
Sleep and Biblical Counseling

Introduction

“...to sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there’s the rub for in this sleep...what dreams may come...” –*Hamlet* (Act III, Scene I).

1. A short course in a biblical view of sleep, courtesy of Doc Smith.
 - a) The word sleep is used in a variety of ways in the Bible.
 - b) Sometimes it refers to death. (John 11:11)
 - c) Can refer to our spiritual state. (Romans 13:11)
 - d) And, it can just mean sleep. (Acts 20:9)
 - e) Sleep is pleasant after a good day’s work! (Ecclesiastes 5:12)
 - f) Idleness may produce excessive sleep. (Proverbs 19:15)
 - g) Excessive sleep may produce poverty. (Proverbs 20:13, 6:9-11)
 - h) Enjoyable, restorative sleep is possible in trials. (Psalms 3:5)

2. What do we know medically about sleep? Why do we need it?
 - a) Sleep stages.
 - b) Wake makes up two-thirds of our 24 hours.
 - c) Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM). In three stages N1, N2, N3
 - d) REM sleep.
 - e) How much do we need?

3. What makes it difficult to get enough sleep?
 - a) Our schedules?
 - b) Screen time.
 - c) Getting older...
 - d) Obstructive Sleep Apnea.
 - e) Restless legs.
 - f) Medications.
 - g) Caffeine, GERD.
 - h) Unrelated medical problems.
 - i) Worry, sadness.
 - j) Daytime naps!

4. What problems result?
 - a) Cognitive effects.
 - b) Judgment.
 - c) Mood, depression, anxiety.
 - d) Sleepiness! Microsleeps and traffic accidents!
 - e) Accidents, workplace errors.
 - f) Increased cardiovascular disease.
 - g) Immune suppression.
 - h) Obesity and diabetes.
 - i) Loneliness, social rejection.
 - j) Anger.
 - k) Risky behavior in teens.

5. What should we be doing in Biblical counseling?
 - a) Gathering data, taking a good history.
 - b) Helping counselees arrange life in a 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 way.
 - c) Encouraging appropriate medical care.
 - d) Understanding nightmares, PTSD, parasomnias, REM sleep movement disorder in a biblical context.
 - e) Apply biblical principles to worry, sadness, conflict.
 - f) Avoid making sleep the primary goal in life. (2 Corinthians 5:9)

6. Helpful habits.
 - a) Eliminate caffeine and other things that disturb sleep.
 - b) Deal with problems daily well before bedtime!
 - c) Don't take the problems to bed with you.
 - d) Reading, thinking on scripture, Psalms in bed.
 - e) Turn off phones, tablets, television.
 - f) Keep your days busy.
 - g) Regular physical exercise during the day.
 - h) Thankfulness instead of worry for insomnia.



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