

Proverbs 6

1 My son, if you become surety for your friend, If you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger, 2 You are snared by the words of your mouth; You are taken by the words of your mouth. 3 So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; For you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and humble yourself; Plead with your friend. 4 Give no sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids. 5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, And like a bird from the hand of the fowler. 6 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise, 7 Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, 8 Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest. 9 How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep? 10 A little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep- 11 So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, And your need like an armed man. 12 A worthless person, a wicked man, Walks with a perverse mouth; 13 He winks with his eyes, He shuffles his feet, He points with his fingers; 14 Perversity is in his heart, He devises evil continually, He sows discord. 15 Therefore his calamity shall come suddenly; Suddenly he shall be broken without remedy. 16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, 19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. 20 My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. 21 Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck. 22 When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake,

they will speak with you. 23 For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life, 24 To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. 25 Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, Nor let her allure you with her eyelids. 26 For by means of a harlot A man is reduced to a crust of bread; And an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. 27 Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? 28 Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? 29 So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; Whoever touches her shall not be innocent. 30 People do not despise a thief If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving. 31 Yet when he is found, he must restore sevenfold; He may have to give up all the substance of his house. 32 Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul. 33 Wounds and dishonor he will get, And his reproach will not be wiped away. 34 For jealousy is a husband's fury; Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. 35 He will accept no recompense, Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.

It's amazing how many times God uses animals to illustrate a point. In this passage alone he uses a gazelle, a bird, and an ant. Today I want to focus on the work habits of the ant.

Solomon tells lazy people to go to the ant, contemplate her ways, and learn wisdom. Here are some lessons we learn from ants:

1. **Ants have no leader, yet they still get the job done.** As people, sometimes we rely too much on our leaders.

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We lack the initiative to do things that might not be in our “job description.” As God’s people at work, at home, and in our local churches we need to consider the ant and do things without being told. You expect that from your kids! How many times have you told your children “I expect you to do it without being told” or “Do I have to tell you every little thing?” Look around today and see if there is something you can do without being told. It might be as simple as sending a card of encouragement to a brother or sister you know is struggling. You know they are struggling, do you really need to be told to make the call or send the card?

Consider the Ant!

2. **The ant takes care of her immediate needs.** I can’t help but consider the garden my dad has at Happy Acres. For those of you who don’t know, he has about 12 acres and has a very large garden. It wouldn’t surprise me if he had 150 tomato plants. We’ve waited for several months for produce, and we have a lot. It take a lot of work just to go to the garden and pick what you need for that day. It is so much easier just to go to the grocery store. The ant would never make that argument. The ant would never choose what is easier over what is best.

3. **She gathers her food in the harvest.** Providing for your daily needs is easy. Planning and storing for the future is much more difficult. This is the first year we have had access to a garden, and we a learning how much time and effort it takes to “put things up” for the winter. So far we have 40 meals worth of green beans, 30 meals of corn, some peas, some lima beans, peppers, chow-chow, and salsa. We have a lot more lima beans, peas, salsa, and spaghetti sauce to do.

4. **Other lessons from the ant:**
 - a. Ants cooperate
 - b. Ants share
 - c. Ants are diligent
 - d. Ants exercise responsibility

After looking at the ant, I guess I’m in for a late night of tomato peeling and pepper chopping. Salsa and chow-chow are on the schedule for tonight.