

May 28 — ANT University

READ

Proverbs 5:1-7:27

Proverbs 6:6-8, *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.”*

THINK

At first glance, we may not seem to have much in common. But, believe it or not, humans and ants share a very important quality — we’re both wired for work! But, let’s face it, we all feel a little lazy at times, and if we aren’t careful, we can easily slip and slide on the slime of sluggishness and forget that work is, in fact, a gift from God! So, get out your number 2 pencil and notebook because it’s time to enroll at ANT-U, where in today’s reading, God illustrates this core lesson with the hard-working, self-starting ant. Let’s look at two lessons we can learn from this inspiring insect:

Ants take initiative. They don’t wait on others to motivate them. They don’t set the snooze button or wait for wake-up calls. They get the job done without prompting!

Ants are prepared. They work smarter, not harder. They keep their eyes forward and their heads in the game. We, too, should first do what we have to do, so we are then free to do what we want to do later.

Students, apply what you’ve learned, and you’ll be well on your way to working the way God wired you to work. Then, you can enjoy the fruits of your labor with a satisfied heart and a smile on your face!

PRAY

God, Thank You for wiring me to work and showing me that it is truly a gift. Please continue to nudge me when I get lazy and procrastinate. Guide my priorities and help me to take initiative. In Jesus' name, Amen.

May 29 — Folly's Call

READ

Proverbs 8:1-10:32

Proverbs 9:13, 16-18, *"Folly is an unruly woman...To those who have no sense, she says, 'Stolen water is sweet; food eaten in secret is delicious! But little do they know that the dead are there, that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.'"*

THINK

Buy this! Drink that! Smoke this! In this day and age, we are constantly bombarded with advertisements trying to sell us things, many of them unnecessary at best and downright harmful at worst. In the book of Proverbs, we see two women competing in their "advertisements" to passersby, enticing them in to dine with them: Wisdom and Folly.

Both Wisdom and Folly have prepared a meal, but while Wisdom is a hospitable and responsible woman of character, Folly is clamorous and unpleasant, encouraging indulgence in sin. She lures people with the promise of forbidden pleasures and the thrill of breaking the rules. And while stolen water may taste sweet at the moment, it offers no lasting satisfaction. Folly and sin lead only to death.

Who will you dine with today? When tempted by the insidious and illicit pleasures of the moment, remember that only the living water of God can ever truly satisfy. Wisdom and Folly may both be vying for your attention, but it is up to you to decide which you will heed.

PRAY

Dear Lord, I want to "dine" with Your Wisdom today. Don't let temporary pleasures cloud my sight; remind me of what is truly fulfilling. Help me live my life with a long-term vision, trusting in Your leadership at all times. Amen!

May 30 — The Filter

READ

Proverbs 11:1-13:25

Proverbs 13:3, *“Those who control their tongue will have a long life; opening your mouth can ruin everything.”*

THINK

By definition, filters are designed to control. They regulate the impurities allowed in our water and the gas in our cars. They control the amount of light allowed in a camera lens, just to name a few uses. But just as they can work wonders, they can also fail. The coffee has unwanted texture, the car doesn't run as smoothly, or the subject in a picture is washed out because filters failed to control what they were supposed to. But there's another kind of filter that can't be found in any physical device that can also work wonders but has a much higher probability for failure — our heart that's meant to regulate the tongue.

The Bible warns us many times that the tongue wields immense power. It can build up and tear down, cause wars and bring peace depending on the filter we use for our words. We see this happening daily when, in frustration or hurriedness, people speak first and think later. The impact is misunderstandings, damaged relationships, or worse.

We could argue that this unseen filter of the tongue is the most valuable. It can help us to choose words wisely as we speak the truth in love and know when to communicate or listen instead. But the only way to truly secure this filter effectively is when we surrender our filter to God. Only when we give Him control of our lives can we truly have control of our tongues. It's then that a heart that is overflowing with God's love will be reflected in our words.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I need Your help. Take control of my life and let Your love fill my heart to overflow. Let my words be truthful and filtered with love. Help me to listen more and reflect You in my life. Amen.

May 31 — Best-Laid Plans

READ

Proverbs 14:1-16:33

Proverbs 16:9, *"We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps."*

THINK

Have you been in a situation where a last-minute change of plans threw off your whole day, or maybe even your year? Perhaps you had your heart set on something you "just knew" must have been ordained by God, then suddenly realized it wasn't going to be possible, and it completely changed the trajectory of where you thought your life was going. Such occurrences can be devastating. You feel as if the wind has been knocked out of you, your dream is lost, and you're left wondering what went wrong. You begin to question God's motives. Why isn't He allowing to happen what you desired most?

