

# Sleep Disorders

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the spiritual and practical importance of sleep, urging believers to trust God for peace and restful nights.*

**Duration:** 26:24

**Scripture:** Psalm 32:3

**Topics:** "Sleep Disorders"

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## Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the importance of getting enough sleep and addresses the spiritual reasons behind it. He shares how David's silence about his sin caused him physical and emotional distress, but when he confessed his transgressions to the Lord, he was forgiven. The pastor also encourages the congregation to turn to God in prayer and transfer their worries and burdens to Him, promising that doing so will bring rest and peace. He concludes by referencing Jesus' promise of abundant life and contrasting it with the thief's intention to steal, kill, and destroy.

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## Transcript

Let's talk about sleep for a second. If you're 60 years old, you've only been awake 40 years. 20 years, you've been sleeping.

If you're 21 years old, you've only been really alive and awake, moving for 14 years. Seven, hopefully you've been sleeping because that's about the average. A third of our days, a third of our lives are spent sleeping.

Sleep is something that God put into the human equation and without it, you cannot exist. It was a tragic thing. I read in the post of the Daily News this week when at the trial for Michael Jackson and all the aftermath of his death, that they said in his last days, his last hours, he would show up.

He couldn't remember the dance routine, which never happened. He couldn't remember the lyrics of the song, which never happened. And he was getting thinner and thinner, which he already was so thin.

And all the people around it knew it was from sleep deprivation. He wasn't sleeping. And if you don't sleep, you don't live.

And if you don't sleep properly, I don't care who you are, Christian, atheist, agnostic, whatever race you might be, if you don't sleep properly, you tend to make poor decisions and you can get irritable and you

can be susceptible to mood swings that are horrible. So this is a practical thing, but it's a very spiritual thing as we find out from some verses in the Bible. Let's look at them real quick.

"Lord, how many are my foes?" David says. "How many rise up against me? "Many are saying of me, God will not deliver him, "but you, Lord, are a shield around me, "my glory and the one who lifts my head high. "I call out to the Lord and he answers me." Now he's talking about praying.

"From his holy mountain, I lie down and sleep. "I wake up again because the Lord sustains me. "I will not fear though tens of thousands "assail me on every side." Then Psalm 4, verse eight.

"In peace, I will lie down and sleep. "For you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety." One more verse. Proverbs 3, 24.

"When you lie down," this is to the person who trusts in the Lord and lives with wisdom, "when you lie down, you will not be afraid. "When you lie down, your sleep will be sweet." Oh, isn't it nice to have a sweet sleep? This past year, I actually made too many trips overseas and too many trips and it affected me toward the end of the year. That's another law of living.

Whether you're a Christian or not, if you stretch a rubber band too much, it will break, even if it's a Christian rubber band. How many say amen to that? Sometimes Christians think that certain laws don't apply to us because we're Christians. No, the laws of living all apply, like gravity and sleep and eating properly and exercise.

It was Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, who said that if his Methodist ministers weren't exercising 45 minutes a day, they were living in sin, he said, because the body was made to be moved. That's the way God made it. And if you don't move it and exercise it to some degree, you start to lose the best of your energy and the best of the use of your body.

Sleep falls in that category. Now, there are numbers of reasons why we don't sleep properly at night. And obviously, I'm not giving a symposium here on sleep, but I want to talk about a few spiritual reasons.

But there are physical reasons, improper eating, improper diet. They say lack of exercise, doing nothing will cause sleeplessness. I had the horrible experience that some of you have had.

And as I was traveling last year, I went to seven overseas trips with different time zones. And I went for Samaritan's Purse, Franklin Graham's people invited me to go to the Philippines. The Philippines are a 12-hour time difference.

So when it's three in the afternoon in the Philippines, it's three in the morning, your body. And that's nasty. Well, I went early because they wanted me to speak a lot, and I thought if I get in early, I'll somehow adjust to that time change.

You know, Europe is five, six, seven hours. I was just in Moscow a few months ago with Ravi Zacharias. That was about eight hours, I think, but 12 hours.

So I went early, and I said, I gotta get adjusted to this. I gotta stay up during the day, and I gotta sleep during their night, even though their night is my day, and their day is my night. So I got there early, and I went to the restaurant to have lunch by myself, and I came back from the lunch at about, oh, maybe 1.20, 1.30 in the afternoon Philippine time, Manila, and I went into the hotel room and sat down.

I was gonna read, study the Bible, read from my iPad, and the bed looked at me, and I heard a voice. You know, they say crack has a voice, and when it calls, you're gonna come. Sometimes a bed has a voice.

So I knew I can't go near that bed. If I lay down in the afternoon, I'm done, because it was 1.20 in the morning in my body. I've been through this so many times in Korea, Japan, Taiwan.

So I said, well, let me just lay down, but I'll read. We sometimes go in denial, don't we? I remember at around 10 to two, taking my iPad and saying, let me just, just get a little taste. I'm not gonna really sleep, but just a little taste.

The next thing I know, I woke up, and I looked at the clock, and it was 11.40 in the evening. I had slept through the entire day, and now it was coming on midnight, and I was wired. There is no worse feeling in the world than to be in a hotel room at 10 to 12 midnight, and there's nowhere to go, and you're not gonna sleep.

So I didn't sleep that night, and I just had to do other things, because it was what it was. But it sure set me off for a hard time when I got up to preach during the day, because when you don't sleep, how many have found that? When you don't get proper sleep, you have a hard time. Lift your hand.

How many need seven hours? How many need eight hours? How many need nine hours? No, y'all, I just don't wanna get up and do anything. What are we talking about here? How many can get away with six hours and be feeling good? How about five hours? No. Let's talk about a couple of spiritual reasons, one that I wanna address quickly.

I wanna go through this and pray for people, and sing, and then we'll go off back to our homes. We've had such a good day today. There are spiritual, emotional, psychological reasons.

It happened to David, and from it, he wrote one of the great Psalms found in the Psalter, Psalm 32. Look what he wrote. "When I kept silent about my sin, "my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long, "for day and night your hand was heavy on me.

"My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. "Then I acknowledged my sin to you, "and I did not cover up my iniquity. "I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, "and you forgave the guilt of my sin." I'm not gonna talk for long, so listen so we can get this straight.

One of the reasons why believers have a hard time sleeping is because we violate our conscience. When you have unconfessed sin in your life, it's hard to sleep because God is now after you. You say, no, God is loving.

He will never be after you. No, he's after you because he loves us, and he's not gonna let that thing settle in us. He's gonna bother us and prod us, and day and night, your hand was heavy upon me.

He didn't wanna hurt David. He could've killed David if he wanted, but what he wanted to do was bring David to a place of repentance. So one of the worst feelings in the world is when we fail God, we're living in some secret sin, some secret whatever, and we haven't brought it to the Lord, we haven't confessed it, and now we lay down in bed at night and peaceful sleep is not so easy to find.

And if you're here tonight and you're struggling with a loss of sleep, sleep deprivation from that, there is no pill you can take to make that go away. What you have to do is the simple thing that happened to David.

David couldn't sleep at night, tossing and turning on his bed.

And he said, what am I doing this for? I'm gonna confess my sin to the Lord. And he said, when I did, I found out that God forgave the iniquity that I had committed. God is not a hard task master.

God loves us. But without confession of sin, we can't stand on that verse if we confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So a violated conscience, some secret thing that we're trying to hide from God, oh, how foolish of all of us to try to hide something from God. So if you're here tonight and there's something going on in your life that's not right, and God is bothering you about it at night, how are you gonna run from God? How are you gonna fight God like the thing I had on Broadway years ago? Your arms are too short to box with God. You cannot fight God.

Do I get a witness here, an amen? So if you're here, this is a serious thing. So David said, at night I was struggling, and then I came to my senses and I said, I'm gonna confess my iniquity. If you're here tonight, you're just one sentence away from a good night's sleep tonight.

Just tell God that it's wrong. Just tell God, confess it. You know, he talks to you about that bad attitude you have toward that person, that unforgiveness you have, and then you wonder why everything's churning at night.

You'll blame it on every other thing. That's the way we are. We look for scapegoats.

But if you just be real with God and you say, God, that attitude is wrong in me. Come on, isn't God faithful to put his finger on the thing that is wrong in our lives? So I wanted to get that one out of the way right from the get-go. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

The way to successful prayer and successful sleep and successful anything is to be right with God. Not perfect. If it took perfection to sleep, nobody would sleep.

But you gotta be right with God. You gotta confess your sin to the Lord. But there's another reason why we sometimes lose sleep.

Tell me if you can empathize with this. David says in Psalm 3, man, there's so many people against me. And they're threatening me.

And they say nasty things about me. And David went through times in life when King Saul, who he loved and was loyal to, was trying to kill him. So he's running in the caves and he's out in the mountains and he's out in the desert.

And King Saul has the whole army of Israel chasing him. A lot of the Psalms were written under tremendous pressure. If anyone understood pressure, it was David, the Psalmist.

He said, there's so many that are against me. And listen, ladies and gentlemen, they weren't after him to throw a snowball at him. They wanted to kill him.

He was away from his wife. He had to leave his mom and dad with someone else until he quaintly said, until I see what God will do with me. Emotional pressure, which causes worry and anxiety, keeps a lot of people awake.

