

LESSONS FROM THE FOUR LITTLE CREATURES

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Knowledge they say is power; but it is the application of knowledge that produces result and changes things. There are many ways of acquiring knowledge: Reading of books, receiving teaching and instruction from a knowledgeable person in a particular field, by observation of people, events and creatures, and by experience of life. Observing the creation of God brings us great knowledge and wisdom. Agur son of Jakeh of Israel discovered this to be a wonderful way of learning and becoming great and successful in life. He took time to study his environment and the things that fascinate him. He discovered four little creatures that achieved great things by his own calculation, and he wrote it down for us to read.

I wanted to know what he discovered about these four little creatures that he declared to be very wise, so I took a closer look at these creatures of our great God, and I discovered great deposits of wisdom in their thinking and way of life. I hope you will find my discoveries interesting and enlightening.

Prov 30:24-28

24 "Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: 25 Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; 26 coneys are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; 27 locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; 28 a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings' palaces.

NIV

All these four little creatures are small in size but great in thoughts. What they lack in physical strength, they make up in wisdom.

The four little creatures are:

1. Ants
2. Coneys (Hyrax)
3. Locusts
4. Lizards

LESSONS FROM THE ANTS

The word Ant occurs only twice in the Bible, in the familiar passages in Proverbs in both of which this insect is made an example of the wisdom of providing in the summer for the wants of the winter. Not all ants store up seeds for winter use, but among the ants of Palestine there are several species that do so, and their well-marked paths are often seen about Palestinian threshing-floors and in other places where seeds are to be obtained. The path sometimes extends for a great distance from the nest.

Studies has shown that Ants in northern Europe lie dormant in winter; and do not feed on grain, but flesh of other insects, worms, birds, the honeydew of aphides, and saccharine matter, exuding from trees. But in southern Europe there are species which feed on grain and store it for winter use. Agur son of Jakeh implies, the ant providently and diligently uses the proper seasons for

obtaining her food, though she has "no guide, overseer, or ruler," such as man has in parents, teachers, and masters; therefore laziness should be eliminated from man's life.

There is no monarch, such as the queen is among bees; but ants labor together as a republic, having "no ruler" as Agur son of Jakeh describes. Moggridge (Harvesting Ants) has by observation proved that there are four harvesting ants on the Riviera, namely, : Atta barbara, under two forms, the one wholly black, the other red headed; Atta structor, claret brown colored; and Atta megacephala or Pheidole, a minute bodied, yellow ant, with great head, which works chiefly at night. The Atta barbara, mounting the stem of a fruiting plant as shepherd's purse, and seizing a green pod in its jaws, and fixing its hind legs as a pivot, turns round and round and strains the fibers until they snap. Ants sometimes allow the capsules which they have cut to drop, and their companions below carry them away. Neither the Atta barbara nor the structor bring aphids into their nests.

A host of ants seek and bring in the grain; others sort the materials, strip off the useless envelopes of seed or grain, and carry them out to throw away. Moggridge found masses of seeds stored in chambers and long subcylindrical galleries prepared in the soil. The granaries on a rock covered with earth lay horizontally from one and a half to six inches below the surface. The ants have some mysterious power which checks germination. The few seeds which may germinate the ants prevent from further growth by cutting off the end of the radicle. Hebrew "ant," nemalah, is derived by some from Arabic for "clever." The Arabs put one in the new-born infant's hand, saying, "May he prove clever!" Others take it from namal, Hebrew "cut off," the body being cut into segments, joined by but a slight thread. Similarly in Prov. 30:25 the ants' wisdom is set forth as making up for the absence of the strength of larger creatures.

They belong to the family formicidae, and order Hymenoptera. The mutual affection between the members of the republic is conspicuous in ants. In northern Europe ants strike with their antennae and so make the aphids discharge the juice extracted by their suckers from vegetables; the ants in fact make the aphids their milk cows, imprisoning a number in their nests to serve as a supply in winter (Huber). Both the insect masters and the insect cows are torpid in winter in northern Europe; but in warm winters both at times come to life. The Indian ant (Atta, providens), according to Colossians Sykes, raises up heaps of grass seed in January when they ripen, in store for the season of need.

(For a long time, European commentators and naturalists denied that ants stored up grain for future use, as was asserted in Proverbs, but while this is true of most of the 104 European species, two of those species do lay up food, and are called harvesting ants. Like species have been found in Texas and South America, and are known to exist in Palestine. The soldier ants in Nigeria are harvesting ants.

