

July 10, 2011



Teamwork

“Go the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise:”
(Proverbs 6:6*)

It was a warm day as the man sat quietly in the shade of the old walnut tree. A gentle breeze added to the perfect weather. As he looked up from his Bible, he saw a group of ants moving along the ground. One line of ants was marching empty-handed to the place where someone had dropped some food. The other line was moving in the opposite direction with bits of food on their back.

The man remembered that some time had passed since he read the Scriptures regarding one of God’s smallest creatures. He knew ants are indeed small creatures but also a great example of teamwork. Alone with his thoughts, the Holy Spirit caused the man to turn to the middle of the Bible and read the advice given by one of the wisest men who ever lived.

“Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise, which, having no chief, officer or ruler, prepares her food in the summer, and gathers her provision in the harvest.” (Proverbs 6:6-8*)

The man quietly thanked God for giving us His creatures to observe and “*be wise.*” Perhaps we could learn by watching how the little ones go about their God-directed duties, using teamwork. If the job was left to one ant, the work may eventually be done. On the other hand, it would take a long time to complete the task of moving the food bits to the ant colony.

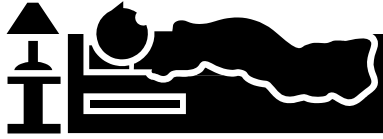
With a whole army of ants working together, the job is done quickly and smoothly. Each member of the ant army has their job to do.



When each does his part, great things are done in minimum time. Small wonder that the man writing the advice told us to “*observe her ways and be wise*”.

God’s word warns the one who would shirk his duty (a sluggard) to be a working part of the team. The wise king tells of the sluggard’s lot, “*How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little holding of the hands to rest—and your poverty will come in like a vagabond, and your need like an armed man*” (Proverbs 6: 9-11*)

Instead of getting up early enough to attend the Sunday service, a person may say, “I really need the rest; it’s been a tough week”. Many people have such weeks, but still manage to get going in the morning. . . .”*a little slumber, a little holding of the hands to rest*”. The body may get the rest, but at what cost to the feeding of the spirit?



We ponder our choice to join in and help the team achieve its mission. Perhaps the team is struggling to keep the mission moving and one more pair of hands or feet may be the thing needed to overcome the next obstacle.

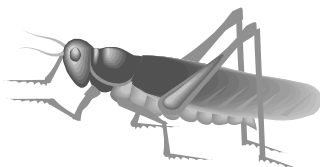
The business world uses a term, "*synergy*". It means a joint effort of people so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of individual effects. One plus one, in effect, equals three. The idea works where teamwork is needed.

In another place, we are told about other little creatures, and their wisdom, "*Four things are small on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise; the ants are not a strong folk, but they prepare food in the summer; the badgers are not mighty folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet all of them go out in ranks; the lizard you may grasp with the hands, yet it is in the king's palaces.*" (Proverbs 30: 24-28*)

By way of the proverb, is God telling us to prepare provision for the future as we are able, to build on solid foundations, to work as teams to accomplish that which He will have us do with the result that we might share a king's reward?

The locusts represent another example of small creatures using their God-directed actions to get things done through teamwork. They, "*all go out in ranks*". Have we ever seen the results of a group of locusts after they have gone through an area? As a team they accomplish what seems impossible to a casual observer.

We may recall the Bible account of God using armies of locusts to make known His power to the Egyptian king. The account tells us that the whole ground was covered with locusts that cleared the land of all its green leaves. There is a lesson to be learned in teamwork from the little creatures.



Teamwork by the locusts got the work done that Almighty God planned. Using the locusts as an example, what mission needs doing with a team working together? What mighty work could our team do with each doing a little part to help?

Strong people may need to slow down a little (which can be difficult for some) to allow weaker ones to keep up. The result of pulling together as a team at work, or at play or in the Lord's work, can make life so much more fulfilling and harmonious. It can also get us to where we want to go. Without this unity, we spend lots of energy accomplishing little.

With practice, we can learn to work as a team and pull together. If the ants and the locusts can do it, so can we! We can be thankful for the opportunity for blessing that God gave our team.

Dear God, please help us to be team players at home, at work, within Your church, and in the work You have prepared for us to do. Thank you

Comments by Harry Bain

* New American Standard Bible; i.e., NASB