

Wellness to *Shalom*

The idea of physician “wellness” to me is better captured by the biblical concept of *Shalom*. This is not so much something to strive for, but gratefully resting in a state of contentment characterized by purpose, fulfillment, challenge, connectedness, and purpose. It is possible to have *Shalom* under stress, deprivation, seeming failures, and even catastrophes along the journey of life. *Shalom* is something given graciously by God, not strived for, a byproduct of living for God’s glory, and there by energized by gifts of His Spirit.

Shalom is facilitated by having right and consistent priorities: 1) God, 2) spouse, 3) family, 4) work-patients and students, 5) self, 6) community. Resources of time, effort, and development all must be mindfully apportioned. I have been blessed by time spent with worship and devotion, as well a meaningful leadership and music roles in my church. I treasure time with my wife of 40 years, Janet, and our family in Marietta, where we recently moved to be able to share the journey with our daughter’s families (see photo). I cherish every moment with grandsons (see photo).

Having challenging patients, sharing their troubles, and especially the joy of being with young residents and students keeps one energized and humble (see photo). Particularly helpful are near annual short term medical and medical educational mission trips around the world. It is extremely refreshing to share faith and profession with colleagues from different cultures facing challenges different than day by day here (photo from Honduras). A short time elsewhere, even if in a local free clinic once a month refreshes the medical soul.

It is important to stay physically fit, and I have found it extremely enjoyable to do outdoor activities with family, and especially run in 5K races with my daughters (see photo). Reading, swimming, and playing flute with the church praise band is extremely enjoyable. It is beneficial to use time in pursuits and think (and read) about things that are true, honest, uplifting, of good report and praise (*Phil 4:8*) and avoid the opposite as much as possible. I find myself reading more and more books about theology and virtue, and less watching television and sports.

Wellness and *Shalom* are gifts and I have found that the key to contentment is gratitude, and the gifts of the Spirit (faith, hope and love, as well as joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness and goodness) are multiplied by consciously and conscientiously practicing them and giving them away to others as strength allows. Dying to self and living for and in Christ is the key to *Shalom*.

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Grandsons Wyatt and Hudson, Dahlonega, Georgia September 2019



5K race, 2017



Short term mission participants, Honduras, 2019



Haburchak Family, Chattahoochee National Recreation Area, November 2018



Clarkston Grace Village Refugee Clinic, April 2019