TOPIC: Christian Living

God's Prescription For Sleepless Nights

PSALM 6: 1-10 (NKJV)

Please turn with me in your Bibles to THE SIXTH PSALM. And let’s read ALL TEN VERSES.

PSALM 6:1-10 (NKJV)

1 O L ORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy on me, O L ORD, for I am weak; O L ORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.

3 My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O L ORD—how long?

4 Return, O L ORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies’ sake!

5 For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?

6 I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.

7 My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of all my enemies.

8 Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; For the L ORD has heard the voice of my weeping.

9 The L ORD has heard my supplication; The L ORD will receive my prayer.

10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled; Let them turn back and be ashamed suddenly.
Introduction

Remember that prayer we used to pray when we were little kids that went like this:

“Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the LORD my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake, I pray the LORD my soul to take.”

When we were young we could pray that prayer and doze right off and sleep like a baby the rest of the night, couldn’t we? But what happens when you LAY DOWN TO SLEEP and YOU CAN’T GO TO SLEEP or CAN’T STAY ASLEEP?

Everyone of us here has experienced a few “sleepless nights” over the course of our lifetime. And I’m sure we have several here tonight who are among the 70 million Americans who suffer from a chronic sleep disorder. In fact 50% of Americans average less than six hours of sleep a night. That might explain why we’ve got a lot of cranky, ill-tempered people amongst us.

ILLUSTRATION: Over these past four months since Linda fell and dislocated her shoulder, I’ve watched my wife agonize night after night after night with sleeplessness because of the intense pain she is in. All night long she moves back and forth from the bed to the couch to the recliner and back to the couch to try to find a spot where she can get comfortable enough to sleep for a couple of hours at a stretch.

Have you ever noticed when you are having trouble sleeping everybody seems to have a solution? Your doctor might prescribe a sleep medication. Family members or friends might recommend that you try everything from drinking a cup of warm milk or an herbal tea to sleeping with a fan to drown out all noise.

In tonight’s message we are going to discover God's Prescription For Sleepless Nights. In fact, we are going to see how we can turn our sleepless nights into a time to grow closer to GOD.
When you read through the Book of Psalms you discover that David suffered through many sleepless nights. In this sixth Psalm David is agonizing through one such “sleepless night.”

As we take a closer look at this SIXTH PSALM we see three things David did that night that might help you and me the next time we have a sleepless night.

First of all, ON SLEEPLESS NIGHTS.........

I. CONFESS YOUR SINS TO THE LORD (vs. 1-3)

1 O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger, Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am weak; O LORD, heal me, for my bones are troubled.

3 My soul also is greatly troubled; But You, O LORD—how long?

1. In these first three verses, David is telling us why he can't sleep. There is SIN in David's life that has taken him out of fellowship with God.

2. Because the wording of this SIXTH PSALM is very similar to the wording of PSALM 51, David's “Psalm of Repentance,” it is very possible David isn’t sleeping because of his sin with Bathsheba and the guilt of having set her husband Uriah up to be killed in battle.

3. In the “dead silence” of his sleepless night, David is all alone with his SINS. His guilt is screaming at him. His conscience is tormenting him. He is under the conviction of God's Holy Spirit for the sins he has committed.
4. Realizing SLEEP is not going to come to his weary body until he “comes clean” and confesses his sins, David begins to bare his soul before God.

5. Do you know GOD promises sleep to His children? Psalm 127:2 tells us God “gives His beloved sleep.”

But that promise is conditional. GOD does not give us sleep when there is unconfessed SIN in our lives. He doesn’t give us rest when we are out of fellowship with Him.

6. Now am I suggesting that any time we have a sleepless night that it is because of SIN in our lives? No, I’m not suggesting that at all. But as children of GOD those sleepless nights affords us the opportunity to search our hearts to see if there is anything sinful standing between us and God.

   **ILLUSTRATION**

I remember when I was a teenager I had done something that angered my dad. And that night I couldn’t sleep a wink. I tossed and turned all night long because things were not right between dad and me. The very next morning I went to my dad and told him how sorry I was for what I had done and it wouldn’t happen again. Dad wrapped his loving arms around me and assured me everything was GOOD between him and me. And you know what? I slept like a baby that night.

7. Likewise in a spiritual sense, it is hard to sleep when things are not right between us and our heavenly Father. And on sleepless nights the Holy Spirit may bring you or me under conviction for sins in our life that we weren’t even aware of.

8. They say, “Confession is good for the soul.” Well, “confession is also good for sleep.” The next time you are having trouble sleeping pray that beautiful prayer in Psalm 139, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Ps.139:23,24)
David teaches something else we can do on those sleepless nights and that is……

II. **CAST YOUR CARES UPON THE LORD (vs. 4-7)**

4 Return, O Lord, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake!

5 For in death there is no remembrance of You; In the grave who will give You thanks?
6 I am weary with my groaning; All night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears.

7 My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of all my enemies.

**ILLUSTRATION**

For several years a woman had been having trouble sleeping at night because she was worried sick that a burglar was going to break into the house. Well one night her husband heard a noise in the middle of the night, so he went downstairs to investigate.

Sure enough when he got there he found a burglar inside his house. The husband reached out and shook his hand and said, “Good evening, I am glad to see you. I would like for you to come upstairs and meet my wife. She has been waiting ten years to meet you.”

