

LEARN HOW TO WAKE UP AND GET UP!

BASED ON A MESSAGE BY JOHN WESLEY ON REDEEMING THE
TIME THROUGH THE DISCIPLINE OF EARLY RISING



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INTRODUCTION

From his conversion in 1738, until his death in 1783, John Wesley preached 40,000 sermons, traveled more than 250,000 miles on horseback, wrote and published scores of publications, and shook two continents for Christ. He was perhaps used of God to a greater extent than anyone since the time of the Apostles to bring genuine revival in his day.

John Wesley gave his circuit rider preachers a book of 52 standard sermons as a basis for their training. One of those 52 sermons was on the topic “Redeeming the Time.” What would a man like Wesley advise as being the most crucial discipline needed by those who would redeem the time for God? What did he see as the main help for those who “need more time?”

John Wesley devoted his entire sermon to the practice of early rising. He rose consistently at 4:00, often preaching his first sermon at 5:00. He was very scientific in determining just how much sleep his body actually needed. Once he determined that amount, he simply did whatever necessary to keep that schedule. He knew the power of doing things methodically. That is where the Methodists got their name.

I hope that this message will encourage and challenge your heart as it has mine. I have noticed over the years, that my devotional life will always rise or fall based on my ability to consistently get up on time and spend quality morning time with God. What I am able to produce in a day's time also depends on my getting a jump on, then staying ahead of, the demands of the day. That means starting early.

We all have a very short time between now and the day we die to accomplish the most we possibly can for God. I have determined I want to have the greatest impact possible with the remaining time God gives me. If that is your desire I believe you can find lasting help in the principles outlined by Mr. Wesley.

May God bless you as you explore this timeless truth.

In Christ,

Rick Grubbs
President
LifeChanging Seminars

JOHN WESLEY

ON REDEEMING THE TIME

Ephesians 5:16.

“See that ye walk circumspectly,” says the Apostle in the preceding verse, “not as fools, but as wise men, redeeming the time;” saving all the time you can for the best purposes; buying up every fleeting moment out of the hands of sin and Satan, out of the hands of sloth, ease, pleasure, worldly business; the more diligently, because the present are evil days, days of the grossest ignorance, immorality, and profaneness.

This seems to be the general meaning of the words. But I purpose, at present, to consider only one particular way of redeeming the time, namely, from sleep.

This appears to have been scarcely considered even by pious men. Many that have been extremely conscientious in other respects, have not been so in this. They seemed to think it an indifferent thing, whether they slept more or less; and never saw it as an important branch of Christian discipline.

That we may have a better understanding of this matter, I will endeavor to show,

- I. What it is to redeem the time from sleep.
- II. The evil of not redeeming it. And,
- III. The most effectual manner of doing it.

I. WHAT IS IT TO REDEEM TIME FROM SLEEP?

First, What is it to redeem the time from sleep? It is, in general, to take that measure of sleep every night which nature requires, and no more; that measure which is most conducive to the health and vigor both of the body and mind.

But it is objected, one measure will not suit all men; some require considerably more than others. Neither will the same measure suffice even the same persons at one time as at another. When a person is sick, or, if not actually so, yet weakened by preceding sickness, he certainly needs more of this natural restorative, than he did when in perfect health. And so he will when his strength and spirits are exhausted by hard or long-continued labor.

All this is unquestionably true, and confirmed by a thousand experiments. Whoever, therefore, they are that have attempted to fix one measure of sleep for all persons, did not understand the nature of the human body, so widely different in different persons: as neither did they who imagined that the same measure would suit even the same person at all times. One would

wonder, therefore, that so great a man as Bishop Taylor should have formed this strange imagination; much more, that the measure which he has assigned for the general standard should be only three hours per day. That good and sensible man, Mr. Baxter, was not much nearer the truth; who supposes four hours daily will suffice for any man. I know an extremely sensible man, who was absolutely persuaded, that no one living needed to sleep more than five hours. But when he made the experiment himself, he quickly relinquished the opinion. And I am fully convinced, by an observation continued for more than fifty years, that, whatever may be done by extraordinary persons, or in some extraordinary cases, (wherein persons have subsisted with very little sleep for some weeks, or even months,) a human body can scarce continue in health and vigor, without, at least, six hours sleep daily. I am sure I have never met with such a person: I never found either man or woman that retained vigorous health for one year, with a less quantity of sleep than this.