What's important to remember is, we can make plans — even when they seem like God's best for our lives — but He determines our steps. Could it be possible that past the immediate disappointment, God's plans will be even better and more fulfilling than we dreamed or imagined?

Maybe our marriage engagement ends in a broken relationship, we lose out on what seemed like the career opportunity of a lifetime, or a scholarship to the school of our choice falls through the cracks. Is it the end of our hope? Absolutely not! God always has something better on the horizon of our lives.

So, when those moments arrive, what do you do? Start by placing your trust in God's plans over yours. Things fall short of our expectations time and time again. But when we place our trust in Him, we will experience His best for our lives. Allow Him to direct your course and discover a life full of possibility, hope, and joy like you never before imagined.

PRAY

Dear God, Thank You for the great plans You have for my life. When I fall short, help me keep my eyes fixed on You and what You have in store for me. Amen.

June 1 — The Wisdom of Restraint

READ

Proverbs 17:1-19:29

Proverbs 17:1, 14, 27, *“Better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife. ... Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out. ... The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered.”*

THINK

An alarm goes off. Music blares. The morning news is heard on the TV, and then the shouting begins. In a moment, the peace found within the silence of the early morning is shattered as tempers flare and new arguments are born with a lack of restraint.

Restraint... in a culture that emphasizes individual freedoms and encourages self-centeredness, the word may not seem like a good thing. BUT here, in Proverbs, we see the wisdom of it. It takes wisdom to bite the tongue, even when we're in the right. Because timing is everything. Discussions may need to be had, but in moments of anger, nothing is accomplished. By holding back words until either the right time or not at all, we can prevent fights and lead the way to peace in our relationships.

Are you a quarrelsome person? Or, do you show restraint until the right time to broach touchy subjects? Do the latter, and you will soon find the peace and tranquility needed to have a fully functioning day that's productive and on purpose with all that God wants you to accomplish!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Give me wisdom in the way I use my words. Let me be a peacemaker in my relationships. Help me know, by the power of the Holy Spirit, when to speak up and when to use restraint. Amen.

June 2 — Training Day

READ

Proverbs 20:1-22:16

Proverbs 22:6, *“Train up children in the way they should go, and when they are old, they will not depart from it.”*

THINK

Did you know there are improv classes, robotics camps, language tutors, and private pole vault clubs for kids? And that doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of all the artistic, athletic, and academic training opportunities available. Parents intentionally invest in their child's specific interests to help them succeed. But, there's no greater investment for a child's success than training their faith.

Training our children's faith starts with us as parents. We don't have to be perfect, but we do have to make our children's relationship with God a priority. They notice what matters to us most, and they see how we prioritize our relationship with Jesus. And the reality is, we “impress” our beliefs on our children far more by what we do than what we say. Godly values are more caught than taught.

If the thought of training your children's faith is intimidating, there's good news — you're not alone! You can partner with the church by attending every Sunday just as you would any other artistic, athletic, or academic commitment. That, alone, will leave a lasting impression on your children's faith as they grow to know who God created them to be.

PRAY

God, Thank You for the opportunity to partner with the church in training my child's faith. Please help me to model faith through how I live and give me wisdom as I train up my child to follow You. In Jesus 'name, Amen.

June 3 — House of Rock

READ

Proverbs 22:17-24:22

Proverbs 24:3-4, *“By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.”*

THINK

In the classic children’s story, *The Three Little Pigs*, the first built his house with straw, the second built his house with sticks, and the third and wisest pig built his house with rock. When the big bad wolf came, the third pig’s home was the only one strong enough to withstand the attack. We can learn a lot from this simple tale. The bottom line: God must be our “rock,” the foundation of our home.

If a family builds the structure of their union on God’s wisdom and establishes their relationships with understanding, the knowledge of God will prevail and create an unshakeable fortress. Jesus is the rock, the anchor on which all true success is found. When our homes are rooted in Him, it carries over into every aspect of our lives.

By putting our trust in God, we are secure and can rest easy that nothing can “huff and puff and blow our house down.” Storms may come, but Jesus is our ultimate shelter. So, no matter what background we come from, as children of the King, we are a part of something much greater than any single dwelling — we have an all-access pass to know Christ personally, which fills our lives with “rare and beautiful treasures.” Have you built your home on Jesus, the solid Rock?

PRAY

Lord, Thank You for being the solid foundation for my life. Today I choose to look to Your word for the blueprints. When things get hard, and storms hit, help me to keep my eyes on You. In Jesus' name, Amen.