

Tim and Ashley Lancaster say that after their son Timmy's diagnosis with leukemia, their focus shifted from keeping their son healthy to keeping him alive



# Something's *Not Right*

How a mother's intuition proved correct when her youngest son was diagnosed with leukemia

*Written by Ashley Lancaster | Photography by Nicole Prosser*

*I am a 25-year-old mother* of two happy, smart, sweet boys. About a year ago, I began waking up and rushing to their rooms at 3 a.m. making sure they were okay, or waking up Tim (my husband), insisting that there was something wrong. That uncertainty was a huge factor in me deciding to quit my job. I remember the day I walked in from work and told Tim that I had just quit without notice. After he finished looking at me like he was waiting for the “Just kidding!” part to come, he asked, “Why would you do this?” I had only one answer. “Something’s not right, I need to be at home.”

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### Strange Behavior

For months I was feeling guilty for quitting my job, and even considered going back to work. I had never doubted myself before now on how to raise my kids, so why all of a sudden did I have this sense of panic? I began to spend more time asking God to give me wisdom and to help me deal with whatever invisible obstacle was causing me so much stress. My need to spend time reading the Bible and talking with God was something I could not explain. I began getting up earlier every morning to read and do whatever I needed to do in silence. It created a nice routine, and I was beginning to think the problem had been solved.

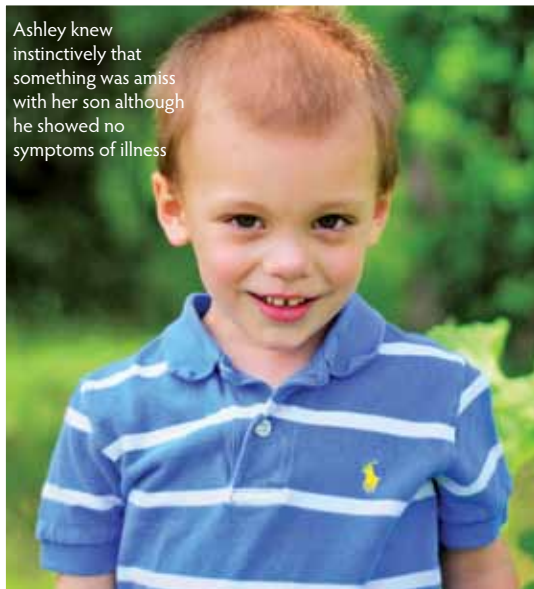
During my time at home, my youngest son Timothy, age 2, was acting strangely. He had no appetite, slept for hours on end during the day, and then went to bed early every night. I thought he might be adjusting to having me at home. He never ran a fever or showed other signs of infection, but even family members noticed that he seemed lethargic and maybe a bit underweight.

### Disturbing Updates

The night of December 8, my husband and I were on a date when we got a call from my mother. She said that Timmy

had been acting funny all day and they had noticed that his skin had a yellow tint. They had let it pass until he had woken up and vomited, rolled over, and fell asleep again. My dad had insisted on taking him to the emergency room. At first, we thought this was a bit extreme, but after we arrived at the hospital, we began to receive one disturbing update after another.

Ashley knew instinctively that something was amiss with her son although he showed no symptoms of illness



Timmy’s blood cell levels were critically low. He was placed on shock protocol and received a constant flow of fluids and antibiotics while they ran more labs. Timmy lay there almost unconscious, and the nurses told us that he would be transferred to Texas Children’s Hospital. Watching my baby being loaded into that ambulance was heartbreaking, but I think we still assumed that these measures were only a precaution.

### The Diagnosis

What happened next is kind of a blur. We had been up all night, and over the course of the next 48 hours the news kept getting scarier and the sleep less frequent. Timmy needed

