

Sleeping Beauty?

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Please take a few minutes to quiet your heart and go before the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to forgive you of any sin and open the eyes of your heart to His word. Now, please read Luke 9:28-36 silently.

28 "Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. 30 And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. 33 Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" 36 When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen."

Now, please read the text aloud, taking time to underline or highlight anything that is significant to you.

Please notate what God is speaking to you in the space provided:

As I was reading this portion of Scripture a few days ago, God impressed upon my heart the following incredible invitation: God calls us to *meet with Him*. Today during our study time, we are going to discover how we can deepen our relationship with Christ by meeting with Him.

Please go back and read verse 28 again.

Where was Jesus going?

Why was He going there?

Who accompanied Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus took Peter, James and John with Him?

Jesus lived with His disciples on a daily basis. They ate, walked, talked, slept, traveled, laughed and prayed together. Why the special call to go away to the mountains? I think Jesus called Peter, James and John to go with Him because He had something important He wanted to teach them apart from the hustle and bustle of busy ministry work. The mountains were a place of rest and solitude for Jesus—a place to commune with His Father. Just as Jesus called His disciples away from everyday life and ministry to meet with Him, He calls you as well. Sometimes Jesus wants you all to Himself.

Have you ever taken time away from your normal daily schedule to spend intentional time with God?

One of my favorite places to meet with Jesus is the beautiful campus of the University of Notre Dame. During the idle days of summer I pack up my bike and a few good books and spend a couple of hours with Jesus doing my favorite things ... riding around Lake St. Mary ... reading by the Golden Dome ... and praying at the Grotto. When school is back in session my retreat spot is a cozy little nook in a spare bedroom of our house. Sometimes I plan ahead to take a retreat with Jesus. Other times when I feel Him beckoning, I drop what I'm doing and steal away with Him for a while. The minutes I spend with Him are special and refreshing.

How can you make time to meet with Jesus?

What gets in the way of meeting with Him?

Please go back and read verse 28 again.

What does Jesus want you to do when you meet with Him?

He wants you to spend some of your time with Him in prayer. The word used for prayer in this verse is *proseuchomai*, which means to *pray* or *offer prayers*. *Proseuchomai* is used in the New Testament eighty-seven times. It is derived from two other Greek words, the preposition *pros* and the verb *euchomai*. The meaning behind preposition *pros* is very interesting. It is used after verbs of *leading, directing, sending, drawing* or *bringing*. From the meaning of this preposition we infer that God uses prayer time to *direct* our steps, *lead* us to those in need, *draw* us closer to Him, *bring* others to the foot of the cross and *send* us to deliver the Gospel of peace.

What has God been leading, directing and bringing you to do lately?

Now, please read verses 29 and 32.

What happened to Jesus as He prayed?

Not only was He transfigured but His clothes became white and glistening. 2 Corinthians 3:18 teaches that as Christians, we are being transfigured as well. Our transfiguration is accomplished by the renewing of our minds through the study of God's Word. As we become more like Christ, our prayers will line up with His will and God will use them to transfigure our lives and the lives of those around us. Matthew Henry, a theologian from the 17th and early 18th centuries writes:

“And thus he [Jesus] intended to put an *honour* upon the duty of prayer, and to *recommend* it to us. It is a transfiguring, transforming duty; if our hearts be elevated and enlarged in it, so as in it to *behold the glory of the Lord*, we shall be *changed into the same image from glory to glory*, (2 Cor. 3:18). By prayer we fetch in the wisdom, grace, and joy, which *make the face to shine*.”

In short, we will be transfigured by our prayer time.

While Jesus was busy praying, His disciples were otherwise employed. What were they doing (Luke 9:32)?

The Greek word used for sleep in this passage is *hupnos*. *Hupnos* can refer to physical *or* spiritual sleep. One of my resources states that *hupnos* means the “slumbering state of a soul,” or “spiritual conformity to the world of which believers are commanded to avoid.” *Hupnos* is derived from another Greek word that means, “to arise from a state of moral sloth to an active life devoted to God.” Spiritual sleepiness is often marked by prayerlessness.

The text says Peter, James and John were *heavy* with sleep. The Disciples aren't the only sleepy Christians. Americans have sleep issues too. According to a recent study published by The National Sleep Foundation, Americans rank second in regards to fewest hours of sleep per night (Japanese people clocked the fewest hours). I can attest to the fact that I have often heard people give excuse that they cannot have a Quiet Time in the morning because they are too tired.

Has sleep ever interfered with meeting with Jesus?

What can you do to avoid this problem?

