

June 15, 2026 Email Newsletter Wellness Block:

When Work Takes Too Much

Written by Joe Willmann

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:15–16 ESV)

Over the past several years I have wrestled with a few challenges in my own wellness. And many of those struggles found their root in one primary roadblock that I had to confront: I was dangerously close to becoming a workaholic. Realistically, I was probably already there.

Who could blame me? I had just moved to a new state with an entirely new career. I worked out of my home, and I had a huge learning curve to tackle. It felt normal to spend 60-70 hours a week engulfed in my new job.

There is always a transitional period when you experience such major life changes. So many of the things I was dealing with were, at least in my estimation, completely understandable. What I didn't do was make sure that these temporary lifestyle shifts didn't become permanent habits. And how did that play out for me?

I didn't eat well.

I didn't sleep well.

I neglected physical activity.

I gained weight that I wasn't proud of.

If I'm honest, I neglected my role as a husband and a father.

And while I slowly was able to work on some of those things (my eating and my physical activity), I never addressed the root cause of why they became a problem. Truthfully, I only addressed the things that had become selfish issues for me. I didn't even know that I was neglecting my roles as husband and father because I was working too much.

And then one day, seemingly, God sent someone to help me pull myself out of it.

Dr. Bev Yahnke gave a presentation at a retreat focused on wellness. And there was one line she said that crushed me. She asked, “Is your family getting the best of you, or are they getting what is left of you?”

In a moment it was clear as day to me. For the past few years, my family had only been getting what was left of me. And it was because I had allowed it to happen. When bedtime came around, I had already

spent 10-12 hours of the day doing other things that I found myself melting my brain with the rot of another Instagram reel, rather than reading to and praying with my kids. When chores around the house needed to be done, I'd conveniently find a way to be in another room, or back in my office working on the next task to complete.

I was running the engine dangerously close to empty all the time, and my fuel pump was about to give out. The thought of doing anything other than work and numbing my brain was too overwhelming.

Dr. Yahnke provided the mirror and showed me what had become of me. In that moment, I texted one of my pastors, got in for confession and absolution, and after hearing Christ's good and gracious words of forgiveness, we put together a plan.

So, what did I do? St. Paul calls us to grow up in every way into Christ in Ephesians 4. I had a lot of growing up to do, and every day I will still have a lot of growth to do. But I had to start.

So, the phone went away in the evening. I stopped sharing my cell phone number for work and instead started using my Zoom phone number. I had to work hard to recognize that the pile of work still to be done would still be there in the morning. I confessed to my wife my struggles and we worked together to help keep me accountable to have a better balance with my work.

Am I perfect? No, and you aren't either. But Jesus has so much more for us. God richly and daily provides us with all that we need to support this body and life. He forgives and sustains us, all out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy. I still stumble, but I now know my family is getting the best and not the rest of me.

Friend, if my story sounds like your story and if Dr. Yahnke's words have convicted you as they convicted me, I promise Jesus has something more for you. It's way better than just continuing to spiral down a workaholic tunnel that leads to nowhere but pain and misery.

Call your pastor. Hear forgiveness. Find a person who can help you address the habits you've built in your life. It may be your pastor or it may be a health coach. In it all, lean on Jesus. He is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). He's got this for you, friend. Follow His call.

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