



How to Enjoy a Good Night's Sleep

1) What the Bible says about Sleep

Prov 3:24

When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.

Prov 3: 24 MSG

You'll take afternoon naps without a worry, you'll enjoy a good night's sleep.

Ps 3:5

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

MSG: I stretch myself out. I sleep. Then I'm up again – rested, tall and steady.

When you have a good night's sleep you wake up rested and ready to take on the day.

Ps 4:8

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

Ps 4:8 MSG

At day's end I'm ready for sound sleep, for You, God, have put my life back together.

Sleep is restorative – God has designed us this way – whilst we sleep He is gently putting us back together.

Ps 127:2

*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.*

Make no mistake about it, you are His beloved – so sleep is God's gift to you.

Literally He wants to grace you with the gift of sleep because He loves you! The more we are into self-effort and performance mode, trying to please everyone and burning the candle at both ends, the less likely we are to be able to receive that free gift of sleep. So do a stress / self-effort audit. Could it be that you are not sleeping because you the yoke you are carrying

is not one He ever intended you to carry – you are striving rather than resting. Remember His yoke is easy and His burden is light. So receive His gift of grace - rest from your own efforts and enjoy a good night's sleep.

*In all these verses there is the clear expectation that we are designed and entitled to lie down and sleep soundly – not being able to sleep is **not** God's best for your life.*

Ps 121:3-4

He will not allow your foot to be moved;

He who keeps you will not slumber.

⁴Behold, He who keeps Israel

Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

He stays awake so you don't have to!

Can I be honest with you, I'm always very wary of people who say that God woke them up in the middle of the night to speak to them! It makes me think, were you so busy stressing and shutting God out of your day that He couldn't get through to you in your normal waking hours so as a last resort He had to wake you up to get your attention! Let's practise His presence throughout the day so He doesn't need to wake us up at 3am to get through to us!

2) The Benefits of a Good Night's Sleep

Let's look at why getting a good night's sleep is so important for us:

According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke:

'Sleep is an important part of your daily routine—you spend about one-third of your time doing it. Quality sleep – and getting enough of it at the right times -- is as essential to survival as food and water.'

So why is getting a good night's sleep beneficial?

- a) It strengthens the immune system – when you are sleep deprived you are more susceptible to illness and disease – now more than ever we need strong, healthy immune systems
- b) It helps with weight loss – did you know that when the body is sleep-deprived, the level of ghrelin (hunger hormone) spikes – so if you can establish healthy sleeping patterns that will help you to lose weight or maintain a healthy weight for you.
- c) It aids concentration / reaction times – 'without sleep you can't form or maintain the pathways in your brain that let you learn and create new memories, and it's harder to concentrate and respond quickly'. NINDS
- d) It protects your heart and reduces the likelihood of disorders such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and diabetes
- e) It boosts your mood and conversely persistent lack of sleep can lead to mental health issues like depression
- f) Sleep is restorative – it literally allows our depleted bodies and minds the chance to recharge just like you would put a phone on charge overnight

'Recent findings suggest that sleep plays a housekeeping role that removes toxins in your brain that build up while you are awake'. NINDS

3) How to Sleep Easy

- Start first thing in the morning! Morning sun, fresh air – helps the brain to cycle into alertness mode, which starts the brain's clock ticking toward sleep mode later at night. Sit in a sunny corner of the kitchen to sip your morning coffee or start the day with a morning walk soon after rising. A regular cycle of waking, getting some fresh air and sunlight, going about our daily tasks and then winding down as the sun goes down is proven to be good for us. (2017 study in the journal [Sleep](#))

- Exercise during the day –if you go out for a brisk walk or run or engage in some form of activity during the day you are far more likely to sleep like a baby at night. How many can relate? If on the other hand, we lead a sedentary life during the day, we are less likely to sleep well at night

- No heavy meals last thing at night – eating a heavy meal late at night means that your body will be working like a stoked up engine in a steam train just when you want to wind down. The effort it takes your system to metabolise your food actually creates heat as well and that is not conducive to sleeping well.

- Establish a consistent sleep routine / unwind an hour before – have a regular bed time. Establish a routine of certain actions that will then form triggers to your body and mind that it is time to sleep. For young children this could be bathtime, change into night clothes, get into bed, listen to a bedtime story, light's out. As adults, a bedtime routine is just as beneficial. Bath or shower, change into night clothes, read a few pages of a book or magazine, pray or meditate on scripture, listen to a soothing worship song, lights off.

- Create a conducive bedroom environment- clean, cool sheets, comfortable mattress, find the right pillow for your sleep posture, no clutter, good curtains, open window / fan, optimum temperature for sleep (16-18C), scents like lavender in the room

- Digital detox 1 hour before – turn off the TV / laptop / phone – no scrolling through FB / Insta last thing at night! If you are going to use your phone to help you sleep, turn it upside down so the light isn't distracting you

- Watch caffeine / alcohol / sugar intake 4 hours before bedtime – they are all stimulants

- Hot bath or shower - cool sheets – change in temperature induces sleep

- Read / meditate / pray / sleep stories on apps / stretch (Pilates) / listen to calming music

- Cast your care – if you are feeling anxious about something make a point of casting your care on the Lord – write down what you are anxious about / Write out your To-Do List for the next day / Write 3 good things down in your journal that you are grateful for and then literally 'Close the book' on the day – you have come to the end of this chapter of your life called Today – so it's time to close the book.

Helpful organisations / websites / apps:

The Sleep Council – an impartial advisory organisation that raises the awareness of the importance of a good night's sleep to your health.

National Sleep Foundation

Sleep Research Society

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Guided Meditation / Sleep Apps:

Secular:

Headspace

Calm

NHS Sleep App – Pzizz

Christian:

Abide

Pray

You Version: Rest

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