

Blog post 22-23

## AN ANT AS A ROLE MODEL?

Prov. 6.6-11

Charles Spurgeon was one of the most well-known preachers of the nineteenth century. According to [spurgeon.org](http://spurgeon.org),

*"In fifty-seven years, Charles Spurgeon accomplished three lifetimes of work. Every week he preached four to ten times, read six meaty books, revised sermons for publication, lectured, edited a monthly magazine. In his spare time, he wrote about 150 books. Spurgeon shepherded the largest Protestant megachurch in the world (he knew all 6,000 members by name), directed a theological college, ran an orphanage, and oversaw sixty-six Christian charities."*

Just reading a summary of Spurgeon's week tires me out! Many pastors have used Spurgeon as a role model for preaching and ministry, and rightly so, but Spurgeon was not perfect. A role model is someone whose behavior is copied by someone else. Role models are someone who others aspire to emulate in life. Role models can be professional athletes, movie stars, or regular people you grew up with, even moms and dads, brothers, and sisters. There is nothing wrong with having a role model. There is only one caution in having a role model: all role models are human just like everyone else, and thus can fail and fall in life.

But what about having an insect as a role model? That does not sound too appealing, does it? King Solomon, author of most of the Book of Proverbs, wrote about the ant as a role model. Notice what Solomon wrote:

*Prov. 6.6: Go to the ant, O sluggard, observe her ways and be wise.*

The ant is always working, always building, always looking for food. Ants are always following a trail going somewhere with purpose. I have read that the longevity of ants depends on many factors: species, location, availability of food, etc. In some cases, ants live only a few days to a few weeks, and in other cases a few years. Growing up in the South I am familiar with the fire ant, and I can tell you I really worked hard at times to make sure they had short life spans! But regardless of the species, ants are busy workers, working for the queen and building in the colony.

Solomon also wrote about the opposite of the ant as a role model, and that is of the person he referred to as, "the sluggard."

*Prov. 6.9: How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?*

For some reason I like the word sluggard. A sluggard is a lazy person and that is about as simple as you can put it. The sluggard is the one person who was counseled to take note of the

ant. Solomon used the word sluggard twelve times in the Book of Proverbs to demonstrate the difference between the lazy person and the focused and productive person. The sluggard will not put forth any effort for anything, they will just drift along in life.

Two strong contrasts in life are depicted in Proverbs: the ant and the sluggard. The ant is the picture of diligence and purpose; the sluggard is a picture of laziness. There is no substitute for diligence. Proverbs 6.6-11 are admonitions to be diligent to, “get stuff done” and not be lazy. The ant is used as an example of diligence – he has no boss yet is constantly working, “getting things done.”

When it comes to the Lord’s work, we must be diligent, “redeeming the time” as Paul would put it (Eph. 5.15-16). God has gifted us, blessed us, and made us stewards and one day He is going to return for an accounting. My prayer is that he finds me diligent in His work as He has blessed and directed me to serve.

Maybe you have a role model and maybe you do not. Of course, all Christians have as their ultimate role model Jesus Christ (as an example, John 13.11). In our day-to-day lives, the Bible challenges us to look at the ant, not as sluggards but as children of God. Observe the ant and notice there is no wasted time. Observe the ant and take note, an unlikely role model for the Lord’s work.