



# Open Face

*One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness*

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## The New Covenant

*David Clayton*



Some time ago we started a series of articles focused on the issue of the great conflict between God and Satan. It is our intention to compile these articles and make them into a book entitled, "The Mother of all Wars."

The topics dealt with up to this point are outlined below.

- Origins and Issues
- The foundations
- Corporate identity and sin
- The curse
- God's amazing solution
- The second curse
- The ministry of the spirit
- Why the Old Covenant
- Unfinished business

In this edition we continue with the next article in the series entitled, "The New Covenant."

### WHAT IS A COVENANT?

**Covenant:** - *An agreement or promise, usually formal, between two or more people or groups to do or not do something specified.*

*Dictionary.com*

This is the definition which is most widely accepted and understood, especially as the word is used in the Bible. It focuses on the idea of a commitment or agreement made between two parties. The covenant which God made with Israel at Mount Sinai just after they left Egypt, is an outstanding example of this kind of covenant. God gave Moses the following message to give to the people:

*Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. (Exod 19:5-6)*

Moses passed on the message to the children of Israel and they gave him an answer to return to God:

*And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. (Exod 19:8)*

There we see the elements of a typical covenant; The people made a commitment to obey the voice of the Lord and to keep his covenant. If they did this, then God promised that they would be

a peculiar treasure unto him above all people. They had a part to play and God had a part to play. If they fulfilled their part of the bargain then he would keep his part of it. Let us take note of the fact that the covenant depended on **both** parties fulfilling their part of the bargain. If one failed to fulfill his commitment, then the covenant would fall apart.

When God said that they were to keep his covenant, he meant especially the ten commandments. In Exodus chapter 34 we read that the words of the covenant were the ten commandments.

*And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. (Exod 34:28)*

### THE AIM OF THE COVENANT

It is helpful if we first of all understand what was the purpose and intent of the covenant. It seems evident that there were two different goals or purposes. On the part of God, he desired righteousness from the people, he wanted them to be good and so he told them the way he wanted them to behave, they were to keep his commandments. On the part of the people they needed pro-

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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tection and care, they wanted somebody to provide for their needs and guarantee them security from their enemies. These were the two conditions which the covenant focused on.

The terms of this covenant were very plainly laid out, there was no misunderstanding, each of the two parties had a very clearly defined role. We must understand that according to the terms of the covenant, the people were to provide the righteousness and in exchange God would protect and provide for them. The people were to provide this righteousness by strict obedience to the laws given to them by God. This was clearly stated in Deuteronomy 6:25.

*And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us. (Deut 6:25)*

We can see clearly then that the key part of this covenant was man's obedience, God's blessings depended on man first of all providing righteousness by obeying the commandments of God.

#### WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

I have been told many times that righteousness is defined as right doing. This is the popular understanding. Where did this definition, or this un-

derstanding come from? I am not sure, but I suspect that it is related to verses such as Deuteronomy 6:25 which we already quoted just above.

There is no question that there are several places in the Old Testament writings where righteousness is described in this way, as being related to keeping the commandments. If we take this as our basic understanding of what righteousness means, then we will always connect righteousness to the law. We end up with a religious perspective which is firmly bound up with the law and inevitably, we find ourselves encased in legalism and legalistic ideas.

This is the popular understanding, but we should note carefully that this is based on the teachings of the Old Testament. Is it safe for a Christian to take the Old Testament teachings as the basis for his understanding of spiritual things? Please don't misunderstand, I believe that the Old Testament was inspired by God just as the New Testament is, but truth in the Old Testament was hidden in shadows and illustrations. Many of the things which were taught in the Old Testament were like precious gems which were covered with a translucent bit of glass, you could glimpse what lay underneath, but you could never fully make out the perfect beauty of those gems. The apostle Paul commented that when the Old Testament is read, many people have a veil over their faces so that they cannot properly understand it (2 Cor 3:14)

#### THE TRUE UNDERSTANDING:

When we come to the New Testament and the teachings of the apostles, we find the deeper understanding of what it means to be righteous. The apostle Paul especially is very pointed in making us understand that righteousness is not related to our behavior.

*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for*

*righteousness. (Rom 4:3-5)*

Even though Paul quoted from the Old Testament here, this is not something which was generally understood and taught during Old Testament times. During those ages there was a very, very strong emphasis on being made right with God, through obedience to the commandments. But here, Paul emphasizes that a person is counted as righteous, not because he keeps the commandments or the law – not because he is working, but simply because he believes God!

