

CMDA *Encore*

September 2020

A newsletter for retired and nearly-retired healthcare professionals

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Women Physicians in Christ **Virtual Conference**

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Greece: May 28 - June 6, 2021

Israel: June 8-20, 2021

Turkey: June 20-27, 2021

www.cmda.org/events

CMDA National Convention

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Ridgecrest, North Carolina

www.cmda.org/nationalconvention

It's About Time

by Gene Rudd, MD

It was one of those times when I felt overextended. I was a solo obstetrician/gynecologist practicing in an underserved area while also pastoring a church. One day I commented to one of the church elders, "There doesn't seem to be enough hours in the day." With a kind tone and a twinkle in his eye, the elder admonished me, "God knew how many hours to put into a day. If there is a problem, it is in how you use them." While his perspective did not immediately solve my problem, the lesson stuck with me. I never again complained about the amount of time available to me.

The number of days God gives us differ from person to person, but the amount of time in each day is the same to all of us. We are equally gifted. And who am I to suggest He should have provided more!

In preparing for this article, I looked back at a sermon I prepared years ago on "The Things That Matter Most." I was surprised that I had neglected to include time in the items that matter most. Advancing age and experience has altered my perspective. I now realize that time is one of our most precious gifts.

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It is a unique, irreplaceable and necessary resource. While time will not be a concern in eternity, it is in this life. It is a commodity that we can use wisely or not; use for God's glory or not; used for others, or for self-interests; etc. As in Jesus' parable of the three fellows who were given talents (5, 2 and 1; Matthew 25), I suspect we will be judged on how well we use the "talent" of time.

Use of time is important at every stage of life, not just our career years. It deserves special attention as we enter into and progress through retirement. It is possible you misused time during your career. You may have worked long hours in patients care, neglecting family and other priorities. Such a misuse of time may require forgiveness from God and those you neglected.

When you transition from your career years, demands on your time change. It is an excellent opportunity to assess how you should use time going forward. Many of us will live a fourth or more of our lives after retirement. Those who retire at 65 have a 50-50 chance of living 25 years or more. Think about it!

Another reason we should pay attention to our use of time: God said so! Pastor Bert Jones outlines a few principles found in Scripture:

1. There is a time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1).
2. God works within "appointed time" frames (Romans 9:9). If God is purposeful in the use of time, we should be as well.
3. Time is short (1 Corinthians 7:29).
4. We are to make the most of our time (Ephesians 5:16 and Colossians 4:5).