And I have long observed, that women, in general, need a little more sleep than men; perhaps, because they are usually of a weaker body. If, therefore, one might venture to name one standard, (though there will be many exceptions and occasional alterations,) I am inclined to think this would come near to the mark: Healthy men, in general, need a little more than six hours sleep, healthy women, a little above seven hours. I myself need six hours and a half, and I cannot function well with less.

If any one desires to know exactly what quantity of sleep his own constitution requires, he may very easily make the experiment which I made about sixty years ago: I woke up every night about twelve or one, and lay awake for some time. I readily concluded that this arose from my lying longer in bed than nature required. To be satisfied, I got an alarm, which woke me the next morning at seven; (near an hour earlier than I rose the day before) yet I lay awake again at night. The second morning I rose at six; but still, I lay awake the second night. The third morning I rose at five; but, nevertheless, I lay awake the third night. The fourth morning I rose at four; (as, by the grace of God, I have done ever since) and I lay awake no more. And I do not now lie awake on average a quarter of an hour total in a month. By the same experiment, going to bed at the same time each night and rising earlier and earlier every morning, any one may find how much sleep he really needs.

II. THE EVIL OF NOT REDEEMING THE TIME

But why should any one go to such trouble? What need is there of being so scrupulous? Why should we make ourselves so particular? What harm is there in doing as our neighbors do, such as sleeping in from ten till six or seven in summer, and till eight or nine in winter?

If you would consider this question fairly, you will need a good deal of candor and impartiality; since what I am about to say will probably be quite new; different from any thing you ever heard in your life; different from the judgment, at least from the example, of your parents and your nearest relations; nay, and perhaps of the most religious persons you ever were acquainted with. Lift up, therefore, your heart to the Spirit of truth, and beg of him to shine

upon it, that, without respecting any man's person, you may see and follow the truth as it is in Jesus.

Do you really desire to know what harm there is in not redeeming all the time you can from sleep? What harm is there in spending an hour a day more than nature requires? First, **it hurts your earnings**; it is throwing away six hours a week, which you could turn into some material possession. If you can do any work, you might earn something in that time, were it ever so small. And you have no need to throw even this away. If you do not want it yourself; give it to them that do; you know some of them that are not far off. If you have no trade, still you may employ the time so that it will bring money, or money's worth, to yourself, or others.

Not redeeming all the time you can from sleep, spending more time sleeping than your constitution necessarily requires, in the second place, **hurts your health**. Nothing can be more certain than this, though it is not commonly observed, because the evil creeps upon you by slow and insensible degrees. In this gradual and almost imperceptible manner it lays the foundation of many diseases. It is the chief real (though unsuspected) cause of all nervous diseases in particular. Many inquiries have been made, why nervous disorders are so much more common among us than among our ancestors. Other causes may frequently concur; but the chief is we lie longer in bed. Instead of rising at four, most of us who are not obliged to work for our bread lie till seven, eight, or nine. We need inquire no farther.

This sufficiently accounts for the large increase of these painful disorders. It may be observed, that most of these arise, not merely from sleeping too long, but even from, what we imagine to be quite harmless, the lying too long, in bed. By **soaking** (as it is emphatically called) so long between warm sheets, the flesh is, as it were, gently stewed, and becomes soft and flabby. The nerves, in the mean time, are quite unstrung, and all the train of melancholy symptoms, faintness, tremors, lowness of spirits, (so called,) come on, till life itself is a burden.

6. One common effect of either sleeping too long, or lying too long in bed, is **weakness of sight**, particularly that weakness which is of the nervous kind. When I was young, my sight was remarkably weak. Why is it stronger now than it was forty years ago? I impute this principally to the blessing of God, who fits us for whatever he calls us to. But undoubtedly the outward means which he has been pleased to bless was rising early in the morning.

7. A still greater objection to the not rising early, the not redeeming all the time we can from sleep, is, **it hurts the soul**, as well as the body; it is a sin against God. And this indeed it must necessarily be, on both the preceding accounts. For we cannot waste, or (which comes to the same thing) fail to improve, any part of our worldly substance, neither can we damage our own health, without sinning against Him.

8. But this fashionable intemperance does also hurt the soul in a more direct manner. It **sows the seeds of foolish and hurtful desires**; it dangerously inflames our natural appetites; which a person stretching and yawning in bed is prepared to gratify. It breeds and continually increases sloth, so often found in the English nation. It opens the way, and prepares the soul;

for every other kind of excess indulgence. It breeds a universal softness and faintness of spirit, making us afraid of every little inconvenience, unwilling to deny ourselves any pleasure, or to take up or bear any cross. And how then shall we be able (without which we must drop into hell) to take the kingdom of heaven by violence? It leaves us totally unprepared for enduring hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; (2 Ti. 2:3) and, consequently, for fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life. (1 Ti. 6:12)

9. In how beautiful a manner does that great man, Mr. Law, treat this important subject! I cannot help but refer to part of his words here, for the use of every sensible reader.

Alt should be taken it for granted, that every Christian who is in good health should be up early in the morning. It is much more reasonable to suppose a person should be up early because he is a Christian, than because he is a laborer, or a tradesman, or a servant.

We think it abhorrent of a man that is in bed when he should be at his labor. We cannot think good of him, who is such a slave to drowsiness to neglect his business for it.

Let this, therefore, teach us to conceive how horrible we must appear to God, if we are in bed, shut up in sleep, when we should be praising God; and are such slaves to drowsiness as to neglect our devotions for it.

Sleep in such a dull, stupid state of existence, that, even among mere animals, we despise them most which are most drowsy. He, therefore, that chooses to enlarge the slothful indolence of sleep, rather than be early at his devotions, chooses the dullest refreshment of the body, before the noblest enjoyments of the soul. He chooses that state which is a reproach to mere animals, before that exercise which is the glory of angels.

10. Besides, he that cannot deny himself this drowsy indulgence, is no more prepared for prayer when he is up, than he is prepared for fasting or any other act of self-denial. He may indeed more easily read over a form of prayer, than he can perform these duties; but he is no more disposed for the spirit: of prayer, than he is disposed for fasting. For sleep thus indulged **gives a softness to our will, and makes us unable to relish any thing but what suits an idle state of mind**, as sleep does, so that a person who is a slave to this idleness is in the same state of mind when he is up. Every thing that is idle or sensual pleases him. And every thing that requires trouble or self-denial, is hateful to him, for the same reason that he hates to rise.

11. **It is not possible for a pleasure lover to be truly devout.** He must renounce his sensuality, before he can relish the happiness of devotion. Now, he that turns sleep into an idle indulgence, does as much to corrupt his soul, to make it a slave to bodily appetites, as a pleasure-driven sluggard does. It does not quickly destroy his health, as notorious acts of indulgent sin do; but, like any more moderate course of indulgence, it silently, and by smaller degrees, wears away the spirit of religion, and sinks the soul into dullness and sensuality.

Self-denial of all kinds is the very life and soul of piety. But he that has not so much of it as to be able to be early at his prayers, cannot think that he has taken up his cross, and is following Christ.

What conquest does he have over himself? What right hand has he cut off? What trials is he prepared for? What sacrifice is he ready to offer to God, who cannot be so cruel to himself as to rise to pray at such a time as the drudging part of the world are content to rise to their labor?

12. Some people will not hesitate to tell you, that they indulge themselves in sleep simply because they have nothing to do. They claim that if they had any business to rise for, then they would not lose so much of their time to sleep. But they must be told, that they mistake the matter; that they **have a great deal of business to do**; they have such a hardened heart to change that they need to seek the Lord for salvation itself. For surely he that thinks he has nothing to do, because nothing but his prayers await him, may justly be said to have the whole of salvation yet to seek.

You must not therefore consider how small a fault it is to rise late; but how great a misery it is to miss the spirit of true religion, and to live in such softness and idleness as make you incapable of the fundamental duties of Christianity.

If I was to desire you not to study the gratification of your appetites, I would not insist upon the sin of wasting your money, though it is; a great one; but I would desire you to renounce such a way of life, because it supports you in such a state of sensuality as renders you incapable of relishing the most essential doctrines of religion.

For the same reason, I do not insist much upon the sin of wasting your time in sleep, though it be a great one, but I desire you to renounce this indulgence, because **it gives a softness and idleness to your soul**, and is so contrary to that lively, zealous, watchful, self-denying spirit, which was not only the spirit of Christ and his Apostles, and the spirit of all the saints and martyrs that have ever been among men, but must be the spirit of all those who would not sink in the common corruption of the world.

13. Here, therefore, we must fix our charge against this practice. We must blame it, not as having this or that particular evil, but as a general habit that extends itself through our whole spirit, and **supports a state of mind that is wholly wrong**.

It is contrary to piety; not as accidental slips or mistakes in life are contrary to it; but in such a manner as an ill state of body is contrary to health.

