

Rest in Times of Trouble

Ecclesiastes 2:22-24 "For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God."

Matthew 11:28-29 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

As a 32-year old homeschooling mother and wife with a 3 year old and a 5 year old at home, my chronically-ill husband would stop breathing in his sleep until I intervened. This created a very real problem. I could not provide health care all night and then child care all day, day after day. Eventually, something would give. I was created to need sleep to function properly. So, I turned to God. Most every night for a couple of years my last words to God were something along these lines: "Lord, I can't keep watch all night tonight. Eventually, I'll fall asleep. When I do, Lord, my husband's life is in danger. Please, Lord, You won't be asleep. Will you watch over Him and wake me when I need to help him?" Then I fell asleep trusting that He would, and He did. Yes, my husband's very life was at stake, but God loves and cares for him too, far more than I ever could. He loves me and cares for my well-being also.

Let me encourage you that you, too, are loved "with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3). Psalm 121:4 - "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." He's been keeping His people for millenia. He won't drop the ball with you. He'll keep watch while you can't. Rest tonight knowing that "underneath" you "are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33:27).

Psalm 127:1-2 says, "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." I know the relief when the house is finally quiet, and you can finally Google for some new method promising to cure the perplexing illness. Or maybe you'll break out the chocolate and books for some 'me' time. Or maybe this is your time to curl into a ball and have a good cry. But if you 'sit up late' and 'eat the bread of sorrows,' you're going to have an even rougher time tomorrow when all the pressures return and you're dealing with them on 4 short hours of sleep. Let me encourage you – if you'll look to Him, then in His time, God will give you the down-time you need, and He will show you the way to handle the issues. But meanwhile, He wants to give "His beloved,"

which is you, "sleep." Go to bed early enough that you're ready to wake up at a reasonable hour. I know that there are deep cares troubling you – a wayward child, a shattered marriage, a long-term illness, financial strain - often the one compounding the other. But by God's perfect and intentional design, you are a human with human limitations. And God is interested in you getting the rest you need. Turn to Him. Find physical rest in His design for your body, and learn to lean on Him to find rest for your soul.

'Every joy or trial falleth from above, traced upon our dial by the Sun of Love.

We may trust Him fully all for us to do; they who trust Him wholly find Him wholly true.

Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest; finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.'

-Frances R. Havergal-