

Advice From An Ant

Proverbs 6:6-11 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 30:24-25 There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer;

Illustration: Ant Farm

- Harvester ant colonies can have as many as 40-50 thousand ants.
- Ants communicate using scent, sound, touch and sight; they gather in groups and use teamwork to connect tunnels, etc.
- An ant can carry up to 50 times their own weight; if humans could do this, a 100 pound person could lift two and a half tons!
- Ants secrete pheromones to create a navigation trail when foraging for food – like Hansel and Gretel with their breadcrumbs
- Army ants live in colonies with populations of several hundred thousand; when on the march, they swarm and attack everything in their path – animals not able to quickly get away are breakfast!
(*Leiningen versus the Ants – short story by Carl Stephenson*)

King Solomon compiled the book of wise sayings known as Proverbs. One of his favorite teaching techniques was CONTRAST, where he tells us what we should be like by showing us a person who acts opposite. For example, he tells us that we should be wise by talking a lot about “fools” and how they act. In more than one place in Proverbs, creatures in the animal kingdom act with more sense than human beings – that’s the way it is with the ant. The opposite of this industrious creature is the “sluggard” or “slothful” person – a tragic but comic character in Proverbs.

There is an animal that is quite opposite to the ant, called the two-toed sloth. He sleeps anywhere from 15 to 18 hours a day, and is one of the slowest moving mammals in the world. He hangs upside down most of his life, and actually moves so slowly that green algae grows on his fur and he licks it for nutrition rather than go forage for food. Not exactly an exciting attraction for a zoo! But the sloth is nothing compared to the slothful person that Solomon actually makes fun of in Proverbs!

AWTSAL – translated “sluggard” or “slothful” in Proverbs – means “slack,” “indolent” (lazy, lethargic, inactive, avoiding pain), “to lean idly”

Fundamentally, a slothful person is a LEANER instead of a LIFTER.

Classified Ad: (San Francisco Chronicle under "Help Wanted")

Executive age 25-60. Job entails sitting with feet on desk watching others work. Must be willing to spend several hours each day surfing the internet and making personal phone calls on company time. Candidates who play golf every other afternoon are preferred. Salary starts at \$2,000 a week. We don't really have this job open. We just thought you'd like to see in print what everyone else is applying for.

THE SLUGGARD IS THE PERSONIFICATION OF LAZINESS:

1. The sluggard loves to procrastinate.

Proverbs 6:9-11 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth (“like a robber”), and thy want as an armed man

The sluggard’s motto is LATER – he lets opportunity slip away.

Proverbs 26:14 As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.

Proverbs 18:9 He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster (“who destroys”).

2. The sluggard does not finish things that he starts.

Proverbs 19:24 A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom (“the dish”), and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

Proverbs 12:27 The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious.

Proverbs 24:30-32 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.

3. The sluggard is full of excuses.

Proverbs 20:4 The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.

Proverbs 22:13 The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

4. The sluggard makes everyone else's task more difficult.

Proverbs 10:26 As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to them that send ("employ") him.

Proverbs 15:19 The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.

Proverbs 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.

5. The sluggard will ultimately be disappointed.

Proverbs 13:4 The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.

Proverbs 21:25 The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour.

If you think the Old Testament is hard on the slothful person, here are a couple of passages from the New Testament:

Matthew 25:26-30 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

2 Thessalonians 3:10-13 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

However, the ultimate purpose of the Bible is not just to enhance our earthly lives, but to teach us how to live our spiritual lives:

Romans 12:11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Hebrews 6:12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

We are very BUSY today, but it is possible to be busy and slothful at the same time, if you are busy with the wrong things!

Luke 10:41-42 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

If the ANT is the opposite of the SLUGGARD, then there are some spiritual lessons we can learn from this little insect God created!

Video Clip – Antz		
start	0:49	“all my life ...”
end	4:50	“a giant hole in the ground?”

- 1. The ants work in unity, without striving for positions of leadership, or needing to be pushed and prodded. They carry burdens for others!**
- 2. The ants prepare for the future, gathering food in the good times so they can survive the bad times.**

Our future potential is created by the decisions we make today!

Video Clip – A Bug's Life		
start	1:01	music swells (“A Bug's Life”)
end	2:50	“good job, everybody!”

- 3. The ants never stop working – even when an obstacle is put in their way, they immediately find a way around it.**
- 4. Every ant coming back to the anthill brings something for the colony. Some of their treasures seem insignificant and small, but all are important to the colony.**

An anthill is like a corporation or a body that is dependent upon the contributions of each and every one of its members. **That's the church!**

Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1 Corinthians 12:27 Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. **(EVERYONE IS IMPORTANT!)**