This leads us to the conclusion that *true* righteousness is not really right doing, but rather it is the *state* of *being right* with God. In other words, a person can be right with God without doing anything good at all! There are many examples of this in the Bible – especially in the New Testament. One notable example of course is the thief on the cross, the man who was promised paradise, just because he confessed his faith in Jesus before he died.

The goal we are really after, the thing which we are seeking is a way to be accepted by God. This is what it is all about, this is why we desire and need to be righteous. We want to please God and to know that he accepts us. It is natural for humanity to believe that God accepts us because of the way we behave, so we think that good-behaving people are loved by God and get to go to heaven, but those who behave badly are out of God's favor and will end up in hell. This is normal thinking, but it is not the truth.

The truth is that God accepts us, we become *right with God* just because we put our trust in God, just because we accept the gift of his Son. We acknowledge that through Jesus Christ God has opened a way for us to be *right* with him even if we have never done anything good! Even if we have broken his rules every day of our lives!

Being right with God is what we want and it is God himself who decides how we can be right with him. He says that if we accept his son that is all it takes. We believe in God by believing in his

son and if we do, then this is our righteousness, we become 100% acceptable in the sight of God, we are right with God, even without doing anything good! This is true righteousness.

*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. (2Cor 5:21)*

*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: (Rom 3:21-22)*

### THERE ARE TWO COVENANTS

It should be evident that there are two major covenants spoken about in the Bible, indeed, the very structure of the Bible is based on these two covenants. The Old Testament and the New Testament are the two divisions which highlight the reality that in his dealing with humanity God has operated in these two phases referred to as, The Old and the New covenant. This is a simple truth and is not hard to understand, nevertheless I have to emphasize it and spend a little time proving it, because there are actually some believers who deny that there are two covenants! What they claim is that the New Covenant is really a renewing of the Old Covenant, so there is only one covenant. They explain that it is only called a “new covenant,” because God renewed it at some point, but it is still the same one covenant.”

First of all, let’s make sure that the Bible really says there is a new covenant:

*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (Jer 31:31-32)*

There is not much here to misunderstand; God says that the covenant which was made with Israel when he led them

out of Egypt was broken by them, therefore sometime in the future he was going to make a **new covenant** with Israel. Furthermore he said it would be a different kind of covenant, not like the one which he gave at Sinai and which they had broken. What we can understand from this is that the problem was that the people broke the covenant. Because of this God promised that he would give them a different kind of covenant and the implication is that this was one that they would not be able to break.

So at this point, what would become of the Old Covenant? The apostle Paul gives us a clear answer:

*In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away. (Heb 8:13)*

With the coming of the new covenant the old one was to be abolished, it was to “vanish away.”

### ISRAEL’S IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS

From the moment that God first made the covenant with Israel at Sinai (the Old Covenant), there was trouble.



*And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. (Exod 32:7-8)*

Almost immediately the people turned to the grossest idolatry, making a golden calf and worshipping it in blatant disobedience to the terms of the covenant God had given them. Just a few days before God had commanded them clearly that

they were not to make images, nor to bow down to them.

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; (Exod 20:3-5)*

Within just a few days they simply ignored the promise they had made to keep the covenant and turned to worshipping a calf made of gold. This was only the first of many, many similar incidents where the people, both individually and as a group, constantly disobeyed and broke the covenant. There was something very clearly wrong with the conditions of the covenant, it was clear that it was not working.

### CARNAL PEOPLE

The first problem with the Old Covenant was that it was a covenant made with carnal people. By carnal, I mean people who were not born again, people who were still worldly and living the life of the first Adam. Even though the Israelites were referred to as “the people of God,” they were only God’s people in name. They did not know him, they were afraid of him, they were not born of the spirit and as such, they were carnal. Their condition is expressed by the apostle Paul in the following statements:

*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. (Rom 7:14)*

*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. (Rom 8:7)*

*Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not,*

*that I do. (Rom 7:17-19)*

Of course the same problem exists today with all who are not born again. Understanding this helps us to see why the covenant made with Israel was bound to fail, and why it could not be God's permanent arrangement with his people. It is not that the people were unwilling to keep the covenant, it is that they were **not able to do so**, they were incapable. That was the fault with the covenant, it was dealing with a people who could not fulfill the agreement, so it was bound to fail.

