

SLEEP

by

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Sleep is an important part of our daily lives, giving our minds rest and our bodies a chance to recuperate. God designed us to require a certain amount of sleep each day, and more at times, such as when we are sick.

Even God took a day of rest. It speaks to the importance of rest when you think of all the incredible things He created the first six days, and yet it was the day of rest that He sanctified. Let's read Gen. 2:1-3, "*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*" Rest is important, and God designed sleep as the main way we get our rest.

The Bible has quite a lot to say about sleep, and rest, and we should hear God's Word on the subject.

First of all, the Bible gives us help to get a good night's sleep. This was very important to me personally, because I went through a period of many months of insomnia a few years ago. I was having some health concerns, and was afraid they were more serious than they actually were. The fear and worry made it hard to get to sleep, and then the lack of sleep only made them worse, which in turn made it even harder to sleep. Medicine helped me, and I was thankful for it. But it did not offer a permanent solution. But during this process that the Lord blessed me with some scriptures that did provide a more permanent and peaceful solution.

Basically, what the Bible says about getting a good night's sleep is to trust in God, to trust in His Word, and do what He says to do.

One of the major root causes of insomnia is fear. Trusting in God overcomes fear of worldly concerns. Doing what God directs in His Word and trusting in His promises can lead us to welcome Christ's return, easing our fear of it. And it is a principle throughout scripture that if we will do things God's way He will bless us – including, with a good night's sleep.

Let's look to Prov. 3:24, "When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet." What would cause our sleep to be sweet? We have to back up a few verses to find the why. We read in verses 19-24 that it is because of trusting and clinging to and walking in God's Word. "*The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens. By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion. So shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.*" Where do we find God's wisdom, understanding, knowledge and discretion, so that we can keep them? In His Word. And keeping these things that we find in His Word allows us to sleep peacefully without fear. Now, if we read on to verses 25-26 we find that trusting in God enables us to overcome worldly fears, again enabling us to sleep. "*Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.*"

Look to Lev. 26:3-6, of course, we understand that this is part of the Law of Moses, and as such is not command per se to us. But the principle involved can still help us to find sleep in the loving care of God. The principle we find is that if we live our lives as God directs He will bless us in many ways, including with sleep. "*If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.*"

Let's read Phil. 4:6-7, which tells us that God has given us the gift of prayer, to bring us peace of mind. "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep*

your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” We don’t have to worry when we can pray.

Psa. 3:5, *“I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.”*

Thus, sleep is an important natural process, and God’s Word gives us some good guidelines for overcoming fear and worry so we can get a good night’s sleep. It also tells us that if we live our lives God’s way He will bless us in many ways, including sleep. The guidelines we discovered are simple – to trust in God, to trust in His Word, and to do what He tells us to do.

On the other hand, the Bible also warns us not to be too devoted to sleep. We don’t want to be lazy. Prov. 20:13, *“Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.”* Prov. 24:30-34, *“I went by the field of the slothful, (which means lazy), and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.”*

We especially don’t want to be lazy, and asleep, spiritually.

In I Cor. 11:29-30, we read that if our minds are not on Christ when we partake of the Communion, we are asleep (dead) spiritually. *“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”*

In Mark 13:34-37, we read that if we are not doing the Lord’s work, if we are not ready for His return, we are asleep spiritually. *“For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”*

So we need to wake up, and be zealous and active in the Lord's work. Rom. 13:11-12, "*And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.*"

The next point we find about sleep is that physical death is referred to as sleep – a temporary sleep from which we will be raised on that great Judgment Day. 1 Thess. 4:13-18, "*But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*"

Finally, the 4th chapter of Hebrews refers to our eternal reward as rest. Verse 9, "*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*" Verse 11, "*Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*"

So, God blesses us with a good night's sleep when we trust in Him, trust in His Word, and do what He tells us to do. But we don't want to overdo sleep to the point where we are lazy, especially in the Lord's work. Physical death is referred to as a temporary sleep from which we will wake to live with Him forever in Heaven, which is referred to as rest.

I hope this article has been edifying. We will close our study together for now. It's bedtime.

Good night,

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