



DAY 1 PROVERBS 21:5

1

Remember the Aesop fable about the tortoise and the hare? The hare bragged about his lightning speed to the point that the tortoise challenged him to a race. Of course, he agreed to such an easy contest. However, the overconfident hare failed to realize the determination of his challenger. As they raced, the tortoise trailed so far behind the hare decided to take a nap. Much to his chagrin, the tortoise approached the finish line just as he awoke. What was the hare's problem? Overconfidence and lack of effort. He lost sight of his objective. What was the tortoise's secret? Diligence and focus. He put one foot in front of the other and kept his eye on the goal. Proverbs 21:5 gives us several keys to success: plan what you want to accomplish, then focus on doing it one small step at a time.

DAY 2 PROVERBS 24:30-34

2

This proverb vividly shows us what happens when someone neglects to care for his property. Weeds, thorns and thistles take over. Fruit shrivels. The land doesn't produce the crops it should. It doesn't happen all at once. Every little decision to put off the hoeing and watering until later yields a crop of failure. Did you ever put something off until it was too late? Have you ever wavered on making a decision and then the decision was made for you? When we put off choosing to work toward a goal we are actually making a choice – to do nothing and suffer the consequences. Take the advice in Proverbs. Observe what happens when neglect is the action taken. Choose to achieve your goal instead. Ask Jesus to give you the grace to succeed.

DAY 3 EPHESIANS 5:15-17

3

We have a new granddaughter. It's been thrilling to watch her grow. When she was first born she lost weight and had to be fed every two hours around the clock to prevent dehydration. Her proper growth depended on her parents' diligence in feeding her. They lost a lot of sleep those first few days. Our spiritual growth isn't automatic either. We must intentionally pray and study God's word as a habit or we lose ground. When we make the most of our time by spending time with Him, we steadily grow stronger every day. Unlike seeing a newborn lose weight, however, we may not see the signs of spiritual atrophy if life is going our way. Sometimes we only understand our need in the midst of crisis. Are you dissatisfied? Maybe you're hungry for what only God can give.

DAY PROVERBS 6:6-8

4

Proverbs tells us we can gain wisdom by observing the ways of the ant. Ants have no ruler. By instinct, they gather together and accomplish their task. Outward commands or pressures of an overseer do not rule the ant. Rather she is lead by inner understanding. In other words, the Spirit of God within us should govern our path. The ant inwardly knows how to work together with the colony. God created each ant with a specific function. Likewise, God has given each of us a special purpose in his church. If we let the Holy Spirit guide us, we too can have true relationship with the Body of Christ. Outward pressure to perform doesn't lead to true fellowship, but when we understand our gifts and contribute to the Body, we have joy and peace.

DAY GENESIS 41:46-49

5

Joseph's rise to prominence came at a price. He endured slavery and imprisonment before being appointed ruler under Pharaoh. Joseph learned faithfulness and obedience during his years of being unfairly treated. When God showed him that Egypt would have seven years of plenty followed by seven years of severe drought, Pharaoh put him in charge. The lessons he learned as a slave served him well when entrusted with saving an empire from famine. Not only did Joseph save Egypt, he saved the Hebrew people, and therefore the bloodline of the Messiah, Jesus. When we are faithful with what God gives us now, He will trust us with more. Who knows where your small steps of faithful obedience will lead?

Sign up to receive our AppNotes email, Monday-Friday.

parkerhill.org/bible