

Soul Training: Sleep

“The number one enemy of Christian spiritual formation today is exhaustion.” With this line, Jim Smith, in his book *The Good and Beautiful God*, points out a hidden truth. Many of us are lacking in the rest we need. We push ourselves to the limit and sometimes beyond those limits. So, our first attempt at Soul Training this year is to sleep. Smith continues, **“Sleep is a perfect example of the combination of discipline and grace. You cannot make yourself sleep. You cannot force your body to sleep. Sleep is an act of surrender. It is a declaration of trust. It is admitting that we are not God (who never sleeps), and that is good news. We cannot make ourselves sleep, but we can create the conditions necessary for sleep.”** I think it will be a challenge. Here are two ways to engage in this training between now and our next Discipleship Formation Session:

1. At least one day in the next two weeks, sleep until you cannot sleep anymore. Stay in bed until you can honestly say that you are completely rested. You may need help from the other members of your family and plan this time carefully.
OR
2. Try to get at least 7 hours of sleep for at least 3 nights a week. This might be a bit easier, but may still be a challenge. You can also experiment with other ways to practice the discipline of sleep.

After some practice (or failure, which is also practice!), reflect on the following questions:

- 1) Were you able to practice the discipline of sleep this week? If so, describe what you did and how you felt about it.
- 2) What, if anything, did you learn about God or yourself through the exercise?

We will share some of our experiences at the beginning of our next session.

1. Smith, James Bryan. *The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows* (The Apprentice Series Book 1) . InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.