

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is essential to our Christian faith. If Christ has not been raised from the dead our preaching is useless and so is our faith (1 Cor. 15:14). While I believe there is abundant historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, today's letter will deal with something as simple as sleep. The fact that you go to sleep every day, whether you want to or not, and you wake up every day, whether you want to or not, is quite profound.

Sleep has been a part of life since Eden. Even though Adam was a perfect man in a perfect environment he still needed to sleep. On that first day no matter how hard he tried to stay awake, there came a time when he got so tired he could no longer do it. Eventually he fell asleep whether he wanted to or not. He probably enjoyed sleeping, but there came a time when he had to go to the bathroom and woke up. After so many hours of sleep we will wake up whether we want to or not. This may have reminded Adam of his creation. Adam didn't ask to be created, but he was. Neither did he ask to sleep or to wake up, but he did both. As we have said, there is something profound in this scenario. Perhaps God created Adam with the need to sleep to help him prepare him for eternity. It is quite common for the Scriptures to refer to death as sleeping (1 Ki. 11:43; 14:20; 16:6; 22:50; 2 Ki. 14:16; 15:7; 16:20; 20:21; etc.) The prophet Daniel also compared sleep to death and wrote: **"Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2)**. Note that these "multitudes" will "wake up" whether they want to or not. Some will awake to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting contempt. Jesus was even more specific, He said: **"The time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out – those who have done good will rise to life, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned" (Jn. 5:28-29)**.

Adam was surrounded by the reality of sleep. Surely he noticed that the animals slept. Some animals sleep more than others, but scientists agree that all animals sleep. Yes! Birds sleep too. Nocturnal birds like the owl and the night hawk sleep in the daytime and hunt at night, but all birds sleep. God created birds so that when they place their weight on their feet the muscles of the leg force the tendons of their feet to tighten and keep their feet closed. This enables birds to safely sleep on a tree limb without falling. And yes, insects sleep too. The world's champion insect sleeper is the Cicada. Cicadas are an orange and black insect about an inch and a half long with veined wings and blood-red eyes. They are found only in the U.S. from the Great Plains to the Eastern Seaboard. These amazing creatures sleep for 16 years but during the spring of the 17th year they wake up, molt into their adult form, and take wing in quest of a mate to reproduce. God designed our bodies so they can sleep in the dust for centuries and still wake up!

Atheist Thomas Nagel was concerned about this possibility and wrote: *"I speak from experience, being strongly subject to this fear myself: I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief."* Many atheists do not want there to be a God for the same reason a thief does not want there to be a policeman.

In Shakespeare's Hamlet the despondent prince contemplated suicide. His famous speech began with *"To be, or not to be, that is the question"*. He then continued: *"To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub, for in that sleep of death what dreams may come when we have shuffled off*

this mortal coil, must give us pause". Before we die we need to ask "what dreams may come" when we die? When you go to sleep you dream whether you want to or not! How can you be sure that when you die you will not dream? Every day of your life you wake up from sleep whether you want to or not! How can you be absolutely certain that when you die you will never wake up again? "Ay, *there's the rub*".

So it is better to be safe than sorry! Hospital beds are equipped with barriers to keep someone from falling out of bed while they are sleeping. It is wise, of course, to put those barriers up before you go to sleep. The same principle applies to death. The time to prepare for death is obviously before you die! Blaise Pascal was a French mathematician who invented the roulette wheel. He also discovered the "probability theory" in 1654. This discovery enabled him to advise gambling casinos how to project expected outcomes and thus not lose money. Running the numbers Blaise Pascal became a Christian. He calculated: "*one cannot come to the knowledge of God's existence through reason alone, so the wise thing to do is to live your life as if God does exist because such a life has everything to gain and nothing to lose. If we live as though God exists, and He does indeed exist, we have gained heaven. If He doesn't exist, we have lost nothing. If, on the other hand, we live as though God does not exist and He really does exist, we have gained hell and punishment and have lost heaven and bliss. If one weighs the options, clearly the rational choice to live as if God exists is the better of the possible choices.*" This famous bit of common sense is known as "Pascal's Wager".

Those who prepare for eternity sleep well, not only in their bed but also in their grave! To gamble that there is no God is a risk too dangerous to take! Please prepare for eternity!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce