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God didn't create us to be "energizer bunnies." He didn't create us with the ability to go-go-go 24/7. We know this from creation itself. Recall that "on the seventh day He rested." Likewise, the Sabbath was to be a day of worship for the soul and rest for the body. Sleep comes into play here, too. Even Jesus slept. As a complete human His body needed to be recharged. Think of Him in that boat with the disciples in the midst of the storm on the Sea of Galilee—sleeping—before He awoke to calm the storm. Yes, we all need our rest and our sleep.

The older I've gotten the more I laugh at modern humans who think that sleep is unnecessary and outmoded. Think of all the energy drinks sold. Think of all the people engaged in "extreme sports" in order to get an adrenaline rush and thus stave off rest and sleep. I shake my head over all this and think: "In 10 or 20 years they will rue the day they ever adopted such a lifestyle." Lack of sleep plays havoc with the human body.

God made us with various organs and glands which help our bodies function properly. One of these glands is the adrenals located just above the kidneys. In our modern age almost everyone suffers from adrenal fatigue which leads to sleeplessness, higher blood pressure (Yes, they help regulate it) along with weight gain, fluid retention, muscle tissue loss, and heart palpitations to name of a few. The adrenals are the "fight or flight" organs. Chronic stress as well as stimulants (coffee anyone?) literally wears out the adrenals over time. When stress comes upon us, the adrenals pump out adrenaline to cope with it. This in turn increases blood pressure, elevates the heart rate, maximizes blood sugar and shuts down digestion to pump energy to the muscles. Then the body needs rest or it crashes. But, people use stimulants instead of sleeping. This in turn leads to a whole host of health problems including a shrinkage of the hippocampus in the brain (memory center). Inflammation occurs and the adrenal, thyroid and pituitary glands get exhausted. Basically, modern humans yo-yo their bodies and never give them time to recharge. Rest, or sleep, is vital.

Our mothers told us to "get our rest." They were right. Kids need more sleep than adults and adults need between 6 to 8 hours each night. You need a bare minimum of 4 hours of uninterrupted sleep from 10 til 2 a.m. just for basic body maintenance. And the reason so many wake up in the middle of the night is that blood sugar levels and glucose stores from the liver are out of whack by then due to adrenal fatigue. You can research what to do to improve this on your own.

The point is: every single one of us needs to do something to improve our sleep habits and our health. Eliminating stress—mental, physical, chemical or even thermal is important. Avoiding stimulants like caffeine is important. Avoid a lot of sugar which depresses thyroid function and lowers metabolic rates. Don't be afraid of eating high quality fat or protein as

they prevent blood sugar fluctuations and minimize the release of cortisol and insulin. And get your rest—preferably in a darkened room. In other words adopt a lifestyle much like that of “former years”. To be sure, this is easier said than done considering societal pressures. But in this case, what’s good for the body is also good for the soul and vice-versa. So, let’s talk about the soul and rest.

God’s creation of a Sabbath day, or day of rest, shows just how vital it all is. After all, doesn’t God know what you need to cope and function better than anyone else since He created you? And make no mistake, the Sabbath was about the recharging of the soul just as much as the recharging of the body. That’s where Sunday worship comes into play. When we worship, we step outside our hectic world into the eternal. Worship should be an “Ah” moment for everyone. For in worship God does all the giving and we do all the receiving. He gives us instruction in Godly truth. He heals our souls with His forgiving love. He comes via Word and Sacraments to personally bestow rest upon our spirit. In worship God walks with us, comforts us, and uplifts us. He calms our troubled hearts. That, in turn, relieves worldly stress.

I know that most of you leave church calmer and more at peace than when you came. It usually lasts throughout Sunday afternoon. But then, on Sunday night you begin to think about the coming week, gear up, and fitful sleep often results. That’s the problem, isn’t it? So, we get out the Ben and Jerry’s before bedtime and then tank up on caffeine when we groggily get out of bed on Monday morning. The adrenal fatigue cycle starts all over for another week.

None of us can step off this race-track world and become hermits. (Although I know some of you would really like to!) What we can do is ween ourselves away from physical stressors on the body, get our rest as often as possible, eat and drink a more healthy diet, and work at feeding our souls whenever possible. One of the great truths of life that I’ve learned and am constantly re-learning is to take the long view of things. That is, ask yourself: what truly matters and what will still be important to me in 5, 10, or 20 years? It gives you a new perspective on life, doesn’t it? Christianity is all about taking the long view of life. In fact the longest one of all—eternity. Yes, rest for the body and the soul are blessings beyond all measure because they pay the biggest dividends.