(William Marshall, *Eternity Shut in a Span*)

1. In the midst of his sleepless night, David is overcome with worry and fear. The consequences of his sins have complicated his life so much he can't bear up under the load any longer.

   In today's vernacular we might say, “David is about to have a nervous breakdown” or “he's about to crack up.”
2. But notice what he says in **VERSE 4**......

**v. 4** Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies sake!

3. He’s unable to sleep.......his bed is drenched in sweat and tears.... he is over-whelmed with worries and fears.......so what does he do? **He cast his burdens upon the LORD.** He turns his worries and fears over to GOD!

4. I don’t know about you, but a lot of nights when I can’t sleep it is because my mind is racing with worries and fears over situations I have no control over. I have laid awake many a night because I was trying to carry a heavy burden the LORD never intended for me to carry. Haven’t you done that?

**ILLUSTRATION:** Several years ago I went for a walk late in the evening on the road in front of our house. By the time I headed home it was almost dark. In the dim twilight I looked in the field to my right and I saw something big and dark. Fearing it was a bear, I froze in my tracks. I watched it for a few minutes and when I didn’t see it moving any closer I started walking as fast as I could towards our house.

The next day when I left the house to drive over here to the Church I saw my “bear” from the night before; only it wasn’t a bear, **It was just a bunch of thicket along one of the drainage ditches at the edge of the field.**
5. Have you ever noticed what a giant shadow a cat cast upon a wall when it walks by a light in the darkness of night? That’s the way it is with our worries and fears. When we lie in bed and cast a light on whatever it is that is bothering us it cast a huge shadow and looks far more daunting than it truly is.

6. That’s why we need to CAST OUR BURDENS UPON THE LORD when we can’t sleep at night. We need to tell God what is weighing upon our mind and heart and turn it over to Him and let go.

7. I like what Mary Crowley says. She says, “Every night before I go to bed I turn all my worries over to the LORD, after all He is going to be up all night any way.”

When you're having a sleepless night......

CONFESS YOUR SINS TO THE LORD
CAST YOUR CARES UPON THE LORD

And thirdly.........
III. COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS FROM THE LORD (v.8-10)

8 Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity; For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping.

9 The LORD has heard my supplication; The LORD will receive my prayer.

10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled; Let them turn back and be ashamed suddenly.

1. On this sleepless night, David starts “counting his blessings” and realizes he has a lot more to be thankful for than he realizes.
   - He is thankful that GOD still cares for him.
   - He is thankful that GOD has heard his cries.
   - He is thankful for GOD’S mercies.
   - He is thankful GOD has heard his prayers.
   - And he is thankful GOD has delivered him from the hands of his enemies.

2. The text doesn’t tell us, but I have a feeling David dozed off to sleep as he counted his many blessings from the LORD.

3. Isn’t it funny how we “count things” when we can’t sleep? We try “counting sheep” and when that doesn’t work……
   - We count the TICKS ON THE CLOCK.
   - We count the NUMBER OF TIMES THE FURNACE or AIR-CONDITIONER KICKS ON.
   - We count the CHIRPS of the CRICKET outside our bedroom window.
   - We count HOW MANY DAYS IT IS TILL CHRISTMAS.
   - We count THE NUMBER OF TIMES our mate snores each minute.

When we can’t sleep, WE COUNT! And one of the best things we can count on those sleepless nights is OUR BLESSINGS.
4. I have done this many times when I couldn’t sleep and I know it works. I lie there and just start thanking GOD for everything I can think of, and before I know it I’m dozing off to sleep.

5. When we count our blessings instead of our problems, GOD brings a sweet calm and peace over our spirit that helps us rest under the watchful protection of GOD.

6. The next time you find yourself lying awake in the middle of the night “count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the LORD has done.”

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CONCLUSION

Illustration: Over the years I have kept a journal. I don’t write in it every day. In fact, sometimes I’ll go weeks or months without writing anything down. But in one of my journals I wrote something that ties right in with tonight’s message. It was an entry I made February 5, 2003.

Last night was a sleepless night. Symptoms of a bad cold kept me awake the entire night. When you can’t sleep, your mind thinks about anything and everything. Things like, “Boy, am I gonna pay for this tomorrow” “Sermon ideas” “Sunday School lessons” “Am I keeping Linda awake?” “What’s that scratching noise coming from inside our bedroom?” “What time is it?” “If I fall asleep right now how much sleep will I get before I have to get up?”

Sleepless nights produce hundreds of random thoughts. But the one thought that comforts me most is that God is the God of my sleepless nights. God never sleeps or slumbers. Through all my tossing and turning, God remains calm and steady. The thoughts that trouble me on sleepless nights are the matters God wants me to turn over to Him. Lord, thank You for the lessons I learned on this sleepless night.

Normally a “sleepless night” is a negative, but we can turn it into a positive by turning our sleeplessness into a time to draw closer to GOD.

The next time you are having trouble sleeping at night: CONFESSION YOUR SINS TO THE LORD........CAST YOUR CARES UPON THE LORD........AND COUNT YOUR MANY BLESSINGS FROM THE LORD........and chances are the LORD will bless you with sweet, restful sleep before you know it.