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: (Heb 8:7-8)*

#### THE FORMAT OF THE LAW

What do we mean by "the format of the law?" We mean that the law exists in different forms, there are different ways in which we can understand and relate to the law. This is what I mean by the "format of the law." The apostle Paul focused on two different understandings of the law and referred to them as "the letter" and "the spirit."

*Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. (2Cor 3:6-9)*

Notice what Paul says: We are ministers of the spirit, not of the letter. The letter kills, but the spirit gives life. Before we go any further, let us see if we can understand clearly what Paul means when he speaks of "the letter," and "the

spirit." There is a difference, but what is the difference?

#### THE LETTER

When Paul referred to the letter, he mentioned the ministration of death (the ministry of death), and specifies that it was "written and engraven in stones." What he was talking about was the ten commandments, these were written on stone tablets with the finger of God. There can be no reasonable doubt that this is what Paul was referring to as "the letter." It is easy to see why these are referred to as "the letter." First of all they were written instructions, written with actual "letters" of the alphabet. They consisted of instructions which acted on the intellect of people, they reached to the brain and created an awareness of the need to do something, but the motivation to do what was required was outside of men and whether or not these instructions were carried out, depended on the ability of people to respond to those instructions. We may say that this was the law, in the form of the letter. Written instructions on the outside of people.

#### THE SPIRIT

The spirit is very different. First of all, in the ultimate sense, the spirit is a living person, actually the person of Jesus Christ. In the same chapter, 2 Cor 3, Paul states:

*Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2Cor 3:17)*

So when Paul says that, "the spirit gives life," he is referring to a living person. In the first covenant, there was a lifeless document giving instructions, but in the second covenant there is the living presence of the Lord living within a person, not only teaching us how we should live, but also giving the motivation and the power to live that holy life. This is not by giving us some sentences of instructions (the letter), but by giving us a different life (the spirit), that is, the very life of God, a holy life which is lived in uprightness, because it is Christ himself living in us and giving us this life. This covenant is not some-

thing which acts upon the intellect, reaching the brain only, it is something which acts upon and changing the spirit. It does not depend on the abilities of man, but on the abilities of God. This is why it cannot fail.

#### GOD'S GOAL ACHIEVED

So we see that through the New Covenant God's goal is achieved. First of all, under this covenant God accepts us simply on the basis of faith, simply because we trust in Him, by believing in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. So the first problem of righteousness (rightness) is solved. God accepts us on the terms which he lays down, He determines that we are right with Him, simply because we trust in Him.

Secondly, through this covenant God's people do actually obtain a holy life. Even though there is no perfect behavior at the moment in this life, yet, through the gift of the holy spirit, the gift of the New Covenant, God's people are transformed and their behavior changes. Now they begin to do the things which God always wanted, they begin to behave in a holy way, not by trying to obey a set of rules, but because God has put his own nature and life in them, through the indwelling of his spirit. So they begin to behave as God behaves because His nature has become their nature.

This is the wonderful reality of the New Covenant. One day we will see the face of our God and His Son. Then, we will live a life of happiness and peace in Paradise forever. But until then, we may begin to enjoy this privilege of the new covenant from today. Even though our bodies may still be in a condition of degeneracy and decay, yet our spirits are united with the spirit of God and His Son, and thus, our lives are changed. We do know today, the victorious life, the joyful living that comes from being born again and knowing that "*truly, our fellowship is with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.*" 1 John 3:4.





# Letters

## ANSWERED FROM THE CLOUD

One afternoon, as I often do, I went for a run in the nearby hills. I really like to jog there, because the landscape is beautiful, the lark sings, the nightingale sings, there is always something special and beautiful – a startled deer or hare, the changing colours of sunlight and clouds, but mostly because this hour is for me the most intense time of prayer and thanksgiving. As I jogged up the hill, I could see the wide and deep cracks that had appeared in the ground as a result of the drought. I remembered again the lack of rain. „Lord, Father of all, please, I beg you, give rain to the earth and to the hearts!” – my heart was in my throat, and not just from running. I longed for God's answer with a fervor I have rarely felt before. Then suddenly I felt drops of water on my face, on my arms. I involuntarily looked up at the sky, but I saw nothing - maybe a hint of a small graphite grey streak - except the big blue. I would sa unjustified. But still - it fell, and only on me! I could hardly believe it! It was incomprehensible, but a fervent gratitude poured into my heart – I felt what David wrote: *My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* (Psalm 84:3) I felt that he had heard my plea and I was sure that soon it would rain, rain that would thoroughly water the dry fields - and the longing hearts.

