THE ANT AND THE SLUGGARD

"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." —PROVERBS 6:6-8

We have all had days when we feel like a sluggard, but imagine if all our days were like that? How do we get out of it? What does the Bible say?

The Book of Proverbs teaches us two ways in which the sluggard may find correction. First, he is to learn by example, and the extraordinary example given is that of an ant. The ant is a fascinating insect; one of the most social creatures that exist, but also one of the most complex.

The first thing a sluggard can learn from the ant is responsibility. Unlike the sluggard, an ant stores its provisions in the summer and gathers its food at the harvest. The food for winter is only available to the ant because it has worked beyond what was necessary in the summer to provide. It is not dictated by immediate need but by future need. Alongside responsibility, we learn reliability from the ant. It has no commander, no overseer or ruler. It knows its role and fills it, and from this we learn respect. There is the queen ant, the soldier ant, the male and the workers, which are female, and there is a mutual respect among them in which they work in harmony together.

The second way the sluggard learns from the ant is by experience. Solomon writes, “I went past the field of a sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, the stone wall was in ruin, and I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw.” We need to look ahead to the consequences of slothfulness. For the sluggard there is no harvest except for the weeds. Take the easy option and poverty will come upon our futures like a bandit. Proverbs 12:24 says, “Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labour.”

The sad story being told of the sluggard is of the person who misses the boat. We can feel pleased with ourselves when we look at the sluggard, but may suddenly realize that is exactly who we are in our souls. If it is true in the physical realm that we determine our futures by what we do in the present, it is more desperately true that to know what we determine now will determine the future of our souls. We can have all the discipline in the world, but our souls outlive our bodies, which makes it essential that we live everyday with the will of Jesus at heart and with eternity in mind.

PRAYER: Lord, I pray for your motivation and inspiration to make everyday a day that is pleasing to You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: How concerned am I for the future of my soul?