On the other hand, if you were to rise early every morning, as an instance of self-denial, as a method of renouncing indulgence, as a means of redeeming your time and fitting your spirit for prayer, you would soon find the advantage. This method, though it seems but a small thing, might be a means of great piety. It would constantly keep it in your mind, that softness and idleness are the opposite of true religion. It would teach you to exercise power over yourself, and to renounce other pleasures and tempers that war against the soul. And what is so

planted and watered will certainly have an increase from God.

III. HOW TO REDEEM THE TIME FROM SLEEP

1. It now only remains to inquire, in the Third place, how we may redeem the time, how we may proceed in this important affair. In what manner shall we most effectually practice this important branch of temperance?

I advise all of you who are thoroughly convinced of the unspeakable importance of it, do not allow that conviction to die away, but **instantly begin to act on it**. Only do not depend on your own strength; if you do, you will be utterly baffled. Be deeply sensible, that as you are not able to do any thing good of yourselves, so here, in particular, all your strength, all your resolution, will avail nothing. Whoever trusts in himself will be confounded. I have never found an exception. I never knew one who trusted in his own strength that could keep this resolution for even twelve months.

2. I advise you, Secondly, **cry out to our Strong God** for strength. Call upon Him that has all power in heaven and earth, and believe that he will answer the prayer that comes from sincere lips. As you cannot have too little confidence in yourself, so you cannot have too much in him. Then step out in faith; and surely his strength shall be made perfect in your weakness.

3. I advise you, Thirdly, add to your faith, prudence: use the most rational means to attain your purpose. Begin at the right end, otherwise you will lose your labor. **If you desire to rise early, go to sleep early**. Make sure of this point at all times. In spite of the most dear and agreeable companions, in spite of their most earnest pleas, in spite of those who beg you otherwise, scoff at you or reproach you, rigorously keep your hour. Rise up precisely at your time, and retire without ceremony. Keep your hour, notwithstanding the most pressing business: Lay all things by till the morning. Be it ever so great a cross, ever so great self-denial, keep your retiring hour, or all is over.

4. I advise you, Fourthly, **be steady, keep your hour of rising without intermission**. Do not rise two mornings, and lie in bed the third; but what you do once, do always. ABut my head aches. Do not regard that. It will soon be over. But I am uncommonly drowsy; my eyes are quite heavy. When you face temptation not to rise must not hesitate; otherwise it is a lost case; but get up and move about at once and if your drowsiness does not go off; lie down for awhile an hour or two after you get up. But let nothing make an exception this rule, rise and dress yourself at your hour.

5. Perhaps you will say, The advice is good; but it comes too late! I have made an exception already. I did rise constantly for a season, nothing hindered me. But I gave way by little and little, and I have now left it off for a considerable time. Then, in the name of God, begin again! Begin tonight, by going to bed early, in spite of either company or business. Begin with **less self-confidence** than before, but with **more confidence in God**. Only follow these few rules, and, I guarantee, God will give you the victory. In a little time the difficulty will be over, but the benefit will last for ever.

6. If you say, But I cannot do now as I did then; for I am not what I was: I have many disorders, my spirits are low, my hands shake; I don't have the strength, I answer: All these are nervous symptoms; and they all partly arise from your taking too much sleep: Nor is it probable they will ever be removed, unless you remove the cause. Therefore, for this very reason, (not only to punish yourself for your folly and unfaithfulness, but,) in order to recover your health and strength, resume your early rising. You have no other way; you have nothing else to do. You have no other possible means of recovering, in any tolerable degree, your health both of body and mind. Do not murder yourself outright. **Do not run on in the path that leads to the gates of death!** As I said before, so I say again, In the name of God, this very day, set out anew. True, it will be more difficult than it was at the beginning. But bear the difficulty which you have brought upon yourself, and it will not last long. The Sun of Righteousness will soon arise again, and will heal both your soul and your body.

7. **But do not imagine that this single point, rising early, will suffice to make you a Christian.** No: Although that single point, the not rising, may keep you a Heathen, void of the whole Christian spirit; although this alone (especially if you had once conquered it) will keep you cold, formal, heartless, dead, and make it impossible for you to get one step forward in vital holiness, yet this alone will go but a little way to make you a real Christian. It is but one step out of many; but it is one. And having taken this, go forward. **Go on to universal self-denial, to temperance in all things,** to a firm resolution of taking up daily every cross whereto you are called. Go on, in a full pursuit of all the mind that was in Christ, of inward and then outward holiness, so shall you be not almost but altogether a Christian; so shall you finish your course with joy: You shall awake up after his likeness, and be satisfied.