I cannot really describe the state of mind in which I ran on. "Who am I, Lord, that you should listen to me and answer me thus?! Blessed art thou, praiseworthy, most high Father!" – I was filled with thoughts like these, and at the same time I felt that my heart could not contain so much joy and gratitude. Suddenly, a blinding white cloud appeared in the sky to the right; it was striking, for otherwise it was a monochrome blue over the hills. I was so happy that I cried out several times: "Father, I want to hug you!" – an incredible desire to

get physically close to Him, to thank Him personally for the answer, but I saw myself from the outside: a tiny speck on a hill on a tiny planet in the infinite universe...

"Come on, what do you want?" - a sceptical voice inside me said. "How can God grant your childish wish? It is impossible!" Nevertheless, with an overflowing heart I repeated my request, "Father, I want to embrace you!" And then, as I looked up at the cloud again, I noticed a short rainbow streak: it was vertical and did not extend beyond the white edges of the cloud. I was utterly fainted at the sight, because there have been a few times in my life when the Lord has responded with a rainbow, often at quite "amazing" times (e.g. on a gloomy winter morning), and through the tears I could hardly see where I was stepping. Despite my heart telling me this was a kind response from the Lord, my unbelief kicked in again: "What if it's just a coincidence?" - I cried out again, "Lord, answer me, please! I love you very much!" And then from that single white cloud, the sky exploded... at least three times. I cried with joy and gratitude. I remembered when the Father spoke to Jesus, and some thought it was thunder; hope, even certainty came into my heart, that one day I will understand the words ...

A few days later the rain came: a quiet, persistent rain that soaked the ground.

*Lilla Barati*

My name is Goran. Listening to your sermon on parables, I came to the conclusion that killing the body is not losing life, that's how I experience the events of the old covenant. That made me think, it's the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no use. And when we add to that that GOD is omnipotent, here's the answer to why GOD killed in the old

testament, and it's a mystery to us because we can't explain how it is that GOD is love and when we read the old testament we remain confused, but in fact it's simple, I think GOD'S plan is being fulfilled, and Satan is trying to confuse us.. I don't know English well, so I wrote with the help of a translator, I hope it will be understandable. GOD BLESS YOU. - *Croatia*

What an absolutely simple yet profound message (Christ's Sanctuary Ministry). Under the old covenant, salvation ( as it were) came by the law...obey and live, disobey, and die...the Ministry of the sanctuary was from outside in, but under the new covenant, salvation is inside out...Christ in us first, then affect our behavior after. Brethren, who dwells on the law, wants to go back to the type that could not give perfection, but this better covenant can. Hallelujah - *UK*

For most of my life I've accepted I would never understand these mysteries, that these things would always be hidden from me as long as I'm on earth. How wrong I was. With every one of these sermons my knowledge of the Word of God grows by leaps and bounds. - *USA*

I cant believe there are only 3 comments for this eye opening revelation into the heart and personhood of the God of the universe. This message (Seeing God as He is) had the stamp of the Lord Himself. If recieved into the heart will draw the listener to the feet of Jesus in Thanksgiving for effectively reveling the character of His Father. Thank you Brother for this message. Awsome - *USA*



# Melissa's Unwelcome Visit

*Lenworth Frankson*

## HURRICANE MELISSA IMPRESSIONS

I am writing to give you a personal perspective about the hurricane which just recently ravaged Jamaica. I know you have heard various reports and stories, and there is probably some truth to all of them. The brethren who live in central Jamaica like me, came away quite well from the ordeal. Although the storm was tremendously powerful here, most of us suffered only minor discomfort like leaking, slight structural damage, loss of electricity and internet etc. However, I wish to focus on the more seriously affected areas.

