

Our Little Teachers

Introduction. In 2 Kings 5:10-13, Naaman was furious when the instructions were given to heal his leprosy. He wanted to do something big rather than merely washing in the Jordan River. God does not always command big actions to teach big lessons, so we are apt to miss some of God's greatest lessons because we are always looking for something larger than life.

Proverbs 30:24-28 contains four such lessons. All four of these creatures are insignificant but their wisdom makes up for it. Their instinct lifts them to greater respectability. From these four little creatures we can learn lessons that challenge and influence us to be more mature Christians.

I. The Ants Teach Us The Necessity Of Work And Preparation

- A. The lowly ant is one of the most industrious insects on the planet. There are no shirkers or slackers among the ants (Proverbs 6:6-8).
 - 1. In relative terms ants have amazing strength. Have you ever watched an ant carry a morsel of food? They are tireless and strong.
 - 2. In fact, ants can carry ten to fifty times their own weight; which would be equivalent to a 175 lb. man carrying an object of 1,750 to 8,750 pounds!
- B. The applications to Christians:
 - 1. One of the finest lessons a young person can learn, aside from being a Christian and dating godly people, is a lesson on physical work (Romans 12:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; Hebrews 6:12).
 - 2. Spiritually, God wants His children to work. In the parable of the vineyard every laborer worked in spite of when they were hired (Matthew 20:1-16). The earlier you begin, the more time you have for great accomplishments (Psalm 34:11; Ecclesiastes 12:1).
 - 3. You will regret your lost opportunities (Matthew 25:1-10; Luke 13:24-28; Romans 14:12; Hebrews 9:27). On the other hand, there will be great joy for those who are prepared through abounding labor (Matthew 25:21).
 - 4. The true strength of the ant lies in its vision and preparation for the future. God will bless churches who have vision and prepare for the future, and then follow up with earnest labor (Ecclesiastes 9:10; John 9:4; Revelation 3:8).

II. The Badgers Teach Us The Necessity Of Refuge And Safety

- A. Because of their small size, "conies" ("rock badgers," NKJV, ESV; "badgers," NASB) are virtually defenseless, but they show wisdom by dwelling in the safe refuge of the cleft of the rock (cp. Obadiah 3-4).

B. The applications to Christians:

1. Like the badgers, we are also helpless, but in a spiritual way (Jeremiah 10:23; John 3:27; 15:4-5; 2 Corinthians 3:5; 4:7).
2. We must choose our refuge carefully.
 - a) Our refuge cannot be in ourselves (Proverbs 28:26; 2 Corinthians 1:9).
 - b) Our refuge cannot be in wealth (Proverbs 11:28; 1 Timothy 6:17).
 - c) Our refuge cannot be in other people (Psalm 146:3; Hosea 7:11).
3. If our souls are in healthy condition, they will be driven to our true refuge, which is God (Deuteronomy 33:27-28; Psalm 9:9; 18:2; 40:2; 46:1; 94:22; Jeremiah 17:7).
 - a) We can find real security in this present dispensation in Christ who is our Rock (Isaiah 28:16; Acts 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 10:4).
 - b) When you turn from God, you are easy prey (1 Peter 5:8). A badger separated from its refuge is no better than when man is separated from his refuge (Ephesians 2:12).

III. The Locusts Teach Us The Necessity Of Unity And Cooperation

- A. A single locust is hardly noticeable. By itself, it is harmless and insignificant. However, when locusts travel together they command the world's attention because they are virtually unstoppable (Exodus 10:14-15; Joel 2:4-9).
- B. The applications to Christians:
1. In the church there is weakness in division (Matthew 12:25), but there is strength in unity (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10; John 17:21-23; 1 Corinthians 1:10).
 - a) It was good for man not to be alone (Genesis 2:18). There is strength in numbers. The modern world refers to this phenomenon as "synergy."
 - b) With synergy, the sum of the parts is greater than the individual parts alone. The importance of working together is clearly seen in the church (Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 10:24).
 2. The locust are able to cooperate and conquer without a king; surely we can cooperate and conquer sin with our King enthroned in Heaven (Hebrews 1:3).

IV. The Lizards Teach Us The Necessity Of Fearlessness And Perseverance

- A. The wisdom of the lizard is in its elusiveness and boldness (“spider,” KJV, NKJV; “lizard,” ASV, NASB). Even though the lizard is small and can be grasped with the hands, it is not afraid of the task. It will be found in the noblest or most significant of places.
- B. The applications to Christian workers:
 - 1. We cannot fear serving our God (Matthew 25:25). We need great perseverance and courage (Matthew 10:27-33; 24:12-13; Hebrews 10:39).
 - 2. Quiet perseverance will be victorious and patient endurance will be crowned with glorious reward (Mark 13:13; Philippians 2:12; 3:14; 1 Corinthians 15:58).
 - 3. We should not worry about what we cannot do; all that is required is serving according to our personal ability (2 Corinthians 8:12).

Conclusion. Faithfulness is a personal responsibility (Revelation 20:12), and we are grateful to learn from these creatures (2 Corinthians 5:9). They who operate by instinct put those of us who operate by logic and reason to shame. In all these cases, the disadvantages of weakness were overcome by counteracting qualities. Wisdom manifests itself in God’s creation in a variety of ways, and humans can learn the value of wisdom over size and numerical strength.

In 1066, one of the most decisive battles in world history was fought. William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, wanted to invade England. The results of the successful invasion were staggering. It transformed Britain’s culture and ultimately led to world domination by the British Empire. One of the reasons William had the confidence to try such a risky undertaking was that he had a recently-invented technological edge that the English did not possess. That edge was the stirrup. While the English rode to the battlefield, they fought on foot; conventional wisdom being that the horse was too unstable a platform from which to fight. But the Norman cavalry, standing secure in their stirrups, were able to ride down the English, letting the weight of their charging horses punch their lances home. This technological edge led to the conquest of Britain. Without it, William might never have attempted such a perilous war.