MORE IDEAS ON HOW TO WAKE UP AND GET UP

1. In John Wesley's day an invention, whose sole purpose is catering to slothfulness, had not yet been invented. It is called the snooze button! The very purpose of the snooze button is to facilitate rationalization of staying in bed past the time we already determined we ought to get up. I suggest you do the same thing I did years ago. If the structure of your clock allows it, open the clock and disconnect the wires to the snooze button. If you can't do that, at least purpose that you will not learn to use it. Put a piece of tape with the word "NO!" over the button or buy a new clock without the "sloth button."
2. Record for one week what time you go to bed and what time you get up. Just as Wesley did, continually experiment with yourself to see how much sleep you actually need to be at peak performance. Some people find that by napping a half hour during the day they can get by with an hour less sleep at night. If so you can add one half hour to every day, which will result in seven and one half extra days in a year's time added to your life!
3. Place a scripture relating to sleep and slothfulness on the ceiling over your bed.
4. Do a Bible study of great men of God who rose early to do the Lord's work.
5. Read a biography of John Wesley for inspiration and example. There are several of them in any good Christian bookstore. A video of his life story is available from IBLP at Box one, Oak Brook IL, 60522. Or call 630.323.9800 The web site is IBLP.ORG.
6. Schedule with a friend to meet you at a certain hour early in the morning either in person or by phone. Accountability is the key to making you a "morning person." Anyone can get up when they really have to. My previous church had a 5:00 am prayer meeting seven days a week. As you can imagine it is not the most popular activity in the church but there are a few faithful ones. A while back, I asked for the responsibility of making sure the doors were unlocked every day for the prayer meeting. This gave me the accountability I needed to get up even when I didn't feel like it. Try having a friend call you at a given time and you promise to call them back in 15 minutes to make sure you are both still awake. Remember there are two times when you can get up. When you really *want* to and when you really *have* to.
7. Remember "mind over mattress." There is such a thing as genuine physical exhaustion and fatigue. We've all experienced it after driving through the night to grandma's for Thanksgiving or staying up late studying for finals. But I believe much of our early morning fatigue is mental and can be overcome using the methods discussed.
8. Cry out to God for His grace to help overcome indolent sleep. If it is God's will for you to get up at a certain time, He will surely give you the desire and the power to do so.
9. Keep everything in balance. Satan would love for us to die young from unwise care for our health just as much as he would love for us to waste precious time oversleeping. Every truth has its balancing truth. Any truth or emphasis taken to an extreme will result in error.

10. Always begin your day with bright cheerful music. Try a Sousa March CD for when you first get up or some other highly motivational music which will set your mind on the things of God and get you moving. The first experience of the day often sets the tone for the day. Plan ahead to make it a positive one.
11. Give your spouse full authority to do whatever is necessary to get you out of bed at the optimal time. Promise them that you will not be grouchy with them for helping you when you are not yet in a position to think and act rationally.
12. Ask God to be your alarm clock. I am always meeting people in our seminars who tell me about growing up on the farm and never having an alarm clock yet they could set their mind the night before to get up at a certain time and they would just wake up.
13. When you wake up get up and when you get up wake up. Remember it doesn't do you any good to be physically awake but mentally asleep. Do something to get yourself fully awake as soon as possible.
14. GO TO BED!!!

SCRIPTURES FOR FURTHER STUDY

ON LOVE OF SLEEP

Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids. Pro. 6:4

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man. Pro. 6:9-11

He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. Pro. 10:5

Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread. Pro. 20:13

For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. Pro. 23:21

ON THE SLEEP OF THE RIGHTEOUS

I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me. Psa. 3:5

I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety. Psa. 4:8

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. Psa. 127:2

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Pro. 3:24

Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me. Jer. 31:26

EXAMPLES OF EARLY RISING

Abraham - To carry out the will of God in a difficult matter, Ge. 22:3

Gideon- to discern God's will, Jud. 6:38

The Virtuous Woman- To provide for her family, Pr. 31:15

Samuel and Saul- To prepare for leadership, 1 Sam. 9:26

David- To carry out an "impossible" task for the Lord, 1 Sa. 17:20

Jesus- To spend uninterrupted time alone with God, Mk. 1:35