

Proverbs 3:24

When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet.

The comfort of Job is this: nothing happened to Job that God had not already screened. Job didn't know it at the time, but God had a hedge about him, even with all the terrible things that happened to him! *There was a line* which Satan had been told he could not cross. When things go wrong, it is so easy to take the attitude of Job's wife and desire to curse God because we can't perceive His watch-care or His lovingkindness. When things are going well, it is easy to believe in God's goodness, but in dark times we tend to doubt His character and His love for us. We begin to listen to Satan's accusations against Him rather than His own truths He has revealed in the Word. Just at the time that we most need to lean on Him, there is the danger that we will pull away. We must remind ourselves that God has a purpose for everything and acknowledge that we are often not going to be able to see or understand it.

Nights can sometimes be difficult because there is extra quiet in the house, extra time to think. Rather than letting worries and fears crowd in, we can use those moments to take our concerns to our Heavenly Father. He is always awake; He always hears, and He is the only One with the power and authority to do anything about our concerns. He is a faithful God.* Rest in Him.

* See Deuteronomy 7:9.

Proverbs 6:7

Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler . . .

The little ant is self-governing! She knows what needs to be done, and she does it. We also need to be self-governing—living as fully mature Christians who will take responsibility for our own decisions and actions. God has given us a wealth of wisdom, but none of it will do us any good if we refuse to apply it to our lives. Being self-governing does not mean that God is not over us; it means that our wills are submitted to His. We acknowledge His lordship, so rather than doing our own thing, we seek to do what He would have us do.

This is not some strange, mystical process. It means we read the Word, looking to know the heart of God. And we pray for Him to give us a heart like His. We also read the Word with a desire for God to sanctify us—to show us where we need to change to become more like Christ. Just as the little ant was created with a purpose, so are we! The ant will do what she's created to do because God hasn't really given her any choice. But we do have a choice, so we must constantly be evaluating and refining and striving to do right (with the Holy Spirit's counsel and help), or we are most apt to fall into sin and trouble. Then we are at risk of God using someone else to accomplish what He would have had us do, because His ultimate purposes will not be thwarted.

Proverbs 9:9

Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

How can a wise and just man continue learning?

- talk with and listen to his parents, grandparents, older siblings, and mentors in the faith
- read solid books (histories, biographies, God-honoring science, excellent literature which inspires)
- meditate on Scripture (not just reading it to "get through it" for the day but thinking on it and changing ideas and actions to suit)
- pray for discernment
- take courses from godly teachers and professors
- self-study (never stop seeking to know more about God's world)
- have a humble attitude, a teachable spirit
- listen to messages from a variety of preachers and speakers, but be a Berean—Acts 17:10-12—and search the Scriptures for "whether those things [be] so"
- apprentice (even if not formally, just walking alongside someone and learning new skills)
- do research projects (in-depth study over time from a wide range of resources)
- desire knowledge for the right purpose—to do good, not evil

Earning your diploma is an excellent accomplishment,

but don't let it mean the end of your education. Higher learning can happen anywhere. Follow the passions God has put in your heart, continue to study and grow, and see what doors God will open for you and what ways He will use you in His time.

Proverbs 12:11

*He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread:
but he that followeth vain persons is void of
understanding.*

This verse reminds me of the fable of the ant and the grasshopper. The ant worked hard all spring, summer, and fall to store away food for winter. The grasshopper loved to fiddle and dance and visit with friends but never tilled, planted, or harvested anything. When the cold winds and the snow finally came, the ant was cozy and well provided for, but the grasshopper was left to beg as he had frittered away his time and had nothing laid by in store.

Time is an invaluable commodity. We are given only so much and no more. (And what makes it even more precious is that none of us knows exactly how much we've been given!) We should value not only our own time but the time of others.

Last evening we attended a special event, and when the host (a successful Christian businessman) stood to get things started, he told everyone how he wanted to start on time because he didn't believe in wasting minutes—not others' nor his own. He has made good use of the resources God has entrusted to him over the years, and God has blessed his wise stewardship.

Your father has also talked about the multiplication factor involved in wasting other people's time. For example, if a boss calls a meeting of twenty-five employees and he walks into the meeting ten minutes late, he has used 250 minutes of employee time that day accomplishing nothing. While many employees probably wouldn't care, for those who are diligent and want to be making progress on their assigned tasks and projects, minutes spent just waiting are a

frustration.

We want to use our time well, yet we must also remember not to let ourselves become so busy that we have no time for the Lord or for the family and friends God has given us. Relationship building needs to be a high priority. And while it may occasionally inconvenience us, we should also make time to talk with and help those in need. Whether they require prayer, a ride, a listening ear, a meal, or something else, if God has equipped us to meet the need (and it is not frivolous), then He may be leading us to fill it. Willingness to go out of one's way for a friend will remind that friend that he matters—not only to other people but also to God.

Proverbs 14:25

*A true witness delivereth souls:
but a deceitful witness speaketh lies.*

Isaiah 30 speaks of a rebellious people who do not want to hear God's Word, so they instead demand of their teachers, "Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits . . . cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." The beginning of II Timothy 4 also warns of men who "will not endure sound doctrine" but will "turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

We live in such a time today. The majority of people prefer to be made comfortable, to be amused and entertained, to be placated and soothed but not to be challenged by the Word of God or confronted about their sins or any need for reform. While there will always be those who are willing to tell us what we *want* to hear, it will go better for us now and eternally if we surround ourselves with those who love us enough to tell us what we *need* to hear.

Note: Read I Kings 12:1-17 for the example of King Rehoboam, who rejected the wise counsel of his elders (which didn't please him) for the foolish counsel of his peers (which appealed to his lust for power). Because of this poor decision, he lost ten of the twelve tribes of Israel. In contrast, the king and the people of Assyria were faced with a severe message from the prophet Jonah—"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown"—but they listened, believed, and repented, and their entire city was spared. You can learn more about this in Jonah 3.

We hope you enjoyed this excerpt from
A Mother's Heart on Proverbs.

This version is available exclusively from:



www.roots-by-the-river.com