

Ian Law October 9, 2016

These Hands

During my training to become a pediatric cardiologist my mentor and I were discussing the tremendous fulfillment we have when a family expresses their gratitude for the care they have received. My mentor then relayed a story of when he was a fellow in training. The surgeon had just completed a complex operation and declared to the family that the child's surgery had gone well. The mother expressed her joy saying, "Thank God." The surgeon raised his hands for her to see and replied, "These hands, thank these hands."

We all too often feel that the rewards we receive are the result of the long hours and effort we put into our work. However, in Paul's letter to the Romans he states, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." (Romans 8:28) I have been blessed with the "heart, soul, mind and strength" to do God's work and have been fortunate to have experienced his grace. On numerous occasions I have been humbled by my patients and family and reminded of the gift God has given me and the team I work alongside.

While doing medical relief work in Mexico I gathered a large group of patients and families in a room and with the aid of an interpreter discussed the procedures that their children were to undergo over the coming week. Consent forms, which explained the risks and benefits of the procedure, were then passed out to each family to sign. I asked if there were any questions after which there was an awkward pause and discussion amongst the group. I stared at the interpreter, wondering if perhaps they had not understood what I had told them. One of the grandmothers then stepped forward from the group and stated in a very matter of fact way that the families would sign whatever form I wanted them to sign, but "it is not in your hands, it is in God's hands." I cannot express the joy, and relief, I felt knowing that I was there to do God's work and that God would give me and our team the wisdom and skills necessary to treat these children.

Several years ago for Father's Day my family made me a small cross on which they attached photos of our family. At the base of the cross are several hand-written devotions. I keep the cross in my office and find reading the devotions a tremendous way to start the day. This past year I had a particularly challenging case. Following the reading of my devotion I slowly walked through the hospital over to meet the family, running through a check list in mind of what was needed, thinking through the steps required to complete the procedure. When I reached the pre-procedure area I walked into a room and was greeted by a large group of people gathered around the young boy. I had him introduce me to the group and one by one he went around the room: "This is my mom and dad (who I already had met), my brothers and sisters, my aunt, my grandmas and grandpas, and these are my pastors from church." I thanked him for introducing me and told him how nice it was that he had all these people who loved him. The pastors and family then said that the church had prayed for me that week and asked if I would join them in prayer before the procedure. God's grace filled the room.

The surgeon's pride blinded him to all that he had been given. Me, I am thankful for "these hands" and the "heart, soul, mind and strength" that God has given me to do His work, to the glory of His name.