

The Blessing of Sleep

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[0:00] Well, how old are you? You don't have to answer out loud. I just want you to figure that number out. Twelve and a half.

That number is approximately how many years of your life you've been asleep. So I've been asleep for twelve and a half years. In the dark.

Not moving. Snoring. Drooling. All the rest. So we spend a third of our lives like that.

And then I think of 1 Corinthians 10.31. So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. And I don't think the Apostle Paul had sleep in mind.

But there is that principle there. Of whatever you do, our whole lives are meant to be lived for the glory of God. And so, just this afternoon, I want to think about that one-third of your life that you spend asleep.

[1:26] And I want to ask, how can we glorify God with sleep? It's something that we do every day. Or we want to do every day, don't we? It's something we do every day.

It's something that you're going to do tonight. And as I've thought about it, and as I've prepared this message, it really has helped me, as I am going to sleep, to think thoughts towards God.

So how can I glorify God with sleep? That's what I want to talk about this afternoon. Is sleep something God cares about? Well, yes, it is.

He created it. He's never himself gone to sleep. He doesn't sleep. And so, when he made us, he didn't, and when he made sleep, he didn't look at himself and say, I want to make man like me.

He who watches over Israel never slumbers. Never sleeps nor slumbers. And if you think about that, that is amazing. 100% awake.

[2:36] 100% focused. 100% alert. That's God. Century after century. Think about that.

You go 18 hours, and your brain gets fuzzy. Sleep deprivation. Driving while you're sleep deprived, it looks almost the same as driving while you're drunk.

We need our sleep. But God is always alert, on task, ready. We eat lunch, and our heads begin to nod. But God never sleeps.

But he thought it was a good idea for us. So God does care about it because he created it. Is sleep something God cares about? Well, he made us to sleep.

Not only did he create sleep out of nothing, he didn't look at himself when he created sleep. He created it out of nothing. But he made us to sleep. And when we don't sleep, we begin to break down.

[3:42] Listen to just some of the consequences of not getting enough sleep. Just one week of sleeping fewer than six hours a night results in changes to more than 700 genes in your body.

Do you think that's good results? Good changes? Or bad? Just one night of sleep deprivation is linked with signs of brain tissue loss.

Infection-fighting antibodies and cells are reduced during periods of not getting enough sleep.

Sleeping fewer than seven hours a night is associated with triple the risk for catching a cold.

So you can take your vitamin C drops, but if you don't get your sleep, triple the risk. Chronic sleep deprivation, less than six hours a night, ages your skin, gives you four times the risk for a stroke, 50% higher risk for some cancers.

So if we want to take care of the bodies that God has given us, and God has called us to be good stewards, then we need to make sure that we're getting enough sleep.

[4:47] So God does care about our sleep. And it's not just physical. It's emotional. It's spiritual.

We know that. Some of us, if we are running on three or four hours of sleep, have an incredibly hard time being sweet and kind.

Don't we? Does that mean it's not sin? Does that mean it's not coming from our heart? No. Of course it's coming from our heart, but it means that we are physical, spiritual beings, and we're complicated.

We're connected. And what happens with one thing can happen or can affect the other. So when we are worried and anxious, we can't sleep.

And when we are not sleeping, a lot of times we have a hard time not being anxious and depressed. Listen to something that John Piper said.

There were early days when I would work without regard to sleep and feel energized and motivated. In the last seven or eight years, my threshold for despondency, for despair, depression, is much lower.

[5:57] For me, adequate sleep is not a matter of staying healthy. It is a matter of staying in the ministry. It is irrational. I want you to listen to this sentence. It is irrational that my future should look bleaker when I get four or five hours of sleep several nights in a row.

But that is irrelevant. Those are the facts. And I must live within the limits of those facts. So I commend sufficient sleep to you for the sake of your proper assessment of God and his promises. So what he's saying there is when I don't get enough sleep, God's promises don't seem so real. I have a hard time comprehending them.

I have a hard time applying them. So getting enough sleep changes the way I think about God's promises. When I'm running on fumes, God's promises don't look as great and as solid as they should.

If you've ever suffered insomnia, then you know what he's talking about. People with insomnia are ten times more likely to develop depression. And 17 times more to have significant anxiety in their lives.

[7:12] So does God care about sleep? Yes, because he's made us to be emotional, physical, spiritually wired together. Don Carson wrote this.

