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Some people view retirement as a time of leisure and perhaps disengagement, while others see it as an opportunity to re-engage with people in new ways and with a new sense of purpose. Many retirees feel called to make an even bigger impact on their families, communities, or the world in their later years.

The Bible makes no mention of what has become the standard in western culture of quitting work at age 60 or 65. The concept of retirement, as we know it today, was derived from the Social Security Act of 1935. Under pressure, Franklin D. Roosevelt enacted this legislation to create public pensions that would encourage older workers to retire and create employment opportunities for younger workers. In the 1940s and 1950s, private company pensions became the norm due to favorable tax laws. Today, most companies no longer offer pensions but rather 401(k) match opportunities.

Our society places a large emphasis on planning and investing for retirement, often instead of saving for short-term living expenses, getting out of personal debt, or finding balance in our daily lives. It is important to enjoy the journey and not just focus on the end. There are many blessings along the path, and if we are too busy or too focused on retiring, we may miss them. However, with proper planning, you can enjoy the journey and have the financial freedom to use your talents and abilities to fulfill God's next purpose for your life, even after your primary career has ended.

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At Ronald Blue Trust, one of the ways we define retirement is to have the financial ability to choose not to collect a paycheck for labor, to have met your financial finish line, and to have options for how you use your time. Some people enter retirement with excitement and anticipation. Others may reluctantly enter this season before they were planning to, due to corporate restructuring or declining health. Regardless of how you enter this period, what matters is what you do with your time and all of the wisdom you have accumulated over the years. Your role in retirement may look very different from your friends or neighbors because God calls each of us to a distinct purpose. This week and next, we are excited to share with you four unique stories of Ronald Blue Trust clients who have retired from their primary careers but continue to make an impact with their time, talents, and treasures.

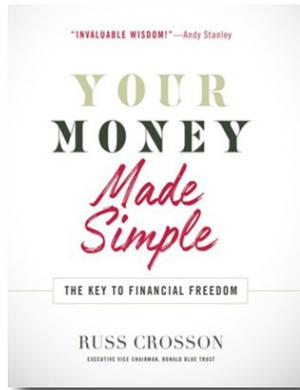
Sharon Mejeur—Chicago, IL

Sharon spent her professional career in education before retiring five years ago. She began her career working with high school students, later joining the staff of Campus Crusade for Christ (now CRU), and then spending several years in college administration before retiring as a vice president of student affairs.

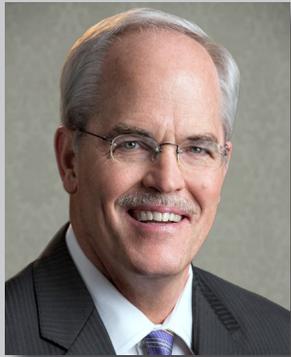
Sharon admits that she didn't think she would ever be able to retire, but eventually through diligent financial planning, it became a possibility. *"To be honest, I looked at it as a time to take it easy and just do what I wanted to do, more of a selfish time, until I saw God had a new purpose for me. Then of course, that changed how I approached it and what I wanted to do in my retirement,"* she says.

Sharon embraced her next season of life as an opportunity to be a blessing to others. She volunteers in her church bookstore, counts the offering, and leads a women's Bible study. She also spends a lot of time with her family, including the seven great nieces and nephews who live near her. Every two weeks during the summer, Sharon picks up organic fruits and vegetables from a local nursery and takes some to her sister, nieces, and friends at church. She has also reached out to her neighbors to meet more people and share the love of Christ with them. She hosted a food drive in the neighborhood and now serves on the HOA board.





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Russ Crosson is executive vice president and chief mission officer of Ronald Blue Trust and executive vice chairman of the board of directors for Thrivent Trust Company. Russ serves as chief advocate for the heart and soul of the organization. Russ works to ensure the mission of the company is fulfilled with integrity in every area of the organization, with a focus on making sure the company's mission is passed down and inculcated into future generations.

Sharon does appreciate the slower pace of life that she gets to enjoy now without the regimented schedule her career demanded. She now has time to read and keep up with friends she has met from living all over the country.

Although her pace may be slower than it used to be, Sharon says, *“I definitely want to live this stage of my life right. It would be so easy just to assume God is finished with me now in retirement. It could be a very selfish period of time, but by seeing life as much as possible from God’s perspective, there’s a richness and a contentment.”*

Seeking Meaningful Retirement

We hope that stories like this one inspire you to look forward to a retirement that is more than just a relaxing reward for years of hard work. Prayerfully consider how you might use your time, talents, and treasures to continue to serve God’s kingdom.

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