They show many other proofs of their skill. Some of them build wonderful houses; these are often several stories high, sometimes five hundred times the height of the builders, with rooms, corridors, and vaulted roofs supported by pillars. Some species keep a kind of cows; others have a regular army of soldiers; some keep slaves -- "No closer imitation of the ways of man could be found in the entire animal economy." (See Encyclopedia Britannica.) McCook's "The Honey

Ants" gives many curious facts about the habits of this peculiar kind of ant, and of the harvesting ants of the American plains.

The amazing thing about the Ants is that they are hard workers and give no room for laziness. They are tomorrow thinkers who plan ahead so that they will not suffer in their future.

Prov 6:6-8

6 Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! 7 It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, 8 yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.
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Lessons from the Ants for man are as follows:

1. Wisdom is better than physical strength.

Ants were declared to be very wise by the scriptures. From their ability to mobilize themselves and make provision for the winter time without a leader, their wisdom is revealed. In their wisdom, they realized the ground is softer and easier to dig during the summer (raining season), and more difficult to gather food during the dry season or winter and snowing period. Because of the softness of the soil, they can access more food, build more houses and store rooms for food. Wisdom taught them to sleep less and work harder during summer so they can have a restful and peaceful winter.

The Bible teaches us that wisdom is the principal thing, and that we should do all that we can to get it and walk in it.

Prov 4:5-9

5 Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them. 6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. 7 Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. 8 Esteem her, and she will exalt you; embrace her, and she will honor you. 9 She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor."
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Prov 8:12-21

12 "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. 13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. 14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power. 15 By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; 16 by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth. 17 I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me. 18 With me are riches and honor, enduring wealth and prosperity. 19 My fruit is better than fine gold; what I yield surpasses choice silver. 20 I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice, 21 bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries full.
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- Gain wisdom through education.
- Gain wisdom through reading and studying.

- Gain wisdom through observation.
- Gain wisdom by associating with the wise.
- A wise man is one who puts the knowledge he has to use.

2. Foresight and planning are very important for survival and success.

The Ants are not only concerned about today, but about tomorrow. They are tomorrow thinkers. They have the foresight to plan for the winter by building storehouses and working harder to gather food for the summer and winter at the same time.

Prov 24:3-4

3 By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; 4 through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.

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- If you get carried away by today and fail to look into tomorrow, you may find yourself in serious trouble.
- Failure to plan for tomorrow is invitation to crisis.
- Preparation for tomorrow is laying foundation for a successful tomorrow.
- If you fail to sow today, you will have nothing to reap tomorrow.
- If you don't sow the right seed in the season for sowing, you will reap confusion and sorrow tomorrow.
- If you allow laziness to take hold of you today, you will cry tomorrow when hunger starts biting hard.
- Plant seeds today for tomorrow. Sow physical seeds. Sow spiritual seeds. Sow favour into the lives of others. Sow financial seeds into the kingdom of God and into the lives of people. Don't eat all that God gives you, sow into your bank account for you don't know what tomorrow will bring.

Gen 8:22

22 "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

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- Preparation gives birth to success.

3. Laziness brings poverty

It takes a hard working person to work twice his normal daily job to make provision for a future date. This is what the Ants do during the summer. In their wisdom, they realized the ground is softer and easier to dig during the summer (raining season), and more difficult to gather food during the dry season or winter and snowing period. Because of the softness of the soil, they can access more food, build more houses and store rooms for food. Wisdom taught them to sleep less and work harder during summer so they can have a restful and peaceful winter.

- There is a time to work and there is a time to rest.
- God is not lazy and does not encourage laziness, so, he instructs through Apostle Paul that anyone who will not work should not eat.

2 Thess 3:10

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

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- A man who has a vision cannot be lazy.
- There is no substitute to hard work in the school of success.

Prov 10:4

4 Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

NIV

4. Hard work brings prosperity and success.

Prov 10:4

4 Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

NIV

- It is input for output.
- What you sow is what you reap. The measure with which you give is the measure with which you receive.
- He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, and will have plenty to eat in the winter.

Prov 10:5

5 He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

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- He that works hard today will be honoured tomorrow.
- Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

Ps 126:5-6

5 Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. 6 He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

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- Love work. Don't be lazy. Laziness attracts poverty. Hard work exalts and crowns one with prosperity.

5. Don't fight for leadership position. Don't be ruled by pride. Face your work.

- Pride will not let you work as you ought to work.
- The ants are not interested in leadership position. All they are thinking of is how to gather food for tomorrow. They are not proud, but hard workers.
- Pride blinds a man's eyes, and keeps him from seeing the work he has to do.
- God opposes the proud.

1 Peter 5:5-7

5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

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6. There is power in cooperation.

The Ants teach us that there is power in team work. Working alone will not profit any ant. They can only make it together. A close observation of the soldier ants, reveal the ants form two parallel lines to protect the transporters of food to their storehouse. When the transporters get tired the ones on the lines will move in while the tired transporters will take their place on the line. Meanwhile, others are moving around scaring other creatures from coming near to disturb their work or attack them. Their success is as a result of working together as a team.

- Get people who agree with you, and work with them.

Amos 3:3

3 Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?

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Gen 11:6

6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.

NIV

- Work with those who will agree with you.
- Team work makes success possible.

Learn from the ants, and you will become an achiever.

LESSONS FROM THE CONEYS (HYRAX)

The Coney in Hebrew is called shaphan. The Coney is “the hider”. It is an animal which inhabits the mountain gorges and the rocky districts of Arabia Petraea and the Holy Land. “The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks” (Pro. 30:26; Psa. 104:18). They are gregarious (fond of company; sociable; living in flocks or colonies), and “exceeding wise” (Pro. 30:24), and are described as chewing the cud (Lev. 11:5; Deut. 14:7).

The animal intended by this name is known among naturalists as the Hyrax Syriacus. It is neither a ruminant nor a rodent, but is regarded as akin to the rhinoceros. When it is said to “chew the cud,” the Hebrew word so used does not necessarily imply the possession of a ruminant stomach. “The lawgiver speaks according to appearances; and no one can watch the constant motion of the little creature’s jaws, as it sits continually working its teeth, without recognizing the naturalness of the expression” (Tristram, Natural History of the Bible). It is about the size and colour of a rabbit, though clumsier in structure, and without a tail. Its feet are not formed for digging, and therefore it has its home not in burrows (a hole or tunnel dug by a small animal as a dwelling) but in the clefts of the rocks. “Coney” is an obsolete English word for “rabbit.”

A Coney is a rabbit, especially the common domesticated European rabbit.

Hyrax Small Mediterranean mammal: a small gregarious plant-eating mammal that resembles a rabbit with short ears and has toenails resembling hooves. Hyraxes live around the Mediterranean Sea and in southwestern Asia.

Crags: rocky part of mountain: a steep rough mass of rock forming part of a cliff or mountain peak. The Coney make their home in the crags.

Ps 104:18

8 The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coney.
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Lev 11:5

5 The coney, though it chews the cud, does not have a split hoof; it is unclean for you
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Deut 14:7

7 However, of those that chew the cud or that have a split hoof completely divided you may not eat the camel, the rabbit or the coney. Although they chew the cud, they do not have a split hoof; they are ceremonially unclean for you.
NIV

Isn't it amazing that a small creature like the Coney will choose to live not on a flat land or bushes, but in the crags - They choose the steep part of the mountain, the cliff or mountain peak. They live in the cracks and tiny spaces in between the rocks. They are thinking about the kind of places no other animal will be willing to come to because of fear of their safety. They know they are small and by makeup cannot fight predating animals, so they looked for the safest place they can dwell that predating animals will not want to risk their lives and come to. This kind of reasoning makes the scripture to declare them wise creatures.

Lessons from the Conies for man are as follows:

1. Your size (stature) is not important. What is important is your vision and faith.

- Where you come from does not matter.
- Your tribe, colour and language do not matter.
- Your family background does not matter.
- The vision of the conies is to make a home in the crags where they will be safe and no predator will want to come because of the danger of falling down and dying.
- How you think is more important than where and the family you come from.
- Faith in God and in yourself is essential for success to be attained.

Mark 9:23

23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
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Phil 4:13

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.
NIV

2. You can succeed anywhere.

- The Coneys have no fear of heights or the danger of having a fatal fall. What is on their mind is that they can and will succeed.
- Never look down on yourself, believe you can and will make it.
- God is always with you and He is committed to your success in life.
- You are already empowered to succeed. As long as you believe in it and let it influence and motivate you, you will be a celebrity.

Matt 28:20

20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

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Deut 28:3

3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

NIV

Deut 28:8

8 The LORD will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

NIV

3. You can live anywhere if you believe and are able to pay the price.

- All things are possible to him that believes that it is possible.
- Your attitude determines your altitude.
- Your thoughts create your decisions, and your decisions motivate your actions.
- Dreams come true when we believe and work towards its actualization with confidence and determination.

Mark 9:23

23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

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Isa 43:19

19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.

NIV

4. There is no problem you cannot confront and overcome.

The Coneys identified their weakness and creatively thought out a plan that will take care of the identified challenge. In the same way, it is very important that we confront challenges with faith and boldness, and through creative and resourceful thinking proffer solutions to the problem.

- You are born in Christ a mountain-crusher, problem-solver and an overcomer.
- God has already declared His sons winners before a challenge comes to them.
- Nothing will overcome you except you submit to it.