If you are among those who become nasty, cynical, or even full of doubt when you're missing your sleep, you are morally obligated to try to get the sleep you need.

We are whole, complicated beings. Our physical existence is tied to our spiritual well-being, to our mental outlook, to our relationships with others, including our relationship with God. Sometimes the godliest thing you can do is get a good night's sleep.

So God cares about sleep because he made us to sleep. He created sleep. He cares about sleep because he cares about how we treat our bodies, how we treat others, what we think about him.

He cares about sleep because he cares about us. And so that's where I want to go back to our question. And then how do I glorify God with my sleep? How do I think about sleep in a godly way?

[8:21] Well, just three things. First is receive it as a gift from God. It's a gift. Receive it like a gift. I want you to listen to Psalm 127 and verse 2.

In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat. For he grants, he gives sleep to those he loves.

Sleep is not a necessary evil. It's a good gift from God. It's a gracious gift of God. It's one of those good and perfect gifts that comes down from the Father of the heavenly lights.

He gives it to men. He gives it to men, especially who trust him. In Psalm 3, David is surrounded by his enemies. And he looks out and he tells God all about those enemies.

And in verse 5, he says, I lie down and sleep. So he looks at all the enemies. Oh, Lord, how many are my foes? And then he tells God about those enemies.

[9:31] And then he says, now to bed. In Proverbs, sleep is the fruit, the gift of wisdom. When you lie down, you will not be afraid.

When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. It's interesting. This is one of those things that the Father in Proverbs is saying, this is why I want you to be wise.

This is why I want you to take on board what I'm saying. This is why I want you to listen to me. This is why I want you to fear the Lord and trust in him. Because you'll sleep really well when you do.

Your sleep will be sweet. Sleep is a gift from God. And so how do you glorify God in your sleep?

Well, tonight, when you lay down, you can say thank you. Thank you for this gift of sleep.

You take it and you use it. Some people want to say no thank you. Don't want it. Don't need it. I can get a lot more done without it. But pretty soon, God's wisdom is proven and their folly is proven.

[10:36] But we honor God's wisdom. We honor the way God has made us when we take the gift he's given us and we say thank you for it. That's first.

Say thank you for the gift of sleep. Second, we glorify God in our sleep by honoring his creation. Honoring his creation.

What I mean by that is by recognizing that he's made us this way. And it's a good thing. And to take it and to use it. And I have more in mind than just a general thing.

I want each of you to think about it particularly to yourself. Because we're each different. That's why we can't make some sort of blanket rules about this.

But we're each different. And what I want to say is we glorify God when we recognize that he made me in a particular way, with particular needs, this particular wiring that we talked about earlier.

[11:37] And when I recognize that and I honor it and I live within it and I trust God in the middle of it, that's glorifying to him. So if I bought a Honda Accord and I never changed the oil, but I took it to the dirt track.

And sometimes what they do is they tie cars together with chains and then they drive the cars around and they are all crashing into each other.

Now if I took my brand new Honda Accord down there and I treated it like that, and then later I pulled it up to the farm and I pulled out tree stumps with my Honda Accord, that would not be honoring the way the designers made the Honda Accord.

That wouldn't be recognizing its limitations. That wouldn't be appreciating the wisdom of its design. Or if I bought a monster truck and I decided to take it downtown Chicago, taxi driving it, what would that be like?

Well, it wouldn't be good. The designers designed that monster truck to smash cars, to jump over school buses, to dig out tree stumps, not as a taxi.

[12:51] And that's what I'm talking about. We honor God by honoring and acknowledging the way he's made us. And we're different here. Husbands, you're different than your wives.

Wives, you're different than your husbands. Parents, you're different than your children. We're different from each other. And so how did God make you? Honor the way he made you in particular. Do you need more to function better? Are you like John Piper where, you know what, if I don't get enough sleep, I start to despair. I start to get depressed.

I become more anxious. Well, maybe what you need to do is go to sleep. Do you need less? Too much sleep makes you feel groggy. You don't get going on your day.

You're sleeping so much you're not having your devotions. You're running on your soul lethargic. Maybe you need to have less sleep and start your day out earlier and better.

[13:54] What I'm saying is we honor God when we submit to the way he's made us. He's given us enough time in our lives and our days to do everything we have to do. So we need to find the way that that works and trust him for it.

Now third, we glorify God in our sleep when we learn sleep's lessons. We learn sleep's lessons. Every night, God has lessons to teach you as you're pulling up the covers and laying your head down and turning off the light and all the rest.

And we honor him when we think about those lessons and learn them. So what lessons am I talking about? Well, that we aren't necessary.

We aren't necessary. Every night, God turns us off. We power down. We don't do anything. We quit working. And the world goes on.

Life goes on. Every night, we learn a lesson. I'm just a creature. God is the creator. I'm not sovereign. He is sovereign.

[15:08] Every night, we're learning that lesson. Jason, you're not sovereign. God is sovereign. Next night, you're not sovereign. God is sovereign. I don't even run the world.

I don't even run my own life. Think about it. Even the president puts on his BJs and goes to sleep. So every night, he has to say, there's a greater superpower than me in the world.

So what lessons? We learn that we're not necessary. We learn that one day, we will go to sleep and not wake up. The Bible calls death going to sleep.

There's a similarity there. Sleep reminds us of death. So I can ask you, how did you sleep last night? You might say, like the dead. And guess what?

One day, that will be true. We will put out, one day we will shut our eyes to this world. And open them to another world.

[16:13] And in sleep, God reminds us of that. In our sleep, God reminds us of hell. And what I mean by that is, have you ever had terrible nightmares?

In your sleep, frightening, out of control, nightmares. Well, hell is one long nightmare that you won't wake up from.

And for those people who are in hell, this life was the dream. It's now over. Sleep reminds us of heaven, too.

Hebrews says, there remains a rest for God's people. Heaven is rest. Heaven is rest. Heaven is a place of renewal. Heaven is a place of refreshment.

Heaven is a place of comfort. Heaven is a place of peace. So when you're lying in your bed and your covers are on you and you're all cozy and comfortable, it's a little bit of a message of this is what heaven is like.

[17:18] It's rest. It's the end of our work. Now it's time for refreshment. How do you glorify God by sleeping? You learn its lessons. And there's just one more lesson I want you to think about.

And it's this. Heaven reminds, our sleep reminds us of how we are saved. How we are saved. What did Jesus say? He said, come unto me, all you who are weary, and I will give you rest.

So how are we saved? Well, a lot of people think you're saved by spiritually getting up at six in the morning and working really hard for the Lord and doing enough for the Lord.

And Jesus is saying, no, that's not how you're saved. You're saved. By leaving your work. By leaving your work.

Leaving your yoke behind and crawling into bed, so to speak. Crawling into his arms. Resting yourself in him. Saying, I can't do the work.

[18:25] The work is too much for me. I can't do enough to save myself. I have to have someone else do it.

Being saved is not doing something great and wonderful to earn your way to God. Doing something spectacular and fierce where God becomes impressed.

God saves us when we say, I'm tired. I'm tired of the work. I can't go on. I have to go to bed.

I have to find rest. And we come to Jesus. And we lay down in his arms. And he carries us. And we trust his work. Not our own. And so tonight.

When you go to bed. Don't miss Jesus. Don't miss Jesus. Rest your head on your pillow. But more than that, rest your soul.

[19:29] And Jesus will give you rest. So. As you go to bed tonight. Remember the things that we've talked about. Rest reminds us that we're not necessary.

Life's going to go on without us. Rest reminds us. That one day we will die. It reminds us of hell. It reminds us of heaven. And so think about those things.

As you're laying your head down. And while you're doing that. Think of that. The Lord. Israel. The God of Israel.

Neither slumbers nor sleeps. So you'll be sleeping. And he'll be watching you. And that's something to thank him for. Well, let's pray. Heavenly Father.

We do thank you for the gift of sleep. We thank you that it is a nightly reminder. That you are sovereign. And we are not. That we are feeble.

[20:28] But you are strong. It's a nightly reminder. That there is yet a rest. That remains. For the people of God. It's a nightly reminder.

That salvation. Is a lot more like. Going to bed. Than going to work. It's resting ourselves in Jesus. So we thank you for that. Thank you that. When. When. Our souls were undone. And we couldn't do the work. That your law.

And your holiness required. You sent a savior for us. Who bore the heat of the day. Who did all the work required for us. And now invites us to.

Come in. And trust in him. So I pray that we would each do that. Help us each to receive the gift of sleep. As a. As something to say thank you for.

[21:26] And to say thank you for it. So that in all of our lives. Whether we are awake. Or whether we're sleeping. That we would give ourselves. Body and soul.

To you. Our faithful savior. And we pray this in. In his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.