You may need to cut out a few television programs, activities or hobbies in order to get to bed earlier so you can meet with Jesus in the morning. Scripture states there are special benefits that can only be received by meeting with God *before* you begin your day. (Check out Psalm 30:5, Psalm 143:8, Isaiah 50:4, Lam 3:23, Ezekiel 12:8). I

am naturally an early riser but I have learned the benefit of hiding God's Word hidden in my heart before I face the challenges of a new day.

Please take a quick look at Mark 14:33-38 and record what the Disciples were doing in this instance.

Matthew Henry, commented on Luke 9 and Mark 14:

" ... when he began to be *transfigured*, and [Peter, James and John] so lost an opportunity of seeing how that work of wonder was wrought. These three were now asleep, when Christ was in *his glory*, as afterwards they were, when he was in *his agony*; see the *weakness* and *frailty* of human nature, even in the best, and what need they have of the grace of God. Nothing could be more affecting to these disciples, one would think, than the *glories* and the *agonies* of their Master, and both in the highest degree; and yet neither the one nor the other would serve to *keep them awake*."

It seems the disciples had sleep issues.

What spiritual application can you draw from the actions of Peter, James and John from these two portions of Scripture?

We need to guard against spiritual sleepiness and becoming so complacent to the things of the kingdom of God that we actually fall asleep in the presence of our Lord and miss His glory. What causes spiritual sleepiness? Wordless, thankless, prayerless lives lead to spiritual sleep.

Think for a moment about what a person can accomplish when asleep. Basically the only thing one can do when asleep is sleep. Sleeping people cannot carry on a conversation, take in information, or participate in any kind of work or task. A sleeping person is a nonproductive person. Romans 13:11 states, "And *do* this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed." For Peter, James and John, their salvation was literally nearer than they first believed. We too need to heed this warning and awake from our slumber.

Please answer the following question (I will answer it too).

In what area/areas of your life do you need a spiritual wake-up call?

Please refer back to verse 32.

Why do you think Peter, James and John were sleeping instead of praying?

What happened as a result of their falling sleeping?

They missed the transfiguration of Jesus. Have we also fallen asleep and missed the glory of God? There are parts of Jesus we too will miss unless we are *fully awake*. Are there things about God that used to drop us to our knees in awe that we now barely notice because they have become commonplace to us? What is the cause of *falling asleep*? Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, "The man who forgets to be thankful has fallen asleep in life." Thanklessness causes spiritual sleepiness.

What does the Bible say about falling asleep? Please look up the following verses and record what you learn about sleep.

Romans 13:11:

Mark 13:35-37:

Please go back and reread Luke 9:32.

What happened when Peter, James and John became not just awake but *fully awake*?

They saw the glory of Jesus. (I imagine it was the shining, glorious brilliance of Jesus that finally awoke our drowsy Disciples from their slumber.) To be *fully awake* means "to give strict attention to, to be

cautious, to be active, to employ the most punctilious care in a thing." Being fully awake means that we are fully seeking, fully longing, fully striving to know and see God with all of our hearts, souls and minds.

Based on our definition above, what can you do to become *fully awake*?

What happened once the disciples were fully awake (verse 34)?

They were overshadowed by a cloud and the very Presence of God. The original Greek word used for *cloud* in this verse is *nephele*. *Nephele* is not an ordinary everyday rain cloud type of cloud; it is used to indicate the cloud that led the Israelites through the desert. Matthew Henry states,

"This cloud was a token of God's more peculiar presence. It was in a cloud that God of old took possession of the tabernacle and temple, and, when the cloud *covered the tabernacle, Moses was not able to enter* (Ex. 40:34, 35), and, when it filled the temple, the *priests could not stand to minister by reason of it*. Such a cloud was this, and then no wonder that the disciples were *afraid to enter into it*. But never let any be afraid to enter into a cloud with Jesus Christ; for he will be sure to bring them safely through it."

What else were Peter, James and John able to do when fully awake (verse 35)?

They were able to *hear* Him. And once God commanded the Disciples to, "Hear Him" according to verse 36 they "kept quiet"! I would too! When in the Presence of Jesus it is probably best not to give Him advice (verse 33) but give ear to the Living Word of God.

What can you do today to hear from God?

In closing, if you have discovered that you are spiritually sleepy, take hope! Sleep is not a permanent condition. We can wake up to fully see, hear and walk passionately with Jesus. When we really see Jesus and let Him speak into our hearts, He will transfigure our lives, our circumstances and our relationship with Him.

Thank you for joining me today. Be blessed.

*“Now all wept and mourned for her;
but He said, “Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.”
And then Jesus “took her by the hand and called, saying,
“Little girl, arise. Then her spirit returned, and she arose
immediately.”
Luke 8:52, 54-55.*

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