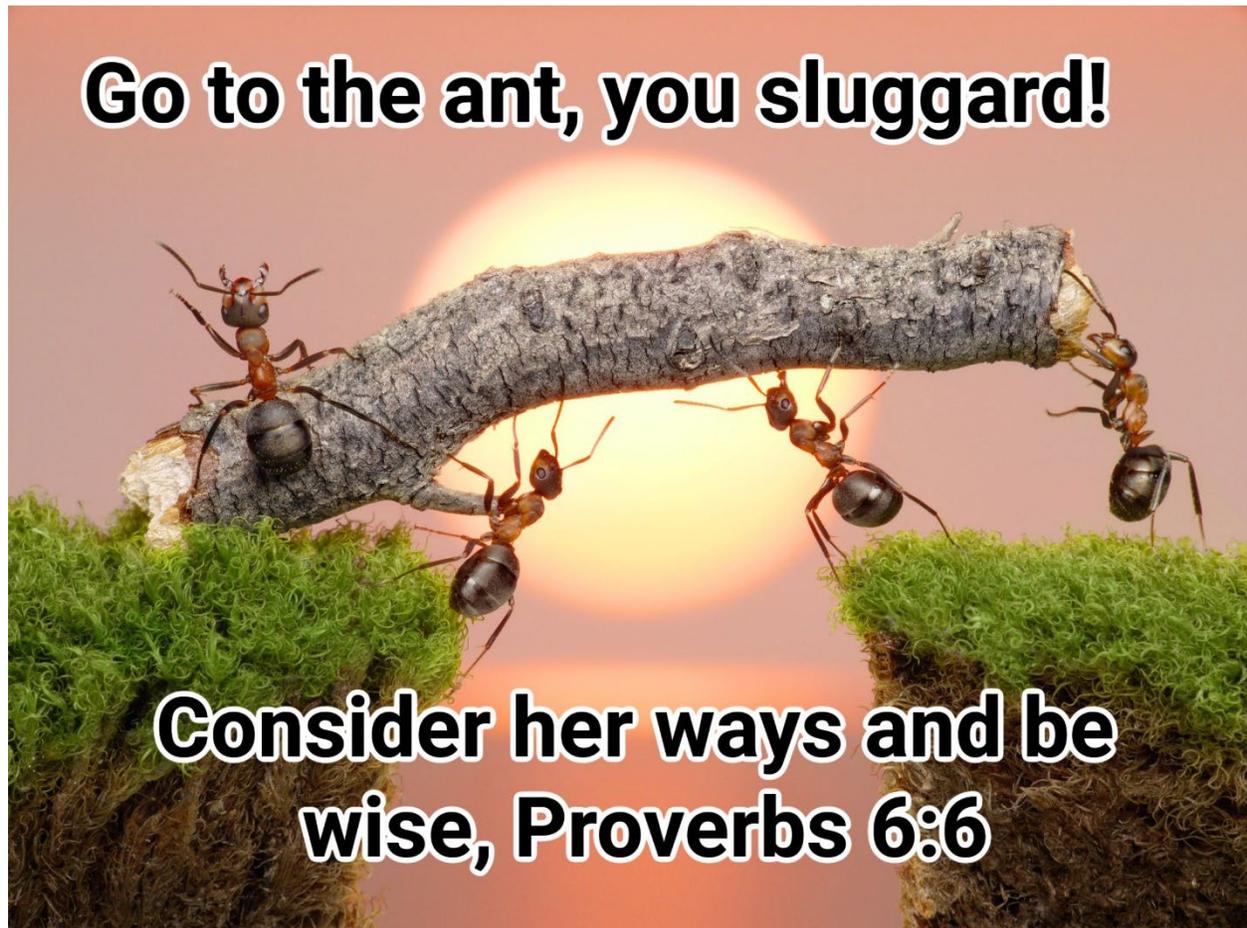


“Go to the Ant...” Proverbs 6:6-11



I. I do not consider any of us here “sluggards” –
אֶסֶל asel – a slow, idle, hesitant person. A lazy person.

Too LAZY to eat, not ME!

¹⁵ **The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl; It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth. Proverbs 26:15 (NKJV)**

Probably an exaggeration on Solomon’s part to make a point ... there are LAZY people in our world, and none of us is immune to laziness at certain times, or in certain situations or maybe about certain things ...

II. The ant is a humble creature, but Scripture tells us to consider her ways, and be wise –

“It is a shame,” said the philosopher Seneca, “not to learn morals from the small animals.”

Yet, Seneca was not a Christian.

