



Outer Growth - Bedtime

**I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep:
for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in
safety.**

Psalms 4:8

Before Bed - Psalm 119:11

Eyes/Ears - Psalm 119:148 or 119:82

Doing - 2 Thessalonians 3:13 or 1 Peter 3:17

Thinking - Proverbs 23:7

Images - Exodus 20:3

Mouth - James 3:10, Jude 1:16

Encounter - John 14:30

What a believer does before they go to bed at night is important. The thoughts in the night before sleeping are vital to enjoying sweet rest and godly dreams! Psalm four has the approach toward that heavenly rest, highlighting some of these verses. "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. How long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself. Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD."

Believers who earnestly call upon God and constantly trust in His faithfulness, with the confidence that He hears, may lie down in peace and sleep securely. God will sustain them and minister His grace even while they sleep. The kinds of persons God hears in times of security must have a personal relationship of trust in God, an earnest desire

for God's help, and a godly lifestyle. Bearing those things in mind, a believer should not carelessly end their day doing things that would attract the powers of darkness, coupled with not praying properly before bedtime, can cause bad dreams, nightmares, and even possibly demonic attack. However, for believers who are married and have obligations to cater to their spouse who needs attention for different reasons, God is aware of that. Still, if not in God's Word, they must be careful that whatever they do with them should not result in sin against the Lord. There is a difference, knowing and not knowing, what the spouse or family may have in mind if not revealed.

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep" is the theme of this topic. The word "both" here means "at the same time;" that is, I will alike be in peace, and I will lie down and sleep; I will have a mind at peace when I lie down, and will sleep calmly. This is said in view of his confidence in God and of his belief that God would preserve him. He had put his trust in him; he had sought his happiness in him, and now he felt assured that he had nothing to fear, and, at peace with God, he would lie down and compose himself to rest. A mind free from anxiety as to the result of the present troubles has a calm confidence in God and commits all to him; and thus gave himself to rest. No one can fail to admire the beauty of this; and no one can fail to perceive that entire confidence in God, and an assurance that all things are under his control, are best adapted of all things to give peaceful days and nights. What a person does before going to bed to sleep is important, as mentioned at the very beginning. Although born physically, the body rests, but the spirit never sleeps. The spiritual part of us experiences these dreams, and some of them can become nightmares, depending on how we end the day. A person shared an experience they had one night, where they were watching two or three vampire movies while enjoying snacks and drinks throughout the late night near the end of the week. However, when he went to bed and began sleeping, he experienced such a horrible dream that turned into a severe nightmare.

For believers, when it is time to prepare for sleep, the last person saints should commune with is God. Read His Word before going to bed. Finish the day with the Lord and start the morning with Him. God is a spirit and has His throne where He resides. Saints might not hear Him, but He hears His people.

Therefore, if the ungodly things are how most followers of Christ end their day. Then how can a person expect to have a peaceful rest and enjoy sleep? The devil will try to get God's people to spend very little time by attacking the physical, especially using slumber or tiredness upon those believers who desire so much to pray and seek God before bedtime. The challenge is providing essential time, not time before bed, which does not work out in most situations.

Jesus in Gethsemane from Luke twenty-two, verse forty-six, "And said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." That is why believers should end their day with God's Word and prayer.

Otherwise, the enemy monitors and sees the slackness and will attempt to move in to devour. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," as in First Peter five, verse eight.

There is a godly song that believers and people in general should think about before going to bed, entitled "Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see."

Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see,
Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see.
There's a Father up above looking down in tender love,
Oh, be careful, little eyes, what you see.

Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear,
Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear.
There's a Father up above looking down in tender love,
Oh, be careful, little ears, what you hear.

What they see and hear should be something they should pay close attention to. No one has control over what happens when they go to sleep, and what dreams they will encounter. However, we do have command over what we see, hear, say, and do before we decide to go to bed. Although if married, the spouse has an

obligation to cater to the needs of their partner. However, when not, the preference should be toward God.

Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel two, verse one, "And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him." The king's spirit was troubled. The body needs rest but the spirit inside never sleeps. However, our spirit encounters the spiritual realm. Still, what we do during our awake time can dictate the dreams we have during our rest period. In verse two, the king had magicians, sorcerers, and astrologers, which indicates the ungodly lifestyle that Nebuchadnezzar was living. Obviously, ungodly activities may translate to having ungodly dreams.

In Daniel, two, verse three, "And the king said unto them, I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream." The dream bothered King Nebuchadnezzar so much that he wanted an interpretation of it. Most people today do not realize that some of these dreams we have come from the lifestyle we live. The thoughts of the heart profess the things we intend to do. Nebuchadnezzar was a king.

People in high positions do not focus on whether they will do godly or ungodly things, but fulfill whatever they desire, not knowing it could affect them when they go to sleep. When we go to bed, we are physically defenseless. In most cases, no one can control or anticipate what dreams they will have because the spiritual mode is different from the physical. During our waking hours, people can change what they do or where they go. However, in sleep mode, there is nothing that can be done other than do thyself no harm by participating in things that will cause bad situations and potentially create bad dreams at night.

To alleviate nightmares and bad dreams at bedtime, each believer must be aware of the images that may surround them and their environment. The first two commandments of the ten are about gods and images.

Nebuchadnezzar, being a king, "commanded to call the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, for to shew the king his dreams. So they came and stood before" him, as in Daniel two, verse two. If

these are the kinds of people he had in his palace, then images would be present within his place.

In First Kings, chapters fourteen through sixteen, are a series of kings who either did right or evil in the sight of the Lord. These leaders who reigned in their time within Jerusalem did one or the other, which is to remove or put up idols. Some of the king's hearts were not perfect toward God. Therefore, at bedtime, some of these kings had horrible experiences with their dreams. Today, the things we view on television, or social media, especially at night, could play a role in what we may dream at night. For a dream cometh through the multitude of business, as in Ecclesiastes five, verse three. When men's minds are distracted and oppressed with too much business in the day, they are frequently disturbed with confused and perplexed dreams in the night. And as such dreams proceed from, and are the evidence of, a flurry of business filling the head, so many and hasty words flow from, and are a proof of, folly reigning in the heart. "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be," as in James three, verse ten. What we say about ourselves and others can hinder our sleep and the dreams we may encounter at bedtime. A pastor shared a message with his congregation concerning how we talk about ourselves and others. Blessing and cursing coming out of the same mouth should not be, as the verse above declares. The pastor was explaining that the enemy hears what we say, and if we have nothing good to say about something or about someone. Do not bother to confess it. Why? He explained what happened in the message to the congregation about a person saying something negative about themselves, and the spirit within the dream that night said, "Oh, so I can do that to you?" Not only the person should not say anything, but helped the evil one do something to them by their confession, made it easy to afflict them! We are taught to dread an unruly tongue as one of the greatest evils. The affairs of mankind are thrown into confusion by the tongues of men. Every age of the world, and every condition of life, private or public, affords

examples of this. Hell has more to do in promoting the fire of the tongue than men generally think; and whenever men's tongues are employed in sinful ways, they are set on fire of hell. No man can tame the tongue without Divine grace and assistance. Jesus said in John fourteen, verse thirty, "Hereafter, I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Satan has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned. But when he would disturb Christ, he found nothing sinful to help him. The best evidence of our love to the Father is our doing as He has commanded us. Let us rejoice in the Saviour's victories over Satan, the prince of this world. Let us copy the example of His love and obedience. We do not want the devil to have something over us at night. Especially before bedtime, that would allow him to invade our home and corrupt our sleep. What we say, do, and think before bedtime will be the difference between a restful or restless sleep. For believers, "Neither give place to the devil," as in Ephesians four, verse twenty-seven. Saints have to be careful and not careless in these situations. Our prayer to God should be like this example: "Dear Lord, close up every door, every window, every pocket with your holy presence. Let not one opening be open to my place as I rest today throughout my sleep. Keep out every spirit that is not of God in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." Amen.