I went to visit the Western side of the island this weekend, where the center of the storm passed by, and believe me when I tell you that words fail me! I have experienced about seven major hurricanes in my lifetime, but I have NEVER seen such utter devastation in my entire life! People are truly suffering, desperate and in dire need! Many have lost absolutely EVERYTHING - house, clothes, furniture and all personal belongings. I saw miles and miles of distraught women and children sitting on the side of the street, lost, crying and pleading for just a sip of drinking water. They have no money to buy anything, stores are destroyed or inaccessible, and all they need now is just something to eat and drink, just a compassionate person to give a helping hand. My heart burned within me, as I was unable to help so many, unable to put just a sip of water into the mouths of parched little 2 and 3 year old babies!

The entire landscape looked like a desolate desert, littered with endless piles and piles of debris, shattered buildings and innumerable power lines and poles. It will take YEARS to recover from this, the power company and cleanup crew face a herculean, almost impossible task, and as I think about the scenario, all I can liken it to is some kind of post apocalyptic world, once inhab-

ited and alive. It looks like a nuclear bomb was dropped on the island, and for miles the stench of what seems to be dead bodies, buried under the rubble assails the nostrils.

But I am truly burdened for the people! I put myself in their position, and imagine having a nice, secure life with my family. Suddenly, in a moment it's all ripped away through no fault of my own, and I have no house to go home to, no clothes to wear, no food to eat, not even a sip of water! I cannot leave my tormented location, because all roads are blocked off, and I don't have a cent in my pocket. All I can do is listen to the pained, tortured cries of my little children, sitting in the cold darkness, the scorching dusty heat, bombarded by flies and mosquitoes, companions with vermin and dogs, and I have not a morsel of bread to give them! I can do nothing to help them, except resort to begging from indifferent motorists passing by with their windows rolled up, too preoccupied with enjoying their AC to care. This is what I saw, and believe me when I tell you that my words are greatly inadequate to describe the true state of these people!

The entire panoramic nightmare has haunted my mind ever since, and I thought I would give a brief description here in case anyone is able, or feels so inclined to assist in any way - financially or otherwise - if possible. If anyone feels impressed to send anything, myself and a few others on site will undertake the task of going into these areas and distributing to whoever we can - even if it's just to find a little child with a morsel of bread and a warm blanket. I feel almost guilty to be sleeping in a warm, comfortable house, with food and drink, while children have to be living like this, and I am burdened to share it with you, if even just so we can all pray about it!

There are many things we take for

granted each day, but if we could only see another perspective more often, see how much the cup of water we throw away could mean life to someone else, we would be more appreciative of what God has given us. If anyone is impressed to be further involved, please feel free to contact me personally, preferably on Whatsapp, and we can discuss further logistics. I can tell you that what you have seen on social media does not even begin to do justice to the reality! My soul aches for the plight of these people, who have feelings and emotions just like I, and all of us do. Please let us keep them in prayer



## Farewell Kerry

Sunday August 10, 2025 marked another sad day in the history of OpenFaceFellowship. It was the day when we paid our last respects to Sister Kerry Harrison.



Kerry died suddenly, unexpectedly. She just went to sleep and never woke up, a shock to all of us and most of all to her husband, Andrew, and son Xavier, who only knew of the tragedy when they went to awaken her in the morning, and found her unresponsive.

Kerry was a bright spark, always cheerful, always optimistic. She just seemed always so full of life that death was the last thing one would have expected. But who can tell the ways of God? He always knows what is best for his children and in

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# Multidimensional Sleep

Lenworth Frankson



Sleep is one of our body's most powerful regulators. Sleep sharpens our heart health, metabolism, immune resilience and even our lifespan. If we only think about sleep in terms of how many hours we get, we are missing out on the bigger picture. The human body does not just need a certain amount of sleep. It needs the right timing, quality and rhythm to operate at full strength. A study published by the American Heart Association shines new light on how multidimensional sleep patterns impact our health outcomes. The study showed that disruptions to your sleep schedule, low-quality rest or poor daytime energy signal deeper biological imbalances that quietly drive chronic disease risk, long before obvious symptoms show up.

Sleep health is not just about duration. Healthy sleep includes timing, quality and regularity. Poor sleep patterns on the other hand are linked to an increased risk of heart disease, stroke and metabolic disorders. Short sleep (*under seven hours*) as well as long sleep (*over nine hours*) durations are associated with higher rates of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular problems. Irregular sleep schedules and poor sleep quality damage health as much as not sleeping enough hours, triggering inflammation and disrupting biological processes.

