Dear Parents,

When you have an infant at home, sleep becomes a thing of the past. You get used to going on little to no sleep. As your child gets older, you may be hoping that you will be able to have deep, glorious sleep again. Then you realize that bedtime with a preschooler comes with its own set of obstacles.

Psalms 116:7 says, “Let my soul be at rest again, for the Lord has been good to me.” Everyone needs good, restful sleep. How do we encourage our preschoolers to embrace bedtime and rest? Take a few minutes and check out this video. We will try to help you understand why bedtime can be so hard for our little ones. Then, we will address some practical tips that can help make this easier.

<https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/109633242/336c97ecd6>

Psalm 4:8 says “In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety”. We all want peaceful nights and restful sleep. That is hard to do when you have a preschooler who is anti-bedtime. He are some practical tips to help make bedtime a little easier.

On average, preschoolers need 10-12 hours of sleep a day, including naps. Sleep is important in their development and overall good health. Resisting bedtime is another way that little ones can try to have control of situations. There are many reasons they may feel the need to do this. They may be delaying due to fear of the dark or having bad dreams. Bedtime is another separation from parents, which can cause some children anxiety. Learning the reason for the resistance can help you know how to work on the problem.

Here are some tips to help out with bedtime:

* If your child doesn’t seem tired at bedtime, you may want to scale back on their naps or wake them up a little earlier in the morning.
* Read bedtime stories and sing songs in their room. Let them wind down and get comfortable where they will be sleeping.
* Give a warning. “After this story, it will be time to go to sleep.” This helps them to feel prepared.
* Use reward charts for good sleep behavior. Motivate them to do well!

Sometimes, children will not stay in their bed/room which can make for a very long night for you and them. You cannot allow bedtime to become a power struggle. If your child continues to get up each night, here is some advice from some professionals about what to do:

* 1st time up after goodnight – Remind your child that it is bedtime and take them back to their bed. Give one quick kiss, say goodnight and leave the room.
* 2nd time up – Repeat. Use a more firm voice and keep it brief.
* 3rd time up – Say nothing. Lead the child back to their room, place them in bed and leave the room. Repeat this last step as many times as it takes for them to stay in bed.

Kids will call your bluff, so stick to the routine. This may result in tears, fits and wailing, but be firm. Once they realize that getting up repeatedly isn’t getting them anywhere, they will back off and stay put.

If your child claims that they can’t go to sleep unless you are with them, you must help them feel secure in going to sleep alone. Follow your calming bedtime routine and offer them a comfort object like a stuffed animal or blanket. Maybe they need a nightlight in their room. Offer to check on them every 10 minutes as long as they stay in bed. If they are still awake when you come in, praise them for being so good and quiet and tell them you will check on them again soon to make sure they are okay. Knowing that you are nearby and coming back soon may be enough for them to get comfortable and feel safe enough to doze off.

Your child may be suffering from a different sort of sleep trouble such as having problems breathing, night terrors, sleepwalking or wetting the bed. If any of these are the case, contact your pediatrician. This type of behavior falls in the category of sleep disorders and may require more professional assistance.

We realize how tough hard bedtimes can be on children and their parents. Hang in there and try to stay calm. Most of the time bedtime problems are just a phase. If you take the proper steps to create a positive atmosphere, it can go by much easier!

Building Young Disciples,

Pastor Sarah