How many people in America are taking pills to sleep because of anxiety and worry? If the economy is doing bad, we're worried because it's doing bad. If the economy gets better, we're worried that it could get worse. There's always a reason to worry.

I talked to a man today in my office from Staten Island. I believe he's here today. And he said, Pastor, you preached years ago about getting rid of worry.

He said, I have a PhD in worry. I just would worry and worry and worry. And that'll keep you up at night.

Worry and fear, anxiety and fear about what's gonna happen to us. We'll just eat your lunch. And we've all gone through it.

Come on, brothers and sisters. Haven't you ever had some nights where you just wish the morning could come in a second because you were so anxious? Hasn't anyone lived like I've lived? Remember when we were putting this building together and we need dozens of millions of dollars and this is outside of any loans we took. And I would regularly get calls, it seemed, by an employee of the church who was working with the contractor.

And they would say, Pastor Simla, just want you to know these requisitions have come due. We don't have the money to pay it. And we have four days to come up with \$1.2 million or they're gonna walk off and they won't complete the job.

That didn't happen once. That happened a half a dozen times. Just different amounts.

And what am I gonna do? Our congregation doesn't have a lot of money. We don't have millionaires, billionaires in the church. And how the devil will come.

Hasn't he ever whispered to you, you're not gonna make it? Come on, do I get a witness here? Anyone ever lived through that? The bottom is gonna fall out. What he would say to me is, you're a chump. Yeah, you're talking about faith and God's helped you and he's done all these things, but no one will ever worship in that building.

Because one day when they had no seats in here, I told Andis the other day, they had no seats. Nothing was put in, just this shell. And I stood against this wall here and it was mostly undone, but I think the finishes were on, but no seats.

And I stood here and I said to God, God, help us to finish this. And that I could just see people lifting their hands and praising you, that's all I want. And the enemy would just attack me and say, no.

And then, oh, what battles at night? One night, I felt like Satan was in my bedroom. My wife was down in Florida taking care of her mom who was ailing from pancreatic cancer. I felt Satan in the room.

How many have ever had a bona fide attack from the devil? I mean, where he's up close and personal in your grill and sleep is hard to find. Sleep, you're churning inside. I'm trying to be real and transparent with you.

The greatest men and women of God who have ever lived have gone through these battles. Fear, fear of the future, fear of the unknown, fear that you won't make it. Fear that your child won't come back.

Fear that you have cancer. Fear, fear, fear. Anxiety about one thing or another.

David writes all kinds of songs, but notice what he does. He says, but you, oh Lord, are my shield. You're my glory.

You're the one I delight in and you're the one who lifts up my hand. For us to sleep at night when we're attacked by anxiety and fear, you gotta understand you have to make a statement of faith. If you have to do it verbally or you have to do it in your heart, know God, you are with me.

And the enemy will whisper and say, where do you feel him? Where do you see him? You don't even listen to that voice. No, I know that God is with me. If he loved me enough to send his only begotten son, he is not gonna let me fall in a black hole now.

Can we put our hands together and affirm that and say amen? If the Lord gave his son for us while we were yet sinners, you think he's gonna let any of these young people from Mobile, you think any of them are gonna fall in a hole? Never, not in a billion years. God has a plan for every one of us and he's not about to be caught off guard and say, oh no, look what's happening in your life. Nothing surprises him.

In fact, here's the reason why we can sleep tonight. Look at this last verse. I love this verse.

I lift up my eyes to the mountains. Where does my help come from? Read it with me. My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip. He who watches over you will not, indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor, the reason I can sleep is that because God never sleeps. The reason I can slumber and relax and trust him, come on, is because his eye is always upon us.

If God ever took a nap, I would never be able to rest. If God ever took a nap, if he ever slept, if he ever got tired, what would we do? No, God never slumbers, he never sleeps. His eye is on me, his eye is on you.

You have to make a statement of faith and then you have to pray. David says, after he makes that statement of faith, no, I will lie down and sleep. Why? Because you're the lifter of my head, you're my shield.

You gotta preach to yourself, you gotta talk to yourself. You have to resist the devil when you can't sleep. This is not fanaticism, this is biblical theology.

You gotta say, no, I will sleep tonight. I am not gonna worry because it doesn't change anything except myself for the negative. No, I will stand upon God's word.

Then David says, I cried to the Lord and he made the transfer. Now look, I end with this. You gotta make a transfer tonight.

Either you're gonna carry your problem or God's gonna carry it. Let's make up our minds tonight. He's not gonna share the load with any of us.

If you're not gonna give everything to him, he's gonna let you carry it. If you carry it, you won't sleep. You're gonna become worried, sick.

But God says, cast all your cares upon me. I really do love you and I care for you. What else do I have to do to show that I love you and I care for you? So I want you to know tonight that you have to make a statement of faith and then you have to pray.

And in that prayer, you have to transfer it. You have to give the thing to God. Pastor, how do you do that? I don't know how to say that.

I'm sorry, I don't have the words to say that. I can't instruct you. I just know that it happens when you pray.

There's some transaction in your soul where you give the thing to God and you can walk home tonight so rested and peaceful and you'll lay down and have a good night's rest. Or you can say, God, I hope, I pray, I hope, I really do. And before you leave the building, you'll be worrying before you hit the exit.

Haven't we all done that at one time or another? But God has promised us sweet sleep. Jesus said the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, but I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. And one of the things that God loves to recover is what the thief has stolen.

And one of the things he likes to steal from us is the sweet sleep that God promised for his children. To see one of your children tossing and turning or a grandchild not able to sleep, that's a very painful thing. To have someone you love not be able to sleep, that is a horrible feeling.

How does God feel when we toss and turn instead of trusting him? This afternoon, we're gonna draw a line in the sand. We're gonna go home and we're gonna sleep tonight. I said, we're gonna go home and we're gonna sleep tonight.

Amen. We're gonna get a good night's sleep whether we're used to sleeping or we struggle with sleeping because God is gonna bring that peace that passes. All understanding.

Be anxious for but in everything by, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God. Now just stop for a second. We're gonna have an altar service, not altar service, we're gonna have a time for you to come and make the transfer.

I don't want you to come unless you wanna give the trouble and the worry and the child and the job and the finances and the whatever. If you're not gonna give it to God, stay in your seat. But if you are tired of being tired, I want you to come and say, God, this is my day.

I'm not living anymore, biting my nails and losing sleep. You promised me sweet sleep. I wanna say with the psalmist, I will lie down and sleep.

I will because God is with me. God is with me. Let's say that together.

God is with me. Say it again out loud. God is with me.

Close your eyes. If you're here this afternoon and you say, Pastor, that was good teaching for us all in case we're attacked and the enemy tries to rob our sleep from us. Because remember, that will affect your body.

Whatever affects your body also tends to have an effect on your spirit. Your invisible inner person. So notice what the enemy can start doing when he brings worry and anxiety in.

No, God is the lifter of my head today. He is my shield. I'm gonna trust him.

If you're here and would like to make that transfer and say, God, take the problem, take the worry, take that unspeakable something that I haven't told anyone else about, I give it to you. If you're here today and

you need to confess something to the Lord, you're one sentence away from being clean and clear. What are you gonna wait for? There's no better day than today.

Today is the day of salvation. Come out of your seat and walk up to the frontier. And we're gonna say a final prayer over you before we dismiss.

No one move except those coming. So Lord, the first thing we wanna say is forgive us our trespasses. Forgive us our sins, our missteps, our rebellions, our bad attitudes, our gossipy talk, any and all uncleanness, all dishonesty, all foul speaking.

Forgive us. We confess it and we now know that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from that. Thank you for healing our conscience so we can sleep tonight.

We don't hide it, we don't protect it, we don't justify it, we confess it. Now Lord, you are my rock. You are our shield.

You're the lifter of our head. We're not gonna toss and turn tonight, we're gonna sleep, we're gonna lie down and sleep tonight. Because you're watching over us.

And because you never sleep and you never slumber, we will sleep and slumber tonight. Because your eye is always on those that you love. So now God, we don't know how you're gonna work it out, but we give you today the problem.

In prayer, we turn it over to you. It's too big for us. We can't handle it.

It's too strong for us. But in our weakness, your strength and grace is made perfect. So we hand it over to you today.

That son, that daughter, that one in prison, that habit that's trying to creep back into our lives, whatever it is, that no job, that the bills are going so high, we don't know how to get out. We give it all to you because God, we've been worrying and nothing's changed, except we've lost sleep. So we instead of worry, we're gonna wait and trust in you.

Everybody lift up your hands to God. We lift up our hands to you now, God. And we give you every problem, every little nuance of our lives, financial, physical, mental, emotional, social, family, work problem, we give it all to you because you love us and you care for us.

And we're gonna sleep tonight because you are alpha and the omega. And we're gonna rest. And we're gonna wake up tomorrow morning, should you give us another day, and we will rejoice in the God of our salvation.

Look at me from down here. You're gonna go home tonight? What are you gonna do tonight? You're gonna sleep. You're gonna get a good seven hours, okay? If any of you here are not Christians and you wanna talk to someone about receiving Christ as your Savior, we'd be happy to do that.

Right now, I want everyone to turn around and hug three or four people. Come on, no handshakes. Hug somebody.

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