Simple interventions like maintaining complete darkness in your bedroom, getting morning sunlight, limiting blue light exposure at night and keeping your bedroom cool can significantly improve one's sleep quality. Research has shown that improvements in blood pressure, blood sugar control and inflammation often begin within weeks of establishing more consistent and restorative sleep patterns.

Let us look at why sleep health involves much more than hours alone, what specific patterns predict better heart and metabolic outcomes, and simple changes to protect yourself. If you want to improve your energy, stabilize your blood sugar and protect your heart for the long haul, paying attention to your sleep habits is one of the smartest places to start.

## HEART AND METABOLIC FUNCTION

The study showed how different aspects of sleep health influence your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and early death. The research looked at sleep as a multidimensional factor. This means sleep duration, timing, regularity, continuity, satisfaction, daytime energy and even sleep stages were all considered together. The American Heart Association emphasized that improving sleep in just one of these dimensions could significantly lower your cardiometabolic disease risk.

- **Linked to chronic disease** — The American Heart Association noted that sleep problems are common in almost every demographic but hit especially hard in low-income and minority communities, where sleep disruptions often start early in life. People with poor sleep patterns showed much higher rates of obesity, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, heart disease and even early signs of stroke.

- **Increased disease risk** — Sleeping less than seven hours or more than nine

hours was strongly tied to a greater risk of obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

- **Compounded damage** — People who went to bed and woke up at different times each day had higher blood pressure, more blood sugar instability and double the risk of developing heart disease compared to those with regular sleep patterns.

- **Daytime tiredness signals bigger problems** — Feeling sleepy during the day, even if you think you slept enough, was linked to a higher risk of stroke, heart attack and metabolic dysfunction

- **Poor sleep satisfaction and missed sleep stages matter** — Those who rated their sleep as unsatisfying, even if they technically got "enough" hours, showed worse cardiovascular and metabolic markers than people who felt refreshed upon waking.

Shallow sleep that skips important phases like deep (slow-wave) sleep and REM (dream) sleep left people more vulnerable to inflammation, poor blood vessel function and blood sugar problems, even when total sleep hours seemed normal.

## REGULARITY AND QUALITY

The study also showed the speed at which poor sleep habits start damaging your health. Researchers noted that even short-term disruptions like a few weeks of poor sleep quality or irregular bedtimes, were enough to raise blood pressure, increase resting blood sugar and trigger early inflammatory changes in blood vessels.

Over months and years, these effects snowball, setting you up for serious chronic illnesses. Interestingly, the largest benefits from restoring sleep patterns were seen in people who had the worst baseline sleep.

- **Getting better sleep quickly improves health** — Those who moved

from highly irregular to more regular bedtimes, improved their sleep satisfaction or cut out nighttime awakenings showed fast improvements in blood pressure, insulin sensitivity and daytime energy. These results appeared in as little as a few weeks, showing that fixing your sleep has rapid effects on your heart and metabolic health.

- **Early correction leads to big improvements** — People who fixed their bedtime regularity and reduced nighttime awakenings saw improvements in blood pressure within weeks.

- **The worse your sleep health, the bigger the payoff** — Those starting with the poorest sleep habits experienced the fastest and largest improvements once they addressed regularity, satisfaction and sleep quality.

#### TIMING AND QUALITY MATTERS

The American Heart Association also compared how different aspects of sleep health stack up against each other. Three irregular sleep schedules appeared to be just as damaging, if not more, than simply getting too few hours of sleep. Meanwhile, low sleep satisfaction and frequent nighttime awakenings independently predicted worse heart and metabolic outcomes, even if total sleep duration stayed within the "healthy" range.

- **Sleep regularity was a key predictor** — Maintaining a consistent bedtime and wake-up time mattered just as much, if not more, than hitting a target number of sleep hours.

- **Sleep quality matters as much as sleep quantity** — Feeling rested and staying asleep through the night had an equal or greater impact on heart and metabolic health than just sleeping longer.

The biological mechanisms uncovered were equally fascinating. Poor sleep disrupts your body's circadian rhythms, which regulate everything from hormone release to blood vessel function to blood sugar management. When your sleep is irregular, fragmented or out of sync with natural light cycles, your body struggles to maintain stable blood pres-

sure, regulate glucose levels and repair blood vessel linings.

- **Circadian disruption sets off a chain reaction** — Sleeping at odd times or waking frequently sends confusing signals to your brain and hormones, throwing off blood sugar regulation and heart function.

