

## 7. Sleep Well

I'm an early riser. Maybe it's because I woke up throughout high school at 4:30 am to milk the cows before going to school. I would jump right out of bed because Mom would say, "I'm headed to the barn. If you don't come, I'll do what I can and then come back in when I'm finished." I wanted her help, because she always put feed in front of the stanchions for the cows and fed milk to the calves. So it became a pattern to never hit the snooze button on the alarm. In fact, someone once said that Proverbs 6:10 spoke against using that snooze button. "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber and want like an armed man." He says the same thing again in Proverbs 24:33. I'm not so sure that's what that verse means, but too much sleep isn't good either.

Psalm 127:2 says, "It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for He gives His beloved rest." That's a great promise - "God gives His beloved rest." He wants to give you a good night's sleep every night. That promise can also be translated, "God gives to His beloved while (or in) their sleep." He even gives to you and blesses you while you sleep. I know, for me, the solution to things I couldn't figure out can often come to me as I sleep.

David also puts it this way in Psalm 4:8, "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you alone, O LORD make me dwell in safety." In Psalm 3:5 he says, "I lay down and slept; I woke again, for the LORD sustained me." David knew full well who his shepherd was; and that it's his shepherd who makes him to lie down in green pastures because he was satisfied and could trust him. Solomon put it this way in Proverbs 3:21-24, "My son, do not lose sight of these (he's talking about God's Word) keep sound wisdom and discretion. And they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck. Then you will walk on your way securely, and your foot will not stumble. If you lie down, you will not be afraid, when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet."

Psalm 127:2 also gives a warning to those of us who lay down, but lie awake worrying or work all the time and hardly ever rest or sleep. We fill our minds thinking about all the things we didn't finish today and how will we get everything done tomorrow. We keep thinking about the problems we didn't solve and those that will happen tomorrow. We become workaholics. Philippians 4:6 says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

I'm not a sleeper. In fact, I hardly ever sleep in or go to bed early. I would tell kids when we were on trips, "Sleep is overrated - you can sleep when you get home." I'd ask teens, "Why do you want to waste your life away sleeping in bed?" But I would also tell them that it's important to get a good night's rest, because if you don't, you're going to miss tomorrow's treasures because you will just want to sleep. Work and play are important, but so is rest and sleep. We are more productive when we work and play out of our rest.

God gives to everyone He loves, sleep. So, does the way you live, work, and play give you that precious gift? In Matthew 11:28-29, Jesus said "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in

heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” If you work hard and play hard you will sleep well (medical conditions aside). God can be trusted with everything, even the things we can or cannot finish. Sleep well. It’s a gift from God.