy with fear.

At only 28-years-old, Jonathan Oledan was facing the unthinkable. The shortness of breath, chest pains, and fatigue he had been experiencing for the past month and a half while at work as a dance instructor for the Arthur Murray Dance School were not the result of merely stress. In fact, Jonathan's doctor had some daunting news: he had Rheumatic Heart Disease, and the only treatment was open heart surgery.

A positive person by nature, and one not unfamiliar with overcoming odds, Jonathan was determined to find the silver lining in the situation. He thought a call to his foster father, who was also a doctor, would surely ease his mind. "My doctor has to be exaggerating. This whole thing can't be as bad as he said," Jonathan remembers thinking. But his foster father wasn't able to offer any encouraging words about the diagnosis or the cost of the procedure, and this only amplified his anxiety. A second opinion from another doctor didn't offer him any relief either. The same diagnosis was given. Heart surgery was inevitable. Jonathan's hope began to dwindle.

"When I went to work to talk to my boss and co-workers about the situation, I broke down in front of them, which is very unusual for me," recalls Jonathan. "I was so overcome by fear at that point that I couldn't contain my emotions. My mind was flooded with thoughts about the possibility that I might not survive the operation, and I was worried about my family back in the Philippines and who would help them if I was no longer around."

Then something miraculous happened. Though

Jonathan's medical condition didn't change, he was freed of the gripping anxiety he had felt. "One day, I just gave it all up to God and asked that He do whatever He wanted to do with me since He owns my life," he remembers. "I continued to go to church regularly and participate in church-related activities, and I continued to pray and ask others to pray for God's help." What he did *not* do was question God about the "whys" of the situation. He knew that God had a perfect plan for his life. Instead, Jonathan began thanking the Lord for healing him.

Jonathan's prayers did not go unanswered. His health insurance company soon informed him that they would pay for the medical bills he incurred, and the Lord made a way to provide for his family when he would be unable to work. "I was no longer fearful about what was going to happen to me. I was confident that the Lord would never forsake me, but rather that He would heal me."

On the morning of February 25, 2003, Jonathan's seven-hour heart operation began. At 6:00 pm that evening, doctors detected internal bleeding, which caused them to open him up again. In spite of the initial set back, Jonathan, filled with faith, was already on the road to recovery. After an eight day hospital stay, Jonathan was sent home to recuperate. Less than two months later, he went back to work at Arthur Murray. "God is so faithful that He never abandoned me, even when all wordly hope faded," says Jonathan. "I know that He planned my life perfectly and He has given me a purpose in this world. As Proverbs 3:5-6 says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding, and He will make your path straight.' I believe He brought me to this country so that I would have the best medical care possible. If I had focused on my circumstances, I would have lost it. Focusing on Him got me through it. Now, because of God's plan, my life has been extended, and I have a better future than I ever could have hoped for." vcm