Isa 41:15-16

15 "See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff. 16 You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up, and a gale will blow them away. But you will rejoice in the LORD and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

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1 John 5:4-5

4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

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5. Accept, face, and overcome challenges.

The Coneys did not deny their nature and complain against God. They settled down to determine how to survive and live long and happy. Accept your nature and person and make life say yes rather than no.

- Never hate yourself. Accept that you are God's special creation and you are unique and very important to God and His plan for this world.
- Being small or big does not matter. What matters is that you can achieve something here on earth that the world will celebrate.
- The Coneys faced their challenge and found the solution in living in the cliff of the mountain - in the crags. They overcame. You too will overcome if you will believe and work towards it.

1 John 5:4-5

4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

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6. Always be positive no matter the challenge before you.

- A positive man is a winner any day any time.
- A positive mind is a faith filled mind.
- Always look at the bright side of life. Expect the best always and you will get the best out of life.
- Positive people are brave and bold people who do not know how to submit to adverse circumstances.
- Positive people are determined people.
- Always believe you can do it, you will succeed and make it to the other side where celebration and honour awaits you.

Phil 4:13

13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

NIV

7. What is impossible to others is possible to you.

- Your case is always different.
- What is impossible to others may be possible to you depending on how you think.

- That the lion or tigers and monkeys cannot make their homes in the crags does not mean the Coney can't. That the Coney cannot live safely on the plain field or forest, does not mean that they cannot live in the crags.
- Believe you can do all things, and achieve success where others have failed.

Mark 9:23

23 "If you can?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."

NIV

(To be concluded in the next edition)

SUCCESS TIT-BITS

TITBITS FOR WORKING TOGETHER

- 1. Be driven by love, vision and the desire to see the kingdom of God expand in relating and working with others.**
- 2. You will not succeed in life unless you are connected to people.**
- 3. Apart from God and your vision, the next thing is people who will help you succeed. Helpers (people) come before money.**
- 4. If you are not accessible you cannot relate with others well enough to succeed with them.**
- 5. Your dream is connected to people.**
- 6. Just as others need what you contain, so you need what others contain.**
- 7. Goals and dreams last longer than rejection, injury and pain. Therefore be willing to endure pain to create and enjoy an eternity of gain through working with others. Do not be scared of hurts, they won't kill you. Be motivated and driven by the assignment.**
- 8. Fill your heart with love for your team mates. Let your heart reach to them in prayer daily to the Almighty God, and your relationship with them will be fantastic and richly rewarding.**
- 9. Close your ears to gossips about your team mate's personal life and what people say they said.**
- 10. Be willing to help your team mates recover from their weaknesses and failures, remembering that you too do fail at times, and is still pursuing perfection.**
- 11. Keep your eyes on the assignment and not on the leadership position.**
- 12. Do not be envious of another. Just play your part, and you will celebrate the success as a team. Knowing that your labor of love is not in vain, keep your hands on the plough and work with all your might until the work is done.**

RENEWING THE MIND

- 1 The mind of man was not designed to be a prison, but for many people, their minds have become their own prison.**
- 2 You cannot live above your thought life. Your thoughts determine how you live.**

- 3 **Enthusiasm is a product of positive thoughts about life. Depression and bitterness are reflections of the negative conditions of the mind of man.**
- 4 **When a man's thoughts are centered negatively on the hurtful past, there is the likelihood that his mind will become a prison.**
- 5 **The thoughts of your mind limit you. It binds, oppresses, torments, beclouds your vision, cuts you off from good things and good people, makes you bitter and damages your health.**
- 6 **It is important that you count the cost of allowing the evil past to dominate your mind before you do so.**
- 7 **Just as the Lord uses the past of each man to teach him lessons, motivate and mature him, the devil uses the past to torment and hinder man. An understanding of this will help you to be careful how you handle the evil past.**
- 8 **Most pain that we feel are the result of the thoughts that we think as a result of what we suffered or are suffering. Every pain is a direct product of the meditations of the mind of man. When there is no thought, there will be no pain.**

WISDOM FOR ASSOCIATION

BENEFITS OF TEAM WORK

1. **It enhances productivity.**
2. **It increases speed.**
3. **It boosts the morals of all involved in the team – the knowledge that you are not alone encourages, motivates and strengthens the faith of all concerned in accomplishing the assignment.**
4. **You share the burden and problems of the assignment together.**
5. **You can defend each other from enemies and all that seek to stop you.**
6. **Your knowledge and experience will increase as you learn and work with your colleagues and team mates.**
7. **You will climb the ladder of success faster as you, together as a team share the reward of working as a team.**
8. **Success, honor, fame, wealth and promotions will be your portion.**