

YOUR GUIDE TO



# A Good Night's Sleep

BIBLE VERSES, STORIES AND TIPS

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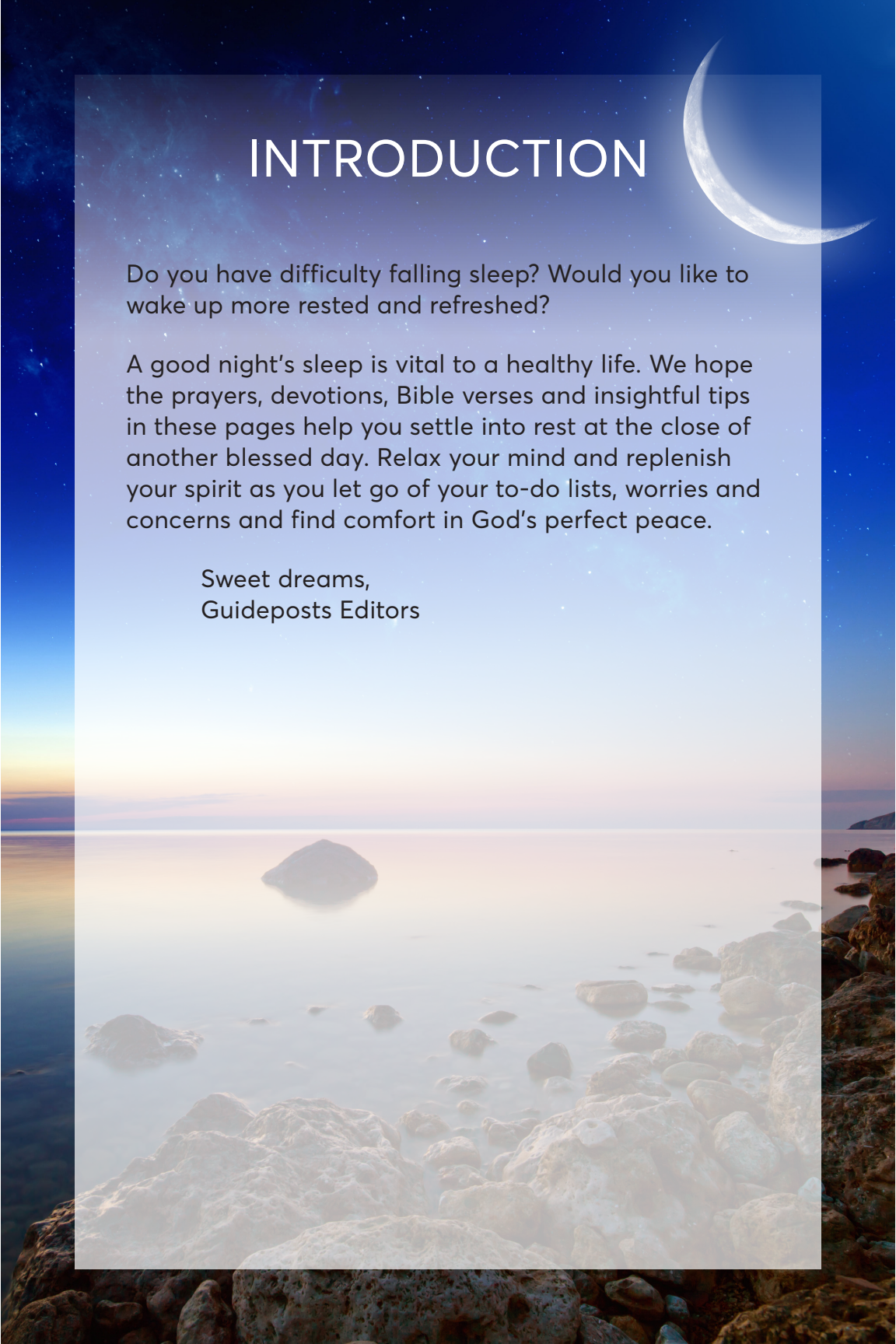
# INTRODUCTION



Do you have difficulty falling sleep? Would you like to wake up more rested and refreshed?

A good night's sleep is vital to a healthy life. We hope the prayers, devotions, Bible verses and insightful tips in these pages help you settle into rest at the close of another blessed day. Relax your mind and replenish your spirit as you let go of your to-do lists, worries and concerns and find comfort in God's perfect peace.