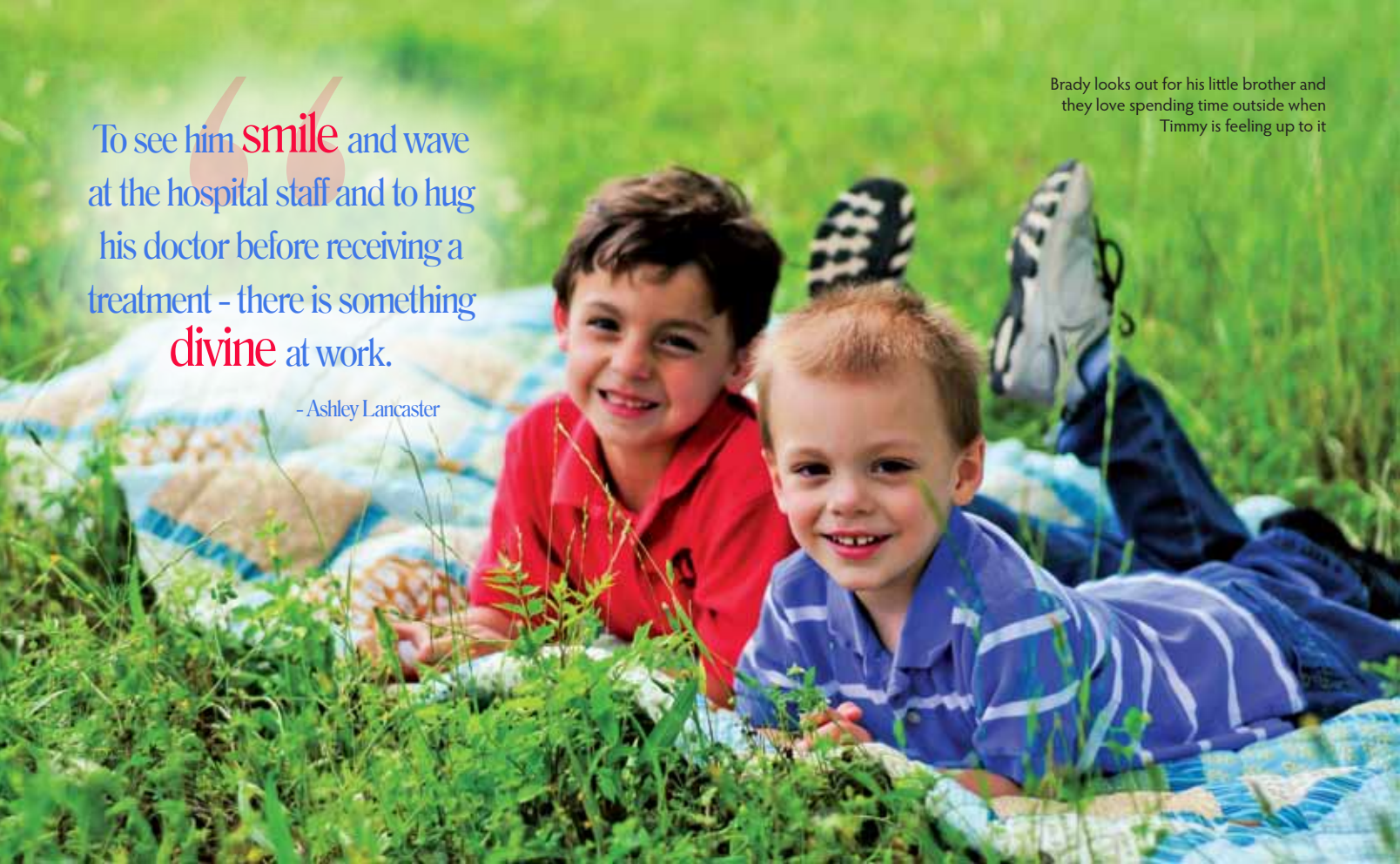
six blood transfusions before he could be admitted, and the doctor told us that had he fallen back asleep after getting sick at my parents’ house, he never would have woken again.

We were visited by the hematology/oncology team on December 10, around 8:30 p.m. Half terrified, half anxious

To see him **smile** and wave at the hospital staff and to hug his doctor before receiving a treatment - there is something **divine** at work.

- Ashley Lancaster

Brady looks out for his little brother and they love spending time outside when Timmy is feeling up to it



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for the wait to be over, Tim and I sat down holding hands, hearts pounding. A young doctor told us that our son had been diagnosed with leukemia.

The immediate reaction wasn't what I would have imagined, because it would never occur to me to think of how to react to news like this. There was crying, but it wasn't real yet. We talked about treatment plans, drugs, statistics...anything to block out the grief. After the meeting was over, we went back to the room, numb. A few days later, we came home to new prescriptions, an encyclopedia full of drugs and phone numbers and calendars, and our boys. Our focus shifted from keeping our child healthy and happy, to keeping him alive.

### Something Divine

It hasn't been an easy road, but Timmy is a happy 2-year-old with so much strength. To see him smile and wave at the hospital staff and to hug his doctor before receiving a treatment - there is something divine at work. Whenever we are having a hard time, the Holy Spirit reminds us that God still has a purpose, even in this. Sometimes that is hard to accept, but with the guidance of God's word, we know that an immeasurable amount of good will come from this experience. It may not make the pain of watching our little boy go through this go away, it may not heal his illness, but it makes the pain bearable, and gives us hope knowing that Christ has felt all we feel, and has had victory over all suffering and death.

In our family, we all have days, moments, nights when we are consumed by grief over what Timmy is going through, but instead of living my life in fear of the future, God has used this experience to teach me to cherish every happy second. When you are in a sea of darkness, and all you have is God's word to go on, I hope that you will use our story to reaffirm your faith that everything will be - everything is - all right. **KM**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: We would like to thank Ashley Lancaster for sharing her story with us.*

Do you have an inspirational story to share? Email [editor@katymagazine.com](mailto:editor@katymagazine.com)