

# Psalm 132:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,

## Analysis

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The self-denial intensifies: 'I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids.' This continues verse 3's vow using even more extreme language. The parallel phrases 'sleep to mine eyes' and 'slumber to mine eyelids' are poetic variation emphasizing refusal of rest. 'Sleep' and 'slumber' (Hebrew 'shenah' and 'tenumah') both mean rest/sleep, used together for emphasis. This is hyperbolic oath language (similar to 'may God do so and more' formulas) expressing unbreakable determination - David would rather stay awake than fail to establish God's dwelling. The verse demonstrates that passion for God's glory should exceed concern for personal comfort. This isn't literal insomnia but expressed priority - nothing (including basic needs) takes precedence over honoring God.

## Historical Context

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Such extreme oath language was common in ancient Near East to express unwavering commitment (Genesis 31:50; 1 Samuel 3:17; Ruth 1:17). The language functions rhetorically rather than literally - David didn't actually never sleep, but communicated that God's honor was his supreme priority. Similar language appears in love poetry (Song of Solomon 3:2) and political oaths.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does hyperbolic language (not sleeping) communicate priorities more effectively than moderate statements?
2. What is the relationship between legitimate self-care and appropriate self-denial for God's glory?
3. How do extreme vows/language express devotion without necessarily being literal commitments?
4. What passions and priorities does this extreme language reveal about David's heart?
5. In what ways might believers appropriately express that nothing takes precedence over God's honor?

## Interlinear Text

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אֶمֶת | אַתָּה שְׁנָת לְעֵינֶיךָ | לְעֵינָתֶיךָ תִּתְנַזֵּב: תִּתְנַזֵּב  
H518 I will not give H5414 sleep H8153 to mine eyes H5869 to mine eyelids H6079 or slumber H8572

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 6:4** (Parallel theme): Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

**Ruth 3:18** (Parallel theme): Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.