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Encouragement for Today

“A Good Night’s Rest”

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Key Verse:

Proverbs 3:24, “When you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.” (NIV)

Devotion:

Do you have a hard time getting a good night’s sleep? Some call it insomnia, but I call it Satan. I’m always amazed at how often our enemy, the devil, invades the crevices of my thought life when I lay my head down to rest each night – particularly if I’ve had a difficult or simply busy day. There have been numerous times where I lie awake at night, too consumed by my anxious thoughts for my desperate soul and body to have a good night’s sleep. Good and bad thoughts of my children, the fight I had with my husband that morning, my endless to-do list for the next day, or worry over a sick friend or family member replay themselves over and over in my mind.

Though God designed us to need sleep, we often lose it worrying. We worry about the things we need to get done, the future, or the angry words we spoke to someone. All this worry can rob us of precious physical rest. It may not take a genius to figure out how we got ourselves into that sleepless state, but it sometimes feels like it will take a genius to get us out of it, particularly if our circumstances aren’t changing. So how do we find the spiritual, mental, and emotional rest our bodies long for? May I encourage you to make your sleep a matter of prayer?

Why lie awake consumed with worries when you can pray? We find rest by coming to Jesus. How do we come to Him? By prayer and petition, as Philippians 4:6-7 says, presenting our requests to God. When you ask Jesus to take away your burdens, be specific about naming the things that are weighing on you. Make it a practice to come before Him and offer to make a trade – the heavy bundle you’re carrying for His much lighter load, as Matthew 11:28-30 suggests. Then, claim the rest He offers today.

Jesus longs to give us sleep that is sweet. When we lie down at night, we are to have a sense of comfort and assurance that He can handle the circumstances of each and every day. We don’t have to be afraid because God is more than able to take us off the wheel we are frantically running on and grant rest for our souls—spiritual rest.

Spiritual rest is a rest and peace that we cannot understand. In fact, it is so supernatural that it works! When we come to Jesus, emptying ourselves and declaring our weaknesses regarding our ability to fix whatever problem we are facing, the power of the Holy Spirit can overwhelm our souls and bring an unexplainable peace that works like nothing else will.

Spiritual rest is unique because it renews us in a way that physical rest never can. It provides emotional strength deep within. When your soul is at rest, panic within the heart simmers down and physical limitations become less overwhelming. Jesus promises that His yoke is light and easy to bear. Doesn't that sound like the relief you long for?

When we search for rest in the Lord, the unanswered questions of life can find contentment in the Sovereignty of God. This allows us to be okay with putting aside our weapons in fighting battles with those we love that have grown distant from us. As I said earlier, Satan desires to rob us of our rest and keep us in a frantic state. He wants us to believe that rest is not possible. He wants us to worry and lose sleep. By doing all these things, he can make us ineffective as wives, mothers and servants of God. In this life, we will always have worries— it is what we do in response to those worries that makes all the difference.

My Prayer for Today:

Heavenly Father, who gives rest to His children – will You wash over me a peace that passes all understanding as I lay down to sleep tonight? I ask that You would ease the load of the burdens I am carrying. My desire is to be an effective mother, wife, and friend and I know my attitude, energy level, and spiritual life will not be sufficient to do this if I don't have the deep spiritual rest You long to give me. Be merciful, O Lord, and give sweet sleep to Your child. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Application Steps:

If you are going through a period of sleeplessness because of anxiety-related issues, take a moment to pinpoint the source of your restlessness and see what the Bible (or just plain old common sense) has to say about it.

What is *your* situation?

-Fear of the future: The balanced woman can laugh at the days to come; Proverbs 31:25

-An unruly child: Put your trust in God alone, and not in your own abilities; Psalm 62

-Financial stress: Because you follow Christ, you lack nothing of value; Luke 22:34

-Panic over a sick child or family member: Pray. Then, rest in the promise that even when things look bleak, God can do the impossible; Matthew 17:14-20

-Anger toward someone or argument-related stress: Resolve the issue before bedtime, when the devil has time to convince you of his lies; Ephesians 4:26-27, Proverbs 15:1

-An overloaded schedule or mental to-do list: Get a piece of paper and a pencil and write all your to-do's down. If you're trying to store it all mentally, you're probably going to become overwhelmed, fearing you will forget something; Matthew 11:28-30, Proverbs 31:15.

-Too much energy: Be productive and clean your house or work out. Exhaust yourself so that when you try to lie down again, you won't have any trouble going to sleep (or just lay off the caffeine if that's the issue); Proverbs 31:17.

Reflection Points:

Take a few moments and step outside of yourself to assess your perspective right now. Has sleepless nights of worry allowed Satan to get a foothold on your thought life? Has it paralyzed your everyday life, making you ineffective as a wife, mother, friend, or mentor? If so, through prayer, reclaim those areas for Jesus to rule over and tell Satan to get behind you!

Power Verses:

John 10:10, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (NIV)

Psalm 4:6, 8, “Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O Lord. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.” (NIV)

Deuteronomy 33:12, “Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders.” (NIV)

Matthew 11:28-30, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (NIV)

Additional Resources:

The Bathtub is Overflowing, but I Feel Drained; by Lysa TerKeurst

What Happens When Women Walk in Faith; by Lysa TerKeurst