

"Ordinary Advice for Extraordinary Times"

4. The ant and the sluggard

Trinity Church Adelaide - Jun 2020

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The Structure of the Book of Proverbs		
Chapters	Section	Talk Topics
1:1-7	Introduction	1. Do you want to be wise?
1:8-9:18	Instruction	2. Choose wisdom not folly
10:1-31:9	Sayings	3. Ethics by soundbites
		4. The ant and the sluggard
		5. What can we learn from worldly wisdom?
31:10-31	Conclusion	6. The (impossibly) perfect wife

"Geoff's 5 Tops Tips for interpreting Proverbs" (Talk 3)
i. remember the big idea: Proverbs describes probabilities not promises
ii. wherever possible, consider the context
iii. don't quote a proverb before reading every proverb on the topic
iv. embrace the God-given freedom we ALL have
v. aim for perfection, not the minimum passing grade

FAQ #1: Why should we work hard?

Prov 6:6 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise!
7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler,
8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.
9 How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—
11 and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

FAQ #2: Why are we inclined to laziness?

Prov 26:13 A sluggard says, "There's a lion in the road, a fierce lion roaming the streets!"
14 As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed.
15 A sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he is too lazy to bring it back to his mouth.
16 A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven people who answer discreetly.

FAQ #3: Will hard work guarantee my success?

Prov 10:4 Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth. 5 He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

Prov 23:4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich; do not trust your own cleverness. 5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

FAQ #4: What does Proverbs say about career?

i. Unemployment:

Prov 19:17 Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done.

- context (historical and literary)

ii. Ambition:

Prov 22:29 Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank.

Prov 24:27 Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready; after that, build your house.

FAQ #5: So how can I change?

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

- the role of God's change agent

- forging Christian character

- conviction => character => circumstance

For discussion/reflection: which ONE fruit of the Spirit will you ask God to cultivate in you this week?