



Quick Backdrop

It's a spiritual discipline you may not actually need to employ much "discipline" to do: sleep. Yep, sleep. Think about this for a minute. We're told in 1 Corinthians 6 that our physical bodies are a temple that houses the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are to take care of the temple. In Psalm 46 we're told to "be still." Even Jesus was noted as sleeping in Matthew 8 and Mark 6. Granted, the book of Proverbs speaks frequently of sleep from a negative angle of slothfulness and sluggishness. And yes, sleep, like other good things, can be abused.

But studies increasingly show the mental and physical damage of sleep deprivation. Other studies are also showing that sleep among teenagers is decreasing, while rates of teen auto accidents and suicides are increasing. A good night's sleep may be the best thing you can do for yourself to be a better student, better son/daughter, better sibling, better artist, better athlete, and even a more consistent follower of Christ.

1 Digging In (God, Show Me!)

Take a minute to explore a few key verses about sleep and rest. As you experience these verses let God's Spirit speak to you about the importance of giving your physical body what it needs so that you can be in great spiritual and emotional shape.

Genesis 2:2

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

¹⁶Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Psalm 3:5

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me.

Psalm 4:8

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

Psalm 46:10

He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."

Psalm 91:1

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 Taking It Inward (God, Teach Me!)

How does lack of sleep affect you? Check all that apply.

- more irritable
- drowsy throughout the day
- unable to concentrate
- easily distracted
- impatient
- no noticeable affects
- fumbly at my performance tasks (music, acting, etc.)
- sluggish at my sports activities
- skip personal Bible/prayer time
- other

Write out a commitment to take care of your physical temple through better sleep habits. Incorporate elements from the verses you just read about sleep and rest.

3 Putting Into Practice (God, Change Me!)

Studies show that teens need around eight hours of sleep to maintain a healthy lifestyle. What would you need to give up in order to get the sleep your body needs? Obviously, you have some fixed time blocks: school, homework, extra-curricular activities. But are there other activities you can eliminate or tasks you can do more efficiently to help yourself get to bed earlier?

Create your own "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep" prayer, a prayer that gives your body an opportunity to know that it's time to wind down and begin to rest. Consider using phrases from the passages you just read. Here's an example:

God, now is the time for me to be still (cease striving!) and let you take over. Now is the time when I can rest in your mighty shadow while you watch for me, dealing with all those things that would want to wake me and make me nervous. I will rest in your safety. You...are...God.

My prayer:

Fold or Cut