Sweet dreams,  
Guideposts Editors





# TIPS TO REST YOUR MIND

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from Norman Vincent Peale

If you are unable to sleep, instead of getting up, try lying in bed and making a conscious effort to relax your mind. Don't try to completely eliminate upsetting thoughts, just focus on peaceful ones instead.

Imagine all of your irritations, fears, worries, resentments, as slipping away. Replace them with the most soothing and pleasing scene you can imagine! Recall some memory of the mountains, ocean, autumn in the country—brown fields, misty hills, a bobwhite calling, and the occasional whistle of a distant train.

When you reach this state, you may be sure you are reaching down into the creative depths of your unconscious. Here is a pool of strength! People accomplish unbelievable feats in times of crisis by tapping this reservoir of power. There is no reason why it cannot be done in ordinary times.

Then say to yourself a prayer—your favorite—over and over, until you sleep.



*Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.*

(1 Peter 5:7)



# PRAYERS FOR SLEEP

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Lord, keep me safe this night, secure from all my fears. May angels guard me while I sleep till morning light appears. Amen



Heavenly Father, as I lay my head down to sleep envelop me with Your gentle embrace. Help me to clear my mind, open my heart and release all stresses and concerns. Calm my spirit so that I may rest in the comfort of Your loving arms.

Oh Lord, go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts, eager to labor, eager to be happy, and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it.

—Robert Louis Stevenson



Oh Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed. Then in thy mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest and peace at the last.

—Book of Common Prayer



Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give Your angels and saints charge over those who sleep.  
Tend Your sick ones, O Lord Christ.  
Rest Your weary ones.  
Bless Your dying ones.  
Soothe Your suffering ones.  
Pity Your afflicted ones.  
Shield Your joyous ones, and all for Your love's sake.  
Amen.

—St Augustine



*In peace I will lie down and sleep,  
for You alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety.*

Psalm 4:8 (NIV)



# DEVOTION FOR INSOMNIA

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by Marci Alborghetti

*In the morning, then ye shall  
see the glory of the Lord...*

—Exodus 16:7

This morning, the dawn finds me wide awake. But I didn't wake up early; I just never managed to get to sleep. Unfortunately this is not particularly unusual for me; I've suffered from insomnia since childhood.

And I don't suffer gently! When insomnia plagues me, I plague everyone else. I get frustrated, almost panicked, when a long night passes without even a few moments of sleep. How am I going to face my day? How am I going to get everything done?

Will I feel exhausted and sluggish all day? Will I look like an absolute hag, with deep purple pockets under my eyes?

All this and more skittered through my dreary mind at about six this morning as I faced the sliding glass windows, which form one wall of my bedroom, staring morosely at the Atlantic Ocean. It rippled gently under

the dawning skies as finches darted back and forth from the porch to the garden. The sky slowly lightened, a soft wind blowing night's clouds away. Deep purple gave way to waves of robin's egg blue and petal pink. The moon glimmered once and dropped below the horizon. The local fishing fleet steamed peacefully out to deeper waters.

Maybe it won't be such a bad day after all, I thought. And, suddenly, I wasn't even tired.

Dear Lord, when my nights slide restlessly into morning, let me always feel this sunrise hope!



*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.  
I do not give to you as the world gives.  
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

John 14:27 (NIV)





# DOs AND DON'Ts TO CATCH SOME Zs

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by Adam Hunter

1. Keep a regular sleeping schedule: Go to sleep and get up at the same time every day.
2. Don't take frequent or long naps, especially after 3:00 P.M.
3. Avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol.
4. Exercise and stay active during the day, but don't exercise close to bedtime.
5. Make your bedroom a sanctuary: quiet, dark, cool and comfortable.
6. Don't watch television, do work or eat in bed.
7. If you can't fall asleep quickly, don't force yourself. Get out of bed and listen to soft music, take a relaxing bath or read a book until you're tired.

8. Try to resolve all outstanding conflicts before bedtime.
9. Don't try playing "catch up" by sleeping later on the weekends.
10. See a doctor to determine if you have any health problems (like sleep apnea).



*When you lie down, you will not be afraid;  
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.*

Proverbs 3:24 (NIV)



# PRAYER AFTER A LATE NIGHT

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by Edmund L. Johnson

I seldom get to bed before 1:00 a.m., but I always say the same “Now I lay me down to sleep” prayer that I learned as a child growing up in Nassau, the Bahamas. I go to bed late because I work late in my job as captain in the private dining room of a venerable New York City club. A prayer that leaves me secure in the knowledge that God will keep me through the night is vital to me, but even more important is the prayer that I say in the morning. After all, it’s up to me to give Him a lot of help if I’m going to get through the busy waking hours successfully. So it is that years ago—38 of them, I think—a prayer formed in my mind. And I’ve said it every single morning since.

Now I’m awake, and see the light.  
God has kept me through the night.  
Unto Him I lift my voice and pray  
That He might keep me through the day!



*...for He gives to His beloved sleep.*

Psalm 127:2 (ESV)



# WHEN YOU CAN'T SLEEP

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by Sam Justice

*First of all, then, I urge that petitions (specific requests), prayers, intercessions (prayers for others) and thanksgivings be offered on behalf of all people.*

—1 Timothy 2:1 (AMP)

I have little trouble falling asleep, but I often wake up in the wee hours. At such times my mind goes on full alert, and I find myself trying to recall things like whether or not I've paid certain bills or how to persuade my grandson to take high school more seriously.

The idea came to me that I could put this time to better use through intercessory prayer. So I made a list of about thirty relatives, friends and even some religious and political leaders to pray for. Then, in the early hours when I woke up, I began going through the list—praying for a healing for this one, a stronger faith for that one, a relief from depression for another. I soon found that before I could get halfway through the list, I would fall into a sound and peaceful sleep.

Tonight, Lord, I pray for all those on my list,  
especially the ones I won't get to before I drift off  
again. Until then I pray for \_\_\_\_\_, and  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

PRAYER TIP: Create your own intercessory prayer list  
for those nights when you can't sleep.



*When I am afraid, I put my trust in You.*

Psalm 56:3 (NIV)



# 5 TIPS TO SLEEP BETTER

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by Sonya Maizell

You will spend an estimated third of your life asleep—but not everyone has restful nights. A reported 43% of Americans say that they rarely, or never, feel they get enough sleep. More than half of those say they experienced problems like waking up in the middle of the night, waking too early, or still feeling tired after sleeping at night.

A good night's sleep is essential to staying healthy and having a productive day. Here are a few tips for falling asleep soundly, and staying asleep until morning.

## **1. Keep a Schedule**

Your body's internal clock plays a big part in how easy it is for you to fall asleep. Going to bed and waking up at different times every day, or even just on the weekends, confuses your internal timing and makes it harder to sleep when you need to. Keeping a regular sleep schedule throughout the week maintains this clock, so you fall asleep faster and wake up more easily.

## **2. Power Down Electronics**

Many people wind down with a little time on their computer or by watching some television after a long day, but this can actually make it harder to rest when you hit the hay later on.

The light from your TV, or even something small like a tablet or smartphone, can interfere with your body's circadian rhythms—the mechanism that helps your brain regulate periods and sleepiness and wakefulness throughout the day.

Bright light signals that it's time to wake up and be active, so too much time spent with an electronic screen makes your body not as ready for sleep as you want it to be.

## **3. Invest in Your Bedding**

An expensive mattress and soft bedding can seem like a luxury, but it can help you get better rest. The average person spends a third of their life sleeping in bed—shouldn't all that time be spent in comfort?

## **4. Cool Down**

Have you ever noticed how hard it is to fall sleep in a hot room? When you sleep, your body experiences a natural dip in its internal temperature. But too many blankets or a thermostat cranked up too high can interfere with this process. Keep your bedroom a little cooler at night and wear loose, comfortable pajamas made of a breathable fabric, like cotton.

## 5. Eliminate Noise

Everyone has that one friend who can sleep through anything—but most people need a little quiet. Even when you're not conscious, your brain is still registering the sounds around you, and too much noise can interrupt your sleep.

Ask your family to keep it down if they're still awake when you turn in at the end of the night. If the noise is out of your control, consider purchasing a white-noise machine or a CD of ambient sounds to help drown the racket out with something soothing.



*For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*

2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)





# PSALMS TO HELP YOU CALM DOWN

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by Ashley Wiersma

*Place these words on your hearts.  
Get them deep inside you....*

—Deuteronomy 11:18 (MSG)

Last night I had trouble sleeping, which is a rarity for a woman who has been nicknamed “the log” by her husband. For as long as I’ve known Perry, he has lived by two surefire rules for remedying occasional insomnia: First, stay in bed. “Even if you aren’t sleeping, your body can rest.” Second, while you lie there not-sleeping, recite Bible verses until your body gives way.

For the past week, I’ve been reading a handful of psalms. And when I say “reading,” I mean over and over again, until I’d allowed those divine words to read me. So as I lay there not-sleeping, I decided to give Perry’s methods a shot. I folded my hands across my chest, let my heavy eyelids fall shut, exhaled my frustrations over my wakefulness, and began to whisper the poetic fragments God had graciously been writing on my heart:

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers...he is like a tree planted by streams of water.

Even in darkness, light dawns for the upright, for the gracious, compassionate, righteous man.

Within minutes of murmuring those passages, I had drifted off to sleep. Truth is the most comfortable of pillows for the body, the mind, the soul.

Father, thank You for the unparalleled restfulness I find in Your timelessly tranquil Word.



*"Be still, and know that I am God."*

Psalm 46:10 (NIV)



# GOOD NIGHT PRAISE

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by Sabra Ciancanelli

*We praise You, God, we praise You, for Your Name  
is near; people tell of Your wonderful deeds.*

Psalm 75:1 (NIV)

When you are tossing and turning, instead of rehashing the day or worrying about tomorrow, count your blessings—literally—and thank God for each and every one. List everything that makes you happy, from your home to a blue sky. Spend the precious moments before sleep praying. Connect with God and thank Him for the good in your life.

Heavenly Father, You are my joy! Thank You for the countless ways You bless me.



*I lie down and sleep; I wake again,  
because the Lord sustains me.*



# WIDE AWAKE? WORSHIP

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by Julia Attaway

I awoke at 2 a.m., blinking my eyes at the shadows cast by streetlights outside our apartment. Sometimes it's 1:30, other times it's 3, but at some point in the night I am usually up. I assume it's an age thing.

I've learned what to do. I close my eyes and mentally pull out my prayer list. This is as good a way as any to fill the dark hours: I whisper a name, and—because I have no original thoughts at that hour—say the Lord's Prayer or part of a Psalm on that person's behalf. I give back to God the words He gave us, for the benefit of someone else.

Praying Scripture is simple and straightforward. It requires only a movement of the heart, a murmur of love on the lips. I begin my prayers remembering people who are probably up in the middle of the night as well: the friend whose husband died a few weeks ago, the mom with brain cancer, the mother of a newborn, a college student.

I move on to those staggering through financial nightmares, fearful about an addicted teen, in physical pain. If I'm still awake, I pray for politicians I disagree with and people I dislike. That almost always puts me to sleep right away.

Hence I've decided that although it would be nice to sleep through the night, it's okay if I can't. Every hour of the day belongs to the Lord: He made all 24. If it's good to worship Him when I'm awake, it's fine to come before Him half-asleep. I think He's pleased either way.



*At this I awoke and looked,  
and my sleep was pleasant to me.*

Jeremiah 31:26 (NIV)



# PRAY YOURSELF TO SLEEP

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by Bob Hostetler

Health experts say that consistent bedtime rituals can make a big difference in promoting a good night's sleep. For that reason (among many), an evening prayer plan can be a huge blessing.

Not only is it possible and surprisingly easy to incorporate prayer into your existing pre-sleep routine; it could lead to better sleep patterns—as well as a closer walk with God. Here is a suggested evening prayer plan, which can be altered according to your routine:

- 1. Pray as you enter the bedroom.**  
"May the Lord Almighty grant me and those I love a peaceful night and a perfect end. Amen."
- 2. Pray as you empty your pockets and prepare to undress.**  
"Our help is in the Name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."
- 3. Pray as you undress for the night.**  
"Almighty God, my heavenly Father, I confess that I have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, in what I have done, and in what I have left

undone. For the sake of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, forgive all my offenses and grant that I may walk before You in newness of life, to the glory of Your Name. Amen."

**4. Pray as you wash your face and brush your teeth.**

"Praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the God who is, who was, and is to come, at the end of the ages. Amen."

**5. Sing in the shower.**

Sing a hymn or worship song, such as "Abide With Me," "Sun of My Soul," or "Your Love Never Fails."

**6. Pray as you dry off or get dressed for the night.**

Pray the Lord's Prayer, followed by any petitions for yourself or intercessions for others.

**7. Pray as you climb into bed and turn off the light.**

"Into Your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; For You have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth. Keep me as the apple of your eye and hide me under the shadow of Your wings."



*A little sleep, a little slumber,  
a little folding of the hands to rest.*

Proverbs 6:10 (NIV)



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