

Stay Awake!

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Intro. *Do you sometimes feel a little sleepy?*

A. James Rich hadn't slept much the night before he got behind the controls of his private plane. He was planning a 30 minute flight to visit a friend in East Tennessee. As he climbed to 3,500 feet, James decided to take a quick nap. He set the plane on autopilot.

When James suddenly awakened, he looked down to see what appeared to be a lake. But he had fallen asleep for three hours. He awoke to discover two frightening truths: he was over an ocean with no land in sight and his gas gauge registered empty! James had flown over the Gulf of Mexico. He was 85 miles from land and almost out of fuel. Though James Rich crashed into the sea, he was rescued and survived his overly long nap.

B. What a great reminder to us all of our need to be spiritually alert each day.

1) It's so tempting to put our spiritual lives on autopilot -- little prayer, sporadic Bible study, casual about our relationship with God.

2) Knowing human nature, God warns repeatedly about spiritual complacency in our lives.

I. *Realize the devil is waiting!*

A. In any military, soldiers are warned of enemy's tactics.

1) Same as soldiers of God - We need to be aware that we're in a fight.

a. *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."* Eph. 6:12

2) Knowing this we need to be aware that these forces use dangerous tactics we need to be aware of!

a. **Eph. 6:11** *"Put on the full armor of God..."*

b. **2 Cor. 2:11** *"...so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan for we are not ignorant of his schemes."*

B. Some of those schemes involve waiting for us to get "lazy" about our faith.

1) *"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."* **1 Ptr 5:7**

a. Lions wait patiently for their prey to get lethargic and then they pounce!

b. When the devil sees us getting lazy about our faith, he knows that's the time to jump on us.

II. *Follow the example of others who are following Jesus.*

A. Employers know the value of hard workers as examples.

1) They put these folks in visible positions to influence the rest of the staff.

2) Same with God: He uses busy people.

B. One of the most busy for his boss was Paul!

1) Was busy persecuting the Christians, got saved, then busy preaching Christ no matter what the cost.

a. **1 Cor. 4:9-16**

2) Again & again Paul pleads to follow his example.

a. *“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.” 1 Cor 11:1*

b. *“Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.” Phil 3:17*

c. *“You also became imitators of us and of the Lord..” 1Thes 1:6*

C. We can also follow one another’s example:

1) **Heb. 6:9-12**

a. Sometimes it’s hard to follow written directions.

Assembling all those gifts “some assembly req’d”

b. Seeing an example is much more powerful!

It should spur us into action!

D. WE must strive to be the example that others will want to follow.

1) *“It’s impossible to influence others to rise to a higher level than the one your on yourself!”*

2) *“The worst danger facing the younger generation is the example of the older generation!”*

a. We can’t expect our kids to be faithful Christians if we aren’t.

b. People, especially kids, can see through hypocrisy: Practice what you preach!

3) To do this we must STAY AWAKE!

a. Much of the NT refers to being diligent, vigilant, and alert!

b. **Rom 13:11-14; 1 Thess 5:1-11**

III. *How to get busy & STAY busy:*

A. **1 Thess. 5:12-22**

1) Just as waking up early & staying awake takes getting used to, so do these things.

a. Practice, practice, practice.

b. How do you get to Carnegie Hall?

(Practice, Practice, Practice)

c. How do you get to heaven?

(Practice, Practice, Practice)

2) It is the ONLY way to reap the blessings of

1 Thess. 5:23

Conc.

A. Let us resolve to not get sluggish, sleepy or lazy about our walk with God.

1) Let’s remember that we have an enemy who waits for our eyelids to droop so he can sneak in & trip us up!

2) Let’s be the example to each other, to help each other to stay strong, alert, and awake ‘til Jesus comes back!