

Retiring with Peace and Purpose - Part 2



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Last week we looked at how 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.



Retiring with Peace and Purpose - Part 1

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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 65. The concept of retirement, as we know it today, was derived from the Social Security Act of 1935. Under president 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 1980s and 1990s, 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 best purpose for your life, even after your primary career has ended.

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[Click here for Part 1 of this article in it's entirety.](#)

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. Your role in retirement may look very different from your friends or neighbors because God calls each of us to a distinct purpose. We are excited to share with you three more 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.

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Debbie Cone—Houston, TX

Debbie Cone served as a client service associate in Ronald Blue Trust's Houston office for more than 10 years. She recently retired to spend more time with her family and serve others through her involvement in local organizations and international ministries.

Several years ago, Debbie and her husband, Wayne, began participating in travel tours to Israel and fell in love with the people there. Debbie shares, *"Wayne and I felt led to seek out volunteer opportunities to help the community in any way we could."*

The Cones became connected to St. John's Episcopal School for Arab Christians and Arab Muslims in Haifa, Israel. *"We learned that all eighth graders are required to pass an English proficiency test in order to go to high school. However, they don't always have opportunities to practice their English conversationally,"* Debbie explains. *"The school told us that we could really make a difference by simply spending time with the students."* Debbie and Wayne have made many trips to the school.

A typical visit includes playing games, talking about modern culture, and sharing stories about family with the inquisitive students, who Debbie says display tremendous respect for elders and their wisdom. *"The students have been very eager and responsive to us,"* she says. The Cones have also led several large groups on tours of the Holy Land where they are able to help others explore Israel and see the places that they have read so much about in the Bible. Debbie and Wayne have found that their time in Israel has enriched them culturally as they have enjoyed walking the ancient streets, picking up dinner at local markets, attending daily chapel services, and celebrating the high Jewish holidays with their local friends.

At home in Houston, Debbie has become involved in the MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) ministry at their church, and she mentors a group of young women on their parenting journey. The Cones are enjoying retirement and are thankful they have found their calling for this season of their lives.

Ben Hartsock—Athens, GA

Ben Hartsock spent the majority of his life on the football field. After playing 10 years in the NFL, it was time to determine what was next. He admits that time of transition can be daunting for professional athletes. Playing sports is a part of who they are, and for many of them, the end of their professional sporting career will be the first time they are facing an unknown next chapter in their lives.

In 2014, when his football career came to an end, Ben began working as an NFL agent, but after three years, he decided it was not a good fit for him. From there, he began working as a radio sports broadcaster and found his niche with ESPN Radio, which also led to opportunities on Sirius XM and the Big 10 channel.

Ben says that one of the things he has enjoyed the most in this new season of life is finding new, sometimes unexpected, teammates. When he was playing football, he spent six months in one city and six months in another, depending on which team he was playing for. Now he has put down roots with his wife, Amy, and their two daughters in Georgia, where he is able to build deeper relationships with his church community and his radio family.

Although Ben and Amy have financial flexibility at this point in their lives, they want to steward their resources well with a kingdom focus. Also, part of Ben's motivation for continuing to work comes from the example he wants to set for his daughters. He shares, *"I think there is a responsibility and real benefit for my kids to see me going to work and not just sitting around and living that life of leisure that maybe I could partake in."* He also appreciates the flexibility that this season of life affords; he is able to spend time with his family and take extended vacations such as their three-week RV trip out West. He says, *"I want my kids to have it better than I did growing up. But at the same time, I don't want them to be entitled and think that everything comes easily. That is a balancing act that we constantly navigate."*



John Isch—Indianapolis, IN

The demands of a cardiovascular surgeon are extremely high—both physically and emotionally. Dr. John Isch spent more than 30 years blessing others through his rewarding and fulfilling surgical career. Now retired for almost 15 years, he can clearly reflect on the impact of his career and the rewards that have come afterwards.

Dr. Isch describes his last days in the office as bittersweet. He knew he would miss many daily aspects of his career—technical satisfaction, relationships, and the platform to share Christ, but he was also looking forward to a new season of life with his wife, Mary. He recalls, “As I now look back, the fingerprints of God are everywhere on how it ended.”

Transitioning from such an intense, fast-paced career can be a struggle. One of the things that John believes was pivotal was understanding and being honest about his personality. Realizing his tendency to say “yes” and maintain a busy pace but truly desiring to focus on what God was calling him to do next, he committed to a group of close friends that he would say “no” to every new opportunity that came his way for one year. He says that year was challenging but also a sweet time to go deep into the Scriptures and spend time in prayer with the Lord. John describes it as “invaluable preparation for where the Lord wanted to take us these last 15 years.”

Dr. Isch says he considers this season a “reassignment” instead of retirement. Rather than a time of cruise control, it’s a time to pray Isaiah 6: *Here I am Lord, use me*. John and Mary now spend their time pouring into the lives of people in several different areas. They lead a small group in their home that has met for more than 30 years, and they also mentor young men and women in their church. They have three grown children and 10 grandchildren whom they enjoy spending time with, and they now have capacity to reconnect with extended family that full-time medical practice often didn’t allow. John has found it very rewarding to mentor doctors in his former practice by coming alongside to encourage them in their surgical careers as well as their relationships with Christ. John and Mary’s congregation also includes many physicians, and John has been instrumental in helping the church minister to them. John says, *“I remember Mary and I asking the Lord as I stepped away that He would make this next chapter of our lives more fruitful, more productive, more honoring to Him and rewarding for us than the previous one, and now after 15 years He really has honored that. Our life is rich and full. It’s a refreshing, renewing, and blessed time.”*

SEEKING MEANINGFUL RETIREMENT

We hope that stories like these 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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