

Something We Must Not Love: Sleep

Ponder: Too much of a good thing?

Scripture: “Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty; Open your eyes, and you will be satisfied with bread” (Proverbs 20:13, NKJV).

Everyone needs to sleep. That’s the way God created us. Babies sleep a great deal; as we age, we may find it difficult to sleep.

As Jesus and the disciples were crossing the Sea of Galilee, a terrible storm arose that threatened to swamp the boat, “but He (Jesus) was asleep” (Matthew 8:24). Considering His relentless work of preaching and healing, is it any wonder Jesus needed sleep?

Loving sleep, however, is a different issue entirely. In the Scripture quoted above, Solomon warns that loving sleep leads to poverty. Obviously, he is talking about sleeping instead of getting out of bed and going to work! This is made evident in Proverbs 6:9-11 where, after commending the example of the industrious ant, Solomon asks, “How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep – So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man.”

Proverbs 24 uses almost the same words in a different setting. Solomon had observed the field of the lazy man. It was overgrown with weeds, and the stone wall around it was broken down (vv, 30-32). He concluded: “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest; So shall your poverty come like a prowler, And your need like an armed man” (vv. 33, 34).

The New Testament also speaks against laziness and idleness. “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Not only are Christians not obligated to provide for the lazy, they are positively prohibited from doing so!

Love of sleep hinders spirituality. Our God works! “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working” (John 5:17). As God’s children, made in His image, we are to imitate him by working (Ephesians 4:28).

Like so many other things, sleep is good in moderation. But let us not love sleep!