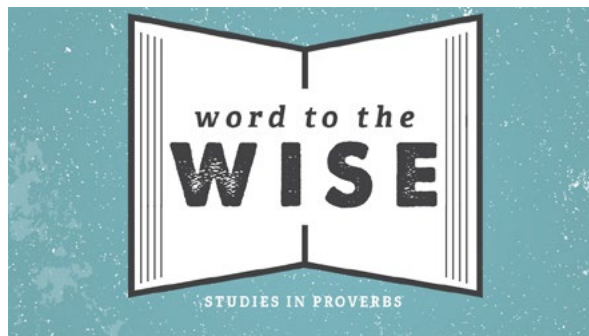


beyond^{the}Weekend

For the sermon on July 19-20, 2014
"Think Small"



Welcome to *Beyond the Weekend!* The experiences below are designed to connect with the weekend message. Take 20-30 minutes each day and enjoy your pursuit of God! *Beyond the Weekend* is also available via daily e-mails. To sign up, go to adabile.org/btw.

During July and August, we are traveling through the book of Proverbs. We are reading one chapter a day for two months, thus reading Proverbs twice this summer. Enjoy!

Day 1 Proverbs 6.6-8 | Sluggard vs Ant

Consider the advice a parent gives to a lazy child: "Wake up," "Work hard," or "Prepare for the future." Similar advice is passed on in today's proverb about the sluggard, except this parental message is a little more creative. The instruction is simple: observe the life of an ant. But the wisdom from this activity is profound.

Living about 45 days, this non-stop insect is the opposite of lazy. Each individual ant moves about freely while remaining diligent to the mission of its colony. No one is watching to keep the creature on task, the ant doesn't complain and it never gives up. Like a diligent farmer, each ant relentlessly keeps going to gather what's needed to prepare for the harvest to come.

If you're more like the sluggard, it's time for you to get up and work diligently. If you're more like the ant, maybe it's time to evaluate your mission. **In addition to reading Proverbs 21**, write down what you want to be working toward and pray to be like the diligent ant.

Day 2 Proverbs 6.10-11 | Unexpected Poverty

Proverbs is scattered with verses about diligence leading to abundance and laziness leading to poverty. "Lazy hands make for poverty, but diligent hands bring wealth" (Proverbs 10.4). "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty" (Proverbs 21.5).

In Proverbs 6.10-11, Solomon depicts poverty arriving when someone is unaware (like a bandit), and arriving with force (like a man in uniform carrying a weapon). He draws a direct connection between a lazy-spirited person (someone who sleeps their life away) and their glaring lack of essentials.

Of course, there are many other reasons for poverty. But certainly one of those reasons is a lazy spirit. Be warned: when you allow laziness to creep into your attitude and your habits, the more likely your essential needs will one day stare you in the face like a bandit or an armed man. **After reading Proverbs 22**, choose one proverb on laziness and memorize it.

Day 3 Matthew 25.14-30 | Spiritual Stewardship

As Jesus nears the day of crucifixion, he pulls his disciples in and tells them a story about a man who entrusted his money to three servants. By putting their money to work, two of the servants proved the truth of Proverbs 13.11, “. . . whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.” The servants returned with more because they invested it wisely. The third man, however, hid his treasure and had nothing more to offer his master.

You'll notice that Jesus is teaching about the end times. He tells his disciples, “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him” (Matthew 24.44). The story about investing money can be a helpful lesson for practical financing, but it is intended as a metaphor about spiritual treasure we receive from God. Jesus will return and no matter how much he entrusted to us, our responsibility—or lack thereof—will be revealed. **Along with reading Proverbs 23**, pray to steward spiritual treasures—like grace and forgiveness—well.

Day 4 Luke 11.5-13 | Persistence

You've heard it said, “If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.” But it seems the voice of our culture sounds more like, “If at first you don't succeed, complain about it or move onto something else.” Persistence is often confused with stubbornness and not always a quality worth having. With this kind of *obstinate continuance*, as Webster defines it, we find it easier to jump from one thing to the next than sticking with something through thick and thin.

Jesus honors those who demonstrate persistence—especially when it comes to faith! Jesus heals those who continually ask (Luke 9.37-43), he saves those who keep seeking (Matthew 15.21-28), and he intentionally uses repetition for *our sake* (John 21.15-19). Perhaps you're growing tired of doing the “right” thing and life hasn't turned out the way you expected. Don't give up! Jesus says, “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you” (Luke 11.9). **Read Proverbs 24 today** and also ask for the Spirit's help in that one area where you need persistence.

Day 5 Galatians 5.13 - 6.10 | Reaping the Harvest

A diligent farmer understands the effort he expends in cultivating the ground. Planting good seeds, weeding, watering, and tending to his crops are all necessary for a good harvest. The same is true for our spiritual lives. When Paul writes to the Galatians, he explains that a person can plant rotten seeds in their heart by acting on what their flesh desires. The result seems obvious— they will reap only devastation.

When a person plants good seeds, nourished by the Spirit, the harvest is bountiful. The result is love, joy, and peace. Such fruit can be enjoyed, but Paul goes on to say, “. . . whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life” (Galatians 6.8). The harvest for the diligent believer is not just a life filled with lovely fruit, but a celebration that lasts for eternity. **Read Proverbs 25** and pray for a humble and attentive heart from which the fruit of the Spirit blossoms.

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