



# Blackfoot Church of Christ

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## Learning To Sleep Like Peter

By Tommy Thornhill

Today we are living in a stress filled society. Some even say that it has the largest group of neurotics on this planet. Stress is identified as one of the major enemies of peace of mind and good health. Stress brings on many problems – hypertension, migraine headaches, strokes, heart attacks, insomnia. As a result, many try to escape through the use of drugs, alcohol, isolation, suicide, etc. Man is a complex man, composed of body, soul and spirit 1 Thes 5:23. The Bible sometimes uses soul and spirit interchangeably. My understanding, without going into a long discourse at the time, is that in this passage, soul involves the inner life which does not die, and the spirit is that which controls the soul (the inner life). Be that as it may, peace of mind and mental health involves all three parts. Why is man in this condition? One cause is wickedness Ps. 14:4-6. “Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge, who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call on the Lord? There they are in great fear (emphasis mine t.t. stressed out, no peace of mind), for God is with the generation of the righteous. You shame the counsel of the poor, but the Lord is his refuge.” Then there are the struggles of the flesh (know what is right, but still want to do wrong). Paul had to deal with this in Rom 7. Materialism – obsessed to be rich, powerful. Read 1 Tim 6:9-10. Doublemindedness Jas 1:7, “unstable in all his ways,” divided allegiances, trying to please two different sets of people at the same time. One cannot serve God and mammon at the same time Matt 6:24. Pride causes stress. People always trying to outdo others – look better, be better, do better,

etc. Judgmental – always nit picking, fault finding. Doubt – lack of trust and faith. Childishness –immaturity. These things cause stress and rob people of peace of mind.

But, in the midst of all kinds of stress, we find Peter sleeping in Acts 12:1-7. What had just happened? Herod had executed James, a fellow apostle, and delayed doing the same thing to Peter because of the Passover (not Easter as in the KJV). But he still intended to kill him afterward, so he put him in prison under heavy guard. It is possible that Herod may have known about Peter's earlier escape from prison recorded in Acts 5:17-24. In the midst of all this, the church was actively praying for Peter, instead of being in a state of armed rebellion and civil disobedience. Were they praying for Peter's release? Note vs. 16-18. Perhaps they were praying for Peter to have physical strength as he faced impending death for he had denied Jesus earlier at Jesus' trial.

In all of this we find Peter sleeping. Remember he was facing death. How could Peter sleep under such circumstances? He may have recalled Jn 21:18-19. Yet, he slept soundly vs. 6-7. Peter had observed Jesus sleeping in the midst of a storm. Maybe Peter learned from that event how to sleep Mk 4:35-36. There were some things Peter knew, that we ought to know, then we can sleep well.

1. Peter knew that God was aware of his situation. While Peter slept God was awake and watching. Peter knew God was well able to protect him Ps 121:1-8. God is our "sentry" during the turmoils of life. When we know God is standing guard, we can be secure under all circumstances. He had proven this in the past, why should it be different now? Ps 23:4; 3:1-6. What did He promise in Matt 28:20? Peter heard this and he could take comfort knowing that Jesus would never forsake him Heb 13:5-6. Could Peter be sure? In all probability he knew of Stephen' death in Acts 7:59-60? Doubt could have caused Peter to waver, but he didn't. He slept. He knew God was aware Rev 2:13.

2. Peter knew there was no reason to fear death so he could sleep. Think of the Hebrew children in Dan 3:16-18. Is it a terrible thing to die while serving Christ? Many today spend their whole life dreading death. It robs them of peace of mind, joy, hope Ps 4:8. Paul shows that the Christian can be confident in facing death 2 Tim. 4:6-8. How soundly do you reckon Paul slept while in prison? 2 Tim 1:12; Rev 2:10.

3. Peter could sleep because he was confident his faithful service would be rewarded. Jesus had promised him a home later Jn 14:1-3, and a reward Matt 19:28-30. Heaven will never forget about us Heb 6:10; Rev 14:13; 7:14-17; Gal 6:9; Eccl 5:12. How well do you sleep? Check your faith, your obedience. Do you have guilt? If so, cast your care on God 1 Pet 5:7.

Trust in God and sleep well. I close with this story. A little boy had an opportunity to select a dog for his birthday. At the pet store he was shown a number of puppies and it was hard to decide which one to get. Then his eye caught one puppy wagging his tail furiously. He told his parents, "I want that one with the happy ending." How about you? Do you want a happy ending?

### **A Great Lesson on Stress**

(from the internet, no author given)

A young lady confidently walked around the room while teaching and explaining stress management to an audience, carrying a raised glass of water. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, "half empty or half full?" She fooled them all... "How heavy is this glass of water?" She inquired with a smile.

Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz. She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer you hold it, the heavier it becomes." She continued, "And that's the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, the burden becomes increasingly heavy. We won't be able to carry on."

"As with the glass of water you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden. Holding stress longer and better each time stress is encountered." So as early in the evening as you can, put all your burdens down. Don't carry them through the evening and into the night. Pick them up tomorrow if necessary.

## Prayer Requests & Announcements

- April will have surgery on her wrist this Thursday
- Sylvia Ward, Ross's Mom, remains in rehab
- Cameron Bauman brain tumor and radiation treatments
- Scott Boucher (Sparks NV) cancer treatment
- Keep April in your prayers as she deals with health issues
- The Christians in the Philippines

**For prayer requests, call or text**

Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

## Worship Assignments

### Today

**Song Leader** – David Porter

**Lord's Table** – Ben Palmer

– Larry Thompson

### Wednesday

**Song Leader** – Tom Mitchell

**Invitation** – Chad Mitchell

Blackfoot Church of Christ  
370 North Shilling Ave.  
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

### Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM

Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM

Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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