

Proverbs Week #56 (6:6-8)

“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. Prov 6:6-8

Before we look at today’s verses, let us review our lesson from last week. Last week, my main thought was about how we can wisely use our mouths. More specifically, I mentioned that when our mouths get us into trouble we may need to use our mouths to get us out of that trouble. We can trap ourselves by the words we speak and when we realize it we can use our mouths to escape that trap. We may need to tell someone that we wronged them and seek forgiveness. We may need to tell others we spoke a lie to or about them, say we are sorry, and tell them we won’t do it again. Sometimes we may need to go to someone and say what we promised we cannot fulfill and ask them to agree to release us from our pledge.

How are you doing in applying the wisdom that the book of Proverbs teaches? Remember, Biblical wisdom is about applying God’s truth to daily life. It is more like a skill than just knowing things. Do you remember the Parable of the Sower and the lessons it teaches? The Sower goes out and plants seed. What is the seed he plants? The seed lands on four different locations. Do you remember the four places where seeds land?

Before I add more seeds to your gardens, I want you all to stop and think about your life for a moment. Your life is like a garden and the seed that is cast into your lives may or may not produce fruit. If you are not paying attention to your garden and the seeds that are being planted, then someone needs to be! Parents and children need to work together to teach and learn the things that God desires for us to know. The knowledge that God desires will bring wisdom that leads to His fruit. Now, on with today’s lesson.

Today we get to consider ants and the wisdom they can teach us. Before we consider ants though, what exactly is a sluggard? Our lessons up to this point have been in the context of a father teaching his son. We have learned about being wise and foolish but this is the first time the sluggard is mentioned. The Proverbs will mention the sluggard many more times. The Hebrew word is עָצֵל and its basic meaning is to be sluggish or lazy. It makes me think of slugs. If you are one who is generally sluggish or lazy, according to this proverb, ants have something to teach you. We are told that ants have no overseer, ruler, or commander. Yet, they seem to have no problem doing what they need to do to survive. God has created them with very small brains (compared to ours) and yet they are examples of wise behavior. Being wise is not always about being “big brained” or intelligent.

I want to point out one main theme from these verses that I hope you will remember. Here it is, “If you are being lazy, go to the ants!” It does not take great intelligence to know what you need to do prepare for the future. God cared enough about ants to give them what they need. How much more do you think He cares about you and will provide for you? Let’s consider this theme and remember some of the lessons that I taught when we first started in the book of Proverbs. We learned early on that “the fear of the Lord” is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom (Prov 1:6, 9:10). We also learned that the beginning of wisdom is to get wisdom (Prov 4:7). We learned from the book of James that if we lack wisdom we can ask God for it. Have you been sluggish or lazy in seeking wisdom? Have you been sluggish or lazy in applying what these proverbs have to teach? If so, you need to go to the ants!

Ants prepare for the future. The wisdom I hope we are learning together will help us prepare for the future. As individuals, families, and a community we need God’s wisdom to be prepared for the good things that He has already prepared for us to do. Knowing that His eyes are on us (and let’s for a moment consider that this is a good thing) we have confidence to seek Him and trust Him to continue to provide what we need.

We will continue this theme next week. The lessons the father in Proverbs is teaching his son are very practical. Think about ants and slugs this week. Think about what they have to teach you about being wise. They really do have something to teach you! Parents and children together remind each other about these proverbs lessons. Lord willing next week we will review and add a little more to our learning (Prov 1:5).