- **Poor sleep increases inflammation** — Inadequate or fragmented sleep triggers your immune system to stay in a low-grade inflammatory state, which damages blood vessels and raises your risk of clots and plaque buildup.

- **Loss of deep sleep impairs recovery** — Missing out on slow-wave sleep — the deep, restorative phase — leaves your cardiovascular and metabolic systems in a chronic state of low repair, making damage accumulate faster over time.

By understanding these mechanisms, you can see that poor sleep is not just an inconvenience. It's a major hidden driver of modern chronic diseases. Fixing your sleep habits is one of the most powerful steps you take to protect your heart, your metabolism and your future.

#### SIMPLE CHANGES

If you want to protect your heart, metabolism and energy levels, fixing your sleep habits is nonnegotiable. Sleep isn't just about logging hours — it's about building a stable rhythm your body trusts. Poor sleep throws your hormones, blood sugar and blood pressure into chaos. Fortunately, you don't need extreme measures to start reversing the damage. Small, consistent changes have a powerful ripple effect. Here's where to start:

1. **Make your bedroom pitch black at night** — If your bedroom isn't completely dark, your body keeps getting signals that it's daytime. That glow from your phone, alarm clock or even a streetlight sneaking through the window disrupts your melatonin production. Melatonin is the hormone that tells your body it's time to sleep and repair.

Blackout curtains are recommended as well as unplugging unnecessary elec-

tronics. Your room should be so dark you cannot see your hand in front of your face. This simple step trains your brain to shift fully into deep sleep mode.

2. **Get outside for natural sunlight within 15 minutes of waking up** — Your brain resets your internal clock based on the first bright light it sees each day. If you roll out of bed and head straight for your phone or computer, your body misses this important reset.

I suggest stepping outside, without sunglasses or windows blocking you, as soon as possible after waking. Even five minutes helps. If you work inside all day, make it a point to take a quick walk in the morning. Morning sunlight strengthens your circadian rhythm, boosts mood and stabilizes your hormones for the entire day.

3. **Cut off blue light exposure after sunset** — Your body needs darkness after sunset to start winding down. Blue light from phones, tablets, TVs and laptops blocks melatonin and keeps your cortisol levels elevated. This tricks your brain into thinking it's still daytime, making it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep.

I recommend shutting down all screens at sunset. If you need to be on a device, wear amber-tinted glasses or use the warmest night mode settings possible. Small adjustments like these lower stress hormones and set you up for better sleep.

4. **Drop your bedroom temperature between 60 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit** — Your body needs to cool down at night to reach deep, restorative sleep stages. A room that's too warm will cause restless sleep, night sweats and early wake-ups. Try setting your thermostat to the 60s before bed.

If you tend to get cold easily, add layers to your bedding rather than heating the room. Keeping the air cool while staying cozy under breathable blankets helps your body stay asleep longer and cycle naturally through the important stages of sleep.

5. **Turn off electromagnetic fields (EMFs) in your sleeping area** — Your

# Multidimensional Sleep

*Continued from page 8*

nervous system responds to EMFs like Wi-Fi signals, cellphones and plugged-in electronics — even if you don't feel it consciously. These signals interrupt your sleep cycles and elevate your stress levels at night. It is strongly encouraged to unplug any devices near your bed, shut off your Wi-Fi router overnight and move your phone out of the bedroom. For an even bigger impact, flip the circuit breaker to your bedroom before you sleep. Removing these invisible stressors gives your body a

clean, quiet environment to heal and recharge.

Each of these steps works by aligning your body with its natural sleep-wake rhythm — the foundation your heart, metabolism and immune system depend on. Start with one or two changes today, and as your sleep gets stronger, your energy, focus and resilience will follow.

*“It is vain for you to rise up early,  
To sit up late, To eat the bread of  
sorrows; For so He gives His be-  
loved sleep.” Psalm 127:2 NKJV*



# Farewell Kerry

*Continued from page 6*

His wisdom, He saw fit that she should rest until the resurrection morning.

Brother Andrew and Xavier must face the prospect of life without a wife and mother. Yet, through it all, the light still continues to shine of a heavenly Father who always, in all things, is working all things for the good of those who love Him. We will see Kerry again, in a brighter, more glorious future and then, we will understand it all.



## ***Open Face***

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