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WHEN YOU'RE TIRED, BE CAREFUL

Fatigue is a dangerous condition. When a person gets tired he doesn't respond as he ordinarily would. His reflexes are not as quick; his thinking not as sharp; his powers of perception not as acute. When a tired person is faced with a difficult situation, he is likely to react carelessly or recklessly.

When a driver becomes fatigued, he may become responsible for dangerous, even deadly, situations. Because he's tired he may not be able to see impending danger. His thinking isn't sharp, and he isn't able to analyze a dangerous situation well enough to avoid it. He may become unaware of his speed and drive either too fast or too slow to be safe. In extreme cases he may see things that aren't actually there. Even when he does see a dangerous situation, his reflexes may be so slow he can't act quickly enough to avoid an accident. He may even fall asleep at the wheel and cause an accident, maybe even a deadly one.

When an army captures an enemy soldier and wants him to compromise the position and ability of his army, the captors will often deprive the captive of sleep. They may do other things to persuade him to give up valuable information, but sleep deprivation is a common tactic. Armies know that when a person is fatigued, he is susceptible to all sorts of suggestion and can be persuaded to do and say things he ordinarily would not. If a person is tired enough, he will do almost anything to get some rest. He might even turn against his own people.

Christians are involved in a struggle. It's difficult to live according to the teaching of Christ consistently, day after day, week after week, year after year. The New Testament writers repeatedly use words to describe our lives that make this point. Paul says, "For our *struggle* is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness" (Ephesians 6:12). "For the weapons of our *warfare* are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortress. We are destroying

speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). He tells Timothy, "Fight the good *fight* of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12).

Consequently, we are often encouraged to persevere with words such as, "...be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you" (1 Peter 2:10), "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil" (Ephesians 6:10), and, "Do not grow weary of doing good" (2 Thessalonians 3:13; Galatians 6:9).

Do you ever get tired in the constant struggle against temptation? Do you grow weary in resisting the pressures of living in a sinful world? Does the continual effort involved in *working* out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12). Does the fight for truth against error ever wear you down? Do you ever want to relax and take a break from "fighting the good fight"? If any ever feel this way he needs to redouble his efforts to do right. It is critical that we understand exactly how vulnerable we are when in this condition. When we get tired in the struggle to resist the world, we may well open ourselves up to temptation.

If we grow weary in resisting the temptation to lose our temper, we may find ourselves becoming angry. If we get tired of controlling our speech, we say what we ought not. If we get worn down by the continual fight against sexual temptation, we may lose our resolve to keep ourselves pure in thought and deed. If we get tired of saying no, we may say yes.

We need to realize that we are at our weakest when we are weary. If we find ourselves in this situation, be on guard. Don't give the devil an opportunity. Be strong and vigilant. Remember the words of Scripture, "For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised" (Hebrews 10:36). Our bodies and minds may want to quit fighting, but never forget the promise of God, "...in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