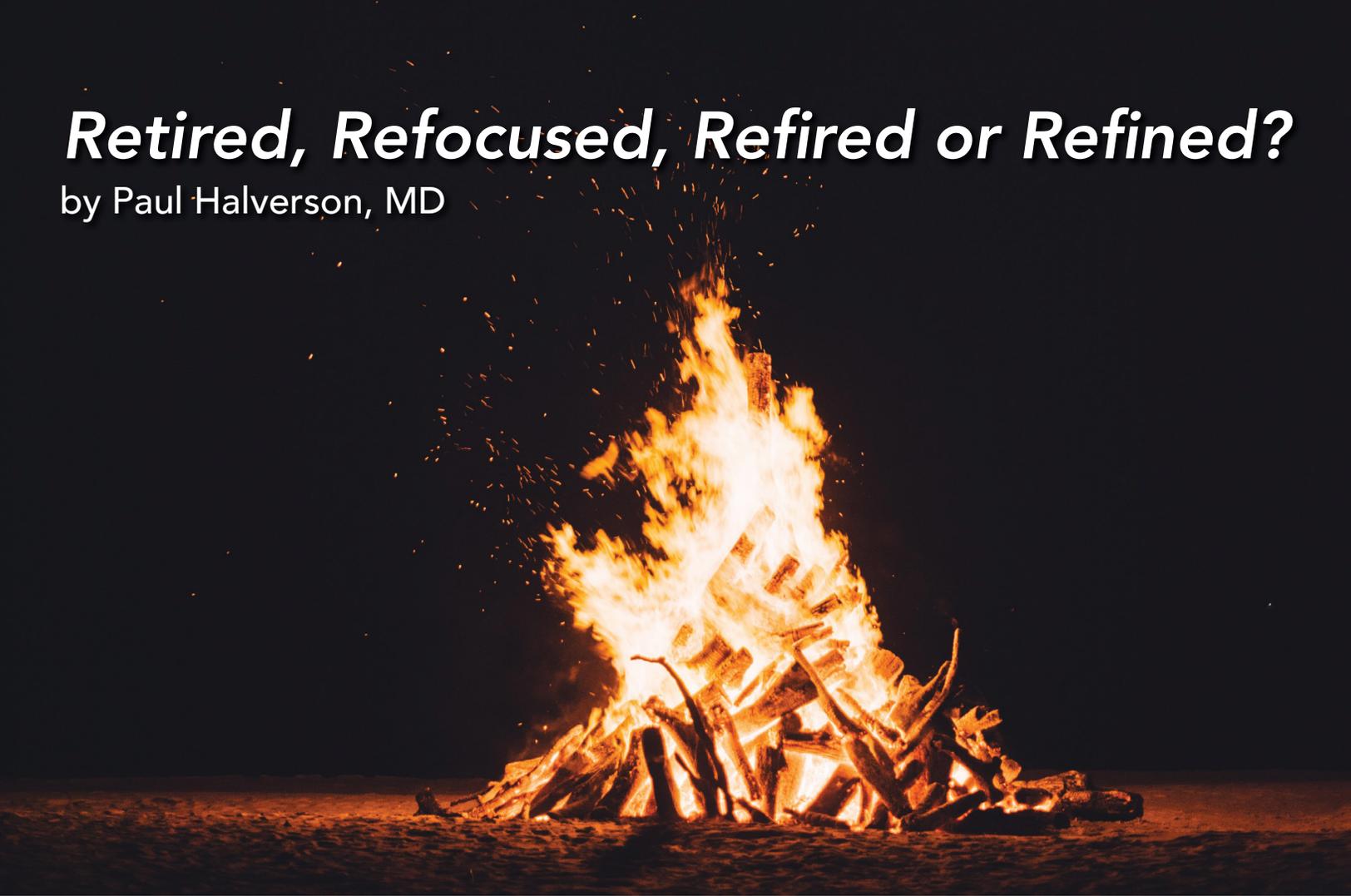
Perhaps you are already familiar with two Greek terms for time. One is *chronos*; it is the passing of seconds, minutes, hours, etc. When you look at your watch, you are checking *chronos*. *Karios*, on the other hand, refers to the critical and opportune moments in your life. Those times when something portentous happens. A God-ordained amount of *chronos* is de facto in your retirement. *Karios*, however, is something you need to plan for. *Karios* is what brings joy and satisfaction to life. It also those moments that bring glory to God. Wise men and women not only build their houses upon the "rock" (Jesus' teaching from Matthew 5-7), they also make good choices about their use of time. And retirement gives us an opportunity to take stock of this resource. How will you use the next 25 years that God may give you?

In Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer Scrooge has an opportunity to visit his past, present and future. You remember the story. It was a wake-up call that changed his perspective and life. Dickens concludes, "Best and happiest of all, the time before him was his own, to make amends in." Perhaps your retirement years will be so for you.



Retired, Refocused, Refired or Refined?

by Paul Halverson, MD



When you come to end of your career, will you be retired, refired, refueled, refocused or perhaps something else? In general, people look forward to retirement. In fact, this anticipation has even been recognized as a coping strategy for healthcare professionals experiencing the stresses of their work—dreaming about an idealized future that is easy and pleasant. There is an undeniable appeal to setting aside one’s daily work obligations to be replaced by relaxation, travel and more leisure activities. Whether it is golf, fishing, hobbies, etc., people look forward to doing the things they always wanted to do but for which they never had enough time. In contrast, some individuals continue on in their their careers and seemingly continue to enjoy it. (I have come to believe that if folks do not have something they want to retire to, then perhaps it is better not to try it.) Some do retire and actually decide to return to work in part-time or full-time capacities.

While finding things to look forward to in retirement, I believe a balanced approach should cause us to have some concerns about retiring. Retirement can be a time of uncertainty. It is difficult for anyone to know completely how he or she will react to this type of major life change. Because our work so often comprises a significant portion of our identity, the absence of work may be felt as a sense of loss. The question then is how we should view ourselves without our work identity. Further, if someone has been a leader or held positions of responsibility, one’s sense of self-worth may seem diminished when there is no longer the honor or respect inherent in the position. There is a real risk of disillusionment. This part of life, often advertised as the “golden years,” may not seem all that it is cracked up to be. There may be a sense of deflation and even loss of meaning of life.

I hope you never find yourself struggling with retirement, but it is good to spend some time considering this phase of life. So how can we deal with it? The answer probably varies with the person. I applaud all attempts at planning for retirement. For myself, I thought about retirement over the course of several years.



I took an inventory of my current and anticipated activities; then, I made lists of things I needed to do, some I wanted to do and others I might do. I talked with my wife and others, including financial advisors, about the various possibilities and realistic expectations about the resources available. Lastly, I also cut down my work commitment for a couple of years before retirement, which seemed to make it an easier transition.

Then that last day came. I found that retirement felt different. Initially, it was just like being on vacation, but after a few weeks of this “vacation,” I began to sense that there was no end date. I also felt something else—the lifting of the pressure to perform at work. This pressure is probably generated both internally and externally. I think my blood pressure was lower. One of my worries was boredom and having nothing to do. I tried to structure my time so I had one or more activities on almost all days. I enjoyed my newfound flexibility and a pace of life that was more relaxed.

So how do I live differently now? I study and read more. I go out for breakfast more often. I spend more time puttering around. I have offered my services at a free clinic and continue to do some teaching locally. I serve on our elder board at church and chair a small Christian non-profit board. A small group of us have started a gradu-

Scripture of the Brevity of Life

- “What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes” (James 4:14, NIV 1984).
- Life is like chaff that the wind blows away (Job 21:18).
- Life is like water that is soaked up and cannot be recovered (2 Samuel 14:14).
- Life is like a dream in the night that is forgotten in the morning (Psalm 73:19-20).
- Life is like grass that withers (1 Peter 1:24).
- Life is like flowers that fade in the heat of the day (Isaiah 40:7).
- Life is like a sigh (Psalm 39:5).

ate local CMDA group. I have become more involved with our local student CMDA group. I participate in a retirement committee at the medical school. We put on a panel discussion each year and are trying small group mentoring for those “younger” than ourselves who are entering the retirement era. I try to look at each week’s activities to make sure there is a flow of activity.

I also realized I had to claim my new identity. I was not the same person I had been. When I filled out forms, I had to check off the “retired” box. I recognized I was in the process of reinventing myself. I didn’t know exactly what I would become, but I didn’t want to simply float into it. That’s where “refocused” and “re-fired” may come in. Who knows what we will find if we are interested in trying some new things and are willing to take on some responsibility.

What about faith? I pray more. I attend some of the senior activities at our church. I relish digging more deeply into the Scriptures than I was able to do in the past. As Christians, we should be aware that “retirement” is not a biblical concept. So what is it that God expects of us? I am sure He expects us to do what He always expected of us. This is where “refinement” may come in. We should be intentional about deepening our relationship to Him as expressed in worship, prayer, time in the Word, giving, service and intimacy with God. We need to remember whose we are more than who we are. Despite living in the latter part of our life journey, I believe God will continue to call individuals to the purposes of building up the kingdom, irrespective of age. If we are now blessed with more time, then asking God what He has next for us would be appropriate. With patience, we wait with expectation for what God will show us on each additional day of life He grants us.

“From inability to let well alone; from too much zeal for the new and contempt for what is old; from putting knowledge before wisdom, science before art and cleverness before common sense; from treating patients as cases; and from making the cure of the disease more grievous than the endurance of the same, Good Lord, deliver us.”

***—Sir Robert Hutchinson, 1953
Eminent British physician***

To My Fellow Seniors (Now That I’m Older)

1. My goal for 2020 was to lose 10 pounds. Only have 14 to go.
2. Ate salad for dinner. Mostly croutons and tomatoes. Really just one big round crouton covered with tomato sauce, and cheese. FINE, it was a pizza... OK, I ate a pizza! Are you happy now?
3. How to prepare Tofu:
Throw it in the trash.
Grill some meat, chicken or fish.
4. I just did a week’s worth of cardio after walking into a spider web.
5. I don’t mean to brag, but I finished my 14-day diet food supply in three hours and 20 minutes.
6. A recent study has found women who carry a little extra weight live longer than men who mention it.
7. Kids today don’t know how easy they have it. When I was young, I had to walk nine feet through shag carpet to change the TV channel.
8. Senility has been a smooth transition for me.
9. Remember back when we were kids and every time it was below zero outside they closed school? Yeah, me neither.
10. I may not be that funny or athletic or good looking or smart or talented...I forgot where I was going with this.
11. I love aging. I learn something new every day...and forget five other things.
12. A thief broke into my house last night. He started searching for money so I woke up and searched with him.
13. I think I’ll just put an “Out of Order” sticker on my forehead and call it a day.
14. Just remember, once you’re over the hill, you begin to pick up speed.