

## Onetime Bully Now A Family Man

Written by {ga=Raymond Billy}

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**By Raymond Billy**  
ResonateNews.com

Jeff Liu still remembers the lofty status he acquired on the juvenile hierarchy by bullying those beneath him. The son of Chinese immigrants to Canada, Liu's menacing presence over other children gave him a sense of significance that wasn't coming from other sources, he said.

Liu, 27, said he struggled ac



Courtesy Photo

Jeff Liu with his wife and children Jenifer and Joseph. Liu was an accomplished bully growing

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up before finding a new identity in Christ, he said. Academically and, for a long time, doubted that he could amount to anything worthwhile. His father's perpetually negative disposition and discouragement from his sister didn't help matters.

By the time he reached the third grade, Liu's temper had become unmanageable. As the years progressed, Liu would often get into fights with classmates, even physically subduing older children. He said intimidating his peers earned him a status that became irresistible.

“Without the bullying type of behavior, I was really a quiet and shy guy,” said Liu, who works as a communications technology specialist in Toronto. “As the bully, I gained a false sense of fulfillment. I felt I was special because schoolmates would laugh at the people I was bullying and they thought of me as the 'bad guy.'”

In high school, Liu became a ringleader of a clique whose mission was always to make its presence felt. Liu often would generate conflict between his group and other cliques both within his school and at other high schools. But, those who did not belong to a powerful social circle were particularly vulnerable to Liu's attacks. Liu would often use that vulnerability to build the ranks of his gang.

“I had a strange relationship that would develop with the classmates I would bully” Liu said. “I would eventually become friends with all the kids I bullied and they would come under my following — it was a form of discipleship, almost, and this is what made me feel good about myself.”

Liu's exploits would eventually earn him the nickname “Crazy Jeff” among his high school classmates. After high school, his reckless behavior took him down a path with potentially grave consequences. Liu became embroiled in legal difficulties and made numerous appearances in court. He said that period of his life was one of profound despair.

“I began to really feel low self-worth,” he said. “I had little to no friends and I felt somewhat abandoned and alone.”

At that time, Liu was taken under the wing of his uncle Michael. This uncle was one of the few people at Liu's side as he sought to work through his legal entanglements. Michael, who Liu described as “a very intelligent man” and “a borderline agnostic believer” was someone with whom he could talk about life, its purpose and eternity. He said that although his uncle did not offer much by way of spiritual guidance, the ability to talk through his own doubts about the existence of a creator led Liu to believe that God could bring purpose to his life.

“This was a pinnacle time in which I began a true search for God,” he said.

During that search, Liu's marriage to his high-school sweetheart — whose name he declined to give — was falling apart. Shortly after the couple's oldest child, Joseph, was born, the two separated. Liu said his shortcomings as a father played a large role in the foundering of his marriage.

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While Liu and his wife were separated, his search for God intensified, he said. He said he had been exposed to many different concepts of God as a child. His parents had been Buddhists, but converted to Catholicism upon immigration to Canada. He attended Catholic schools throughout his life and was naturally drawn, he said, to theology, philosophy and the supernatural. Yet he found his doubts about whether God existed difficult to shake.

“As I was growing up, I asked God to show himself to me, otherwise I would not believe,” Liu said. “I did this throughout my teens, to no avail. God did not appear.”

But in 2004, amid a crumbling marriage and the weight of past indiscretions hanging over his head, Liu decided that a changed life would be his evidence of God's existence.

“I said to God that I didn't care whether he proved to me he existed. I was simply going to commit and believe that he was real and I asked Jesus into my heart that night in my bedroom with tears in my eyes,” Liu said. “I immediately felt the presence of God's love and forgiveness.”

Liu said the results of his spiritual conversion have been astounding.

“After I became born again, the change that God made in my life was drastic,” Liu said. “As a result, my wife and I soon got back together, leaving all of the past behind. We made a vow never to talk about divorce and to be set in our commitment to grow together as a married couple.”

Liu said finding faith in Christ was the culmination of a process that began when he was a high school bully. He said at the age of 18, he began believing there is more to life than intimidating one's way up the social ladder. He said bullying led him through a process of self-discovery, in one respect, because he realized “that this was not who I was really called to be.”

After years of literally fighting to gain acceptance and an identity, Liu said that faith in Christ helped him “find my true self-worth in what God had planned for me and who he said I was.”