

Towards a Theology and Practice of Sleep

Theology of Sleep

1. The Bible says much about “rest.”
 - a. God is a God of rest. **Gen 2:2-3:** ² By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. ³ Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.
 - b. God _____ humans to rest. **Ex 20:8-11:** ⁸ “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.”
 - c. Jesus rested.
 - i. **Mark 4:38:** Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”
 - ii. **Luke 5:16:** But Jesus Himself would *often* slip away to the wilderness and pray.
 - iii. **Heb 10:12:** but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, . . .
 - d. Jesus gives us salvation “rest.” **Matt 11:28:** “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”
 - e. Jesus is our rest. **Heb 4:9-11:** So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.
2. Sleep in the Bible
 - a. Sometimes sleep is used as a metaphor for death.
 - i. **John 11:11, 13:** This He said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out

of sleep.” . . . Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He was speaking of literal sleep.

- ii. **Ps 13:3: Consider *and* answer me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death.**
- b. Sometimes sleep is used as a metaphor for _____.
- i. **Nah 3:18: Your shepherds are sleeping, O king of Assyria; Your nobles are lying down. Your people are scattered on the mountains And there is no one to regather *them*.**
 - ii. **Matt 13:25: But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away.**
- c. Sometimes sleep is associated with laziness.
- i. **Prov 6:9-10: How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest.”**
 - ii. **Prov 10:5: He who gathers in summer is a son who acts wisely, But he who sleeps in harvest is a son who acts shamefully.**
 - iii. **Prov 19:15: Laziness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle man will suffer hunger.**
- d. The Bible speaks of levels of sleep quality: good and bad.
- i. **Job 4:13: Amid disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on men.**
 - ii. **Acts 20:9: And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the window sill, sinking into a deep sleep, . . .**
 - iii. **Prov 3:24: When you lie down, you will not be afraid; When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.**
 - iv. **Gen 15:12: Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror *and* great darkness fell upon him.**
- e. People experience a lack of sleep, sometimes self-induced.
- i. **Esther 6:1: During that night the king could not sleep . . .**

- c. Spiritual causes
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- 5. Overcoming sleep loss
 - a. See a doctor
 - b. Environmental changes
 - c. Regular exercise (**Ecc 5:12; Prov 14:23**)
 - d. Routine and discipline
 - e. _____
 - i. **1 Pet 5:7: Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.**
 - ii. **Phil 4:6-7:⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**
 - f. Confession: **1 John 1:9: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Also: Ps 32:1-7.**
 - g. Contentment

- i. **Phil 4:11-13:** ¹¹ Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. ¹² I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.
- ii. **1 Tim 6:8-10:** ⁸ If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

h. _____

- i. **Ps 3:5:** I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustains me.
- ii. **Ps 4:8:** In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.
- iii. **Prov 19:23:** The fear of the Lord leads to life, so that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.

6. Conclusion: What does your practice say about your theology?