

Wake Up O Sleeper

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Ephesians 5:8-21 (NIV)

8For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10and find out what pleases the Lord. 11Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. 12For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. 13But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." 15Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 21Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Romans 13:11-14 Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed...

Isaiah 60:1-3 "Arise, shine; for your light has come, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you..."

What is Sleep?

'A condition, which typically occurs during the **night**, in which the nervous system is relatively **inactive**, the eyes close, the muscles **relaxed** and consciousness of the world practically suspended.'

When Jesus spoke of the death of Lazarus he used the word 'sleep' to his disciples but they didn't get exactly what he meant, Jesus then explained that he meant 'Lazarus was dead'.

The bible refers to sleep in different ways, either in a natural sense as well as in a spiritual sense. In a positive sense as well as in a negative sense. In a literal sense and a symbolic sense.

Natural Sleep

- **Natural sleep** - Mk. 4:38 - Jesus was asleep on the boat
- **Deep sleep** - Acts 20:9 –Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.

"Science recognises the distinction between lighter sleep (REM = Rapid Eye Movement, i.e., the dream stage) and deeper sleep (non-REM)."

Symbolic Sleep

- **Positive Sleep** speaks of God giving us rest.
Psalm. 4:8 – I will lie down and sleep, for you alone oh lord make me dwell in safety
- **Negative Sleep** speaks of **Death** - "Consider and answer me, O Jehovah my God: Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death" (Psalm. 13:3).
- **Godlessness** - sleep is ascribed to laziness *Proverb 6:4-11– "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest. And your poverty will come in like a vagabond, and your need like an armed man."*
- **Judgement-** *Jeremiah 51:39- But while they are aroused, I will set out a feast for them and make them drunk, so that they shout with laughter--then sleep forever and not awake," declares the LORD.*
- **Passivity or spiritual slumber-** This the sleep that is plaguing the church. This is the sleep of lukewarm living. We are simply too comfortable. We're simply not a distinct people. Our light is simply dim. Our conversation trivial (2 Tim 2:16).

Examples I've seen of sleep in the church:

- ⇒ Young Christian girl kissing her boyfriend full on publicly in the tent. Culture vs. Christ.
 - ⇒ The homosexual debate? How much darkness do we need inside a church before we say it is no longer part of the Kingdom of light?
 - ⇒ The modern missionary is more of a humanist than an evangelist. We go to the places where there is blatant hunger feed them and ignore their spiritual hunger (e.g. social entrepreneur retreat). If our spiritual eyes were open we would see that there is a famine here in England.
 - ⇒ Squabbling back biting.
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Passivity and Spiritual Slumber

Why must the believer not be asleep?

1. Because of the times.

(Mathew 16v3 Jesus says they know how to read the weather but not the signs of the times...)

Rom. 13:11-14—“11And do this, understanding the present time. *The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* 12The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

2. Because he has been assigned a task.

Mk. 13:33-36—“33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. 34It's like a man going away: *He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task*, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. 35“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.”

To be awake is to be vigilant, on your toes, ever prepared. Ready in season and out of season.

3. For the sake of distinction.

1 Thessalonians 5:3-6 3While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. 5You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. 6So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.

Children of the light (which is Christ) cannot be like children of the darkness. The contrast between light and darkness is too much. In Christ we can see in the world we are blind. 1 John 12-13. *Children born not of natural descent... but born of God.* Are we awake to our identity in Christ?

e.g. Story of Mr sheep surrounded by hyenas and wolves...

Conditions for Sleep

Sleep speaks of the spiritual state of deadness and inactivity. (Separation from God)

Darkness speaks of the activity of the dead. (those who cannot see)

Night speaks of the age, time and season. (the climate for sin to abound)

John 1 lets us know that Christ came into darkness. The world system as well as the ‘people’ of the world are synonymous with darkness (John 1v5 and 1v10). Darkness or night is the time when people are asleep. The world is full of sleeping men, dead men walking, zombies. But because we are living in an atmosphere of night time the temptation to sleep like the unbeliever is strong.

The Pharisees came after Jesus in the night and not in the day. Jesus said ‘of course, this is your hour, when darkness reigns (Luke 22v53)’. The disciples also fell under the power of night time (the pull of the world). Their spirit was willing but their flesh was weak.

⇒ E.g. If you feed a boxer a good diet for a week and starve his opponent for a week, who do you think will win when the fight comes? The one we feed more is the one that wins. Have you been feeding your spirit or are you feeding the carnal carbohydrates of your flesh?

Do you have enough nutrients in you for the spiritual warfare we’ve been called to. Are you even involved in the war? I fear that we are asleep to God calling, and I fear worse that many are falling into deep sleep.

Signs to know you are sleeping

1. **Lack of prayer life** – not only a 5 minute word here and there but a time of intimacy (*Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.*)
2. **Lack of bible study** – not only the reading but the receiving of revelation. (Psalm 1)
3. **Lack of worship** – not only the act but the life, Your not about the fathers business. Your life makes no impact.

Prayer points

Lord show me how I have been asleep. / Forgive me for being asleep. /

Lord wake me up!! / Spiritual Awakening for the church in England