

How to Keep a Good Night's Sleep

Psalms 3 & 4

Introduction:

- God designed our bodies for work and for rest, so we should not feel guilty about taking some time to recharge. It is God's will.
- Knowing we needed rest, He even commanded us to take a day of rest each week (Exodus 31:15).
- Jesus called His disciples and gave them an invitation to rest, Matthew 11:28.
- Of course, we do need to balance our need for rest with other responsibilities in life because the Lord does give various warnings about laziness, Proverbs 6:4-10.
- Just for fun, I like to say that anyone who thinks catching up on sleep in a worship service is the way to go, they should memorize 1 Thessalonians 5:6.
- The best single passage I have ever found for helping one learn how to gear down and keep a good night's sleep is the twin pillows of Psalm 3 & 4. The following are just some of my thoughts about the biblical principles related to sleep.
- One last thought, I know that there are sometimes physical or chemical reasons for sleep deprivation, so I am not saying that this is all that is needed to help someone with a chronic problem with their sleep, but my prayer is that this will help not hurt anyone who is longing to have a better rest when they shut down for the day.

The Possibility of a Good Night's Sleep

Sleep disorders can beat a person down so much that they subconsciously give up, assuming that a good sleep for them is really impossible. My take away from this is that sleep is possible with God's intervention.

I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me.

Psalm 3:5

I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 4:8

Perhaps it would seem that I am simply using this as a proof text that is not supported in other places in God's Word. Let's take a look at some other places where the possibility of a good night's sleep is mentioned.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

Genesis 2:21

So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them.

1 Samuel 26:12

It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep.

Psalm 127:2

When you lie down, you will not be afraid; Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; For the Lord will be your confidence, And will keep your foot from being caught.

Proverbs 3:24-26

The Problem with a Good Night's Sleep

So if it is possible with the Lord's help to actually lie down at night and fall into a deep sleep, why does it not happen? Is this God's fault? Or, are there perhaps things that we are not doing that cause us to be on edge and restless?

These negative experiences in life and our perceptions and feelings about these circumstances could be so strong in our emotions or in our thoughts that they become what 2 Corinthians 10:4-7 as becoming "strongholds". These cannot come down unless we know that they are there and bring them to the Lord in prayer.

Look over the following list that David identifies and place a check mark beside the ones that have recently happened in your life. Then, take each one of these to the Lord in prayer and make sure that you have given these to Him. Like it says in Psalm 55:22, "*Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.*" Hey, not moving sounds a lot like REM sleep to me!

- *Have you had an increase in the amount of trouble in your life?
Lord, how they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. (3:1)*
- *Have you felt like there has been a decrease in the help or hope in life?
Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God." (3:2)*
- *What about the intensity level of alarms in your relationships in life?
I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around.
Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. (3:6-7)*
- *What about the intensity level of agony (stress) in your emotions in life?
Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress; Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer. (4:1)*
- *Have you noticed any continuance of anguish (bitterness) over disappointments in life?
Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. (4:4)*
- *Are you distracted by the aimless, critical or negative comments of others in your life?
There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us. (4:6) (Also check out, Ecclesiastes 5:12 – focus on your work).*

The Prescription for a Good Night's Sleep

So now we come to the part that I am sure those who are struggling with have been waiting for. What does one do about sleeplessness? Let me give you a prescription from God's medicine cabinet. I would say that it is natural medicine that will have no negative side effects, but I should probably just go ahead and say that it is really supernatural "medicine" that is so simple in its application that you may have already know it all along. Why not try these basic steps to help you sleep better at night? Or if you are on a swing shift, these may help you sleep better during the day since you work at night.

- *Prioritize Praise*
But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. (3:3)
- *Capitalize Prayer*
I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. (3:4)
Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have relieved me in my distress;
Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer. (4:1)
But know that the Lord has set apart for Himself him who is godly; The Lord will hear when I call to Him. (4:3)
- *Downsize Pride*
Arise, O Lord; Save me, O my God! For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone; You have broken the teeth of the ungodly. (3:7)
Salvation belongs to the Lord. Your blessing is upon Your people. (3:8)
Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the Lord. (4:5)
- *Baptize the Promises*
Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. (4:4)
When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you. (Proverbs 6:22)
- *Personalize His Presence*
There are many who say, "Who will show us any good?" Lord, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.
You have put gladness in my heart, More than in the season that their grain and wine increased. (4:6-7)
- *Pulverize Any Phobias*
I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. (4:8)

Conclusion:

Mark 4:37-38 is an interesting account of a nap Jesus took one time. What stands out to me about this event in His life is where He took the nap and under what circumstances He was able to "sleep like a baby".

And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Mark 4:37-38

Now, if the Lord Jesus could sleep on a boat that I am sure was going up and down with water sloshing into the boat, the wind blowing across His face and the sound of disciples yelling out of panic, don't you think that just maybe He can give you a good night's rest in whatever circumstances you are currently in?

My prayer is that this study will give you some hope, some peace, some direction and most of all some sleep. God bless you!