

ALLEY Rundown – January 20- 21, 2024

Today's Bible Story: Ants Marching (Ant and Sluggard) • *Proverbs 6:6-8*

Today's Key Question: When have you had to work hard?

Today's Bottom Line: Work hard.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Suppose you can be trusted with something very little. Then you can also be trusted