“It demonstrates the degradation of the Fall that although man was created in God’s image and made wiser than any of the other creatures, he should be sent to this insignificant school for instruction!” Charles Bridges

1. *Bridges suggests that part of the reason we learn or NEED to learn from inferior creatures is because sin has humbled us ...*

2. Whether it is a matter of sin or not we can learn from observing ants –
A. They have no need of a boss, outside motivation –

⁷ **Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler, Proverbs 6:7 (NKJV)**

B. They work diligently without this and prepare for the future –

⁸ **Provides her supplies in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest. Proverbs 6:8 (NKJV)**

C. *The future for us as Christians is not just retirement (retirement is the ungodly man’s heaven) but the future for the Christian is eternity -*

D. *We need to be diligent about Heavenly / Spiritual things ...*

¹⁹ **“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. Matthew 6:19–20 (NKJV)**

²⁷ **Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.” John 6:27 (NKJV)**

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Matthew 6:33 (NKJV)

E. It is harder to be diligent, not lazy, about spiritual things, because we do NOT see them –

⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV)

Yet, these things are WORTH are best efforts –

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16–18 (NKJV)

III. Understand what and how we gain and or LOSE –

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. 2 Corinthians 4:16

1. How we GAIN - we do not lose heart.

2. Things that cause even a diligent person to be LAZY (or to lose heart) – our outward man is perishing 2 Corinthians 4:16 B

A. For Paul persecution –

²² Are they Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. ²³ Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. ²⁴ From the Jews five times I received forty *stripes* minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; ²⁶ in journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils of *my own* countrymen, *in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness,

in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; ²⁷ in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness—²⁸ besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 2 Corinthians 11:22–29 (NKJV)

B. For everyone eventually, AGE, and the weakness that comes with it ...

¹² The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³ Those who are planted in the house of the LORD Shall flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They shall still bear fruit in old age; They shall be fresh and flourishing, Psalm 92:12–14 (NKJV)

C. For me, and many FATNESS –

- *Priority Preaching, preparing sermons means a lot of sitting!*
- *Having people at my house for Bible study currently involves food!*
- *Visiting people can involve food too!*
- *Housework, organization, and exercise because not priorities are not done,*

...

I am lazy about some things that used to be my strength –

²⁴ Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*. ²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable crown. ²⁶ Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. ²⁷ But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NKJV)

It is great to have priorities but even priorities need balance, a tire full of air on one side but flat on another is not going to get you FAR!

D. For most, PAIN –

Paul calls “pain(s) light affliction, why? Because temporary ...

¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, 2 Corinthians 4:17

E. Excuses –

¹³ The lazy *man* says, “*There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets!*” Proverbs 22:13 (NKJV)

F. Sleepy laziness is self-destructive –

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. Proverbs 6:9–11 (NKJV)

Two ways laziness destroys:

(1) Gradually, slowly, sneakily – ¹⁰ little sleep, a little slumber, A little folding of the hands to sleep— ... like a prowler, Proverbs 6:10B -11 A

(2) Irresistibly, suddenly, - ... And your need like an armed man. Proverbs 6:11 B (NKJV)

**3. Things that KEEP us from losing heart, things that encourage –
... a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, 2 Corinthians 4:17**

A. However heavy are our pains. The glory ahead is much greater!

*B. Our “inward man” is being renewed –
Physically weaker, but spiritually stronger! Because God is our strength -*

²⁹ He gives power to the weak, And to *those who have* no might He increases strength. ³⁰ Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, ³¹ But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:29–31 (NKJV)

29. “The prophet now applies his general statements to the present subject. We have said that his intention was to give greater encouragement to the people and to lead them to have more hope. Because the Jews were at that time weakened and destitute of strength, he shows that God will help those who were thus exhausted and weakened. He magnifies God’s power so that they may conclude that they should not doubt their salvation so long as they enjoy his favor. It was indeed to the people who were held captive in Babylon that the prophet looked; but we ought also to apply this doctrine to ourselves. Whenever our strength fails, and we are almost laid low, we may remind ourselves that the Lord stretches out his hand **to the weary** who are sinking through lack of help.

30. By this comparison the prophet illustrates more powerfully what he had said before: The strength that God imparts to his elect is invincible and unwearied; human strength fails easily, but God’s strength never fails. It is indeed certain that all the vigor that naturally dwells in us proceeds from God. But since men claim as their own what God has bestowed generally on all, the prophet distinguishes between human strength that appears to be innate and the strength by which God peculiarly supports his elect; for God’s kindness, which is diffused throughout all nature, is not sufficiently perceived.

31. The prophet shows that godly people who **hope** in God will not lack **strength**. We must therefore be fully convinced of our weakness if we are to yield to God’s power. The Jews, who were oppressed by that cruel captivity, had great need of this doctrine; but for us also, during this wretchedly ruinous condition of the church, it is extremely necessary.” **John Calvin**