

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Learning to Rest” the High School Sunday school lesson for January 24, 2016. The lesson is found on page 49 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.



Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

“When teens wake up earlier, it cuts off their dreams. . . . We’re not giving them a chance to dream.” This statement was made by Rafael Pelayo, MD, of the Stanford Sleep Disorders Clinic (as quoted in an online feature by Ruthann Richter for Stanford Medicine, “Among teens, sleep deprivation an epidemic,” 10/8/15, <https://med.stanford.edu/news>). It turns out teens aren’t just being lazy when they want to sleep till noon—they are trying to get their bodies the rest they need. And the fact that they aren’t getting enough sleep could produce seriously negative results. It’s serious enough that, in 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics actually called the problem of sleep-deprived teens a public health epidemic.

This Stanford Medicine report discusses teens’ unique biological needs and characteristics, as well as the social, cultural, and technological changes that set teens—especially those in industrialized nations—up to fail to get the amount of sleep they need (8 to 10 hours). There’s a myth that, as kids get older, they don’t need as much sleep as they did in elementary school. But the truth is, though their bodies do shift to a cycle that naturally allows them to stay up later (called a “sleep-phase delay”), teens still need as much sleep as their little brothers and sisters.

However, the pressures of increased school work, college preparation, athletic routines, and social demands (ever fallen asleep with your cell phone in hand?) push teens to stretch their waking hours out beyond what their bodies are designed to withstand. The results? Increased chances for poor grades, low concentration, mood shifts, decreased health, weight gain, bad decision-making, driving incidents, anxiety, depression, and even suicide.

So, what’s to be done? Maybe we should start by remembering this: you can’t reach your dreams if you don’t ever give yourself time to have any.

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above news story to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read the article, discuss it in this way:

How many of you think you don’t get enough sleep during the week? How do you see that affecting your life—either in your relationships, your work, or in other ways?

Do you think God cares how much sleep you have? Why or why not?

Think about your normal daily routine. What changes would be required to enable you to get more rest? List your top three sleep-stealing culprits. What would you have to do to get rid of those elements or at least decrease their influence?

The Bible makes it clear that God wants us to have adequate periods of rest. Today we will look at three principles from God’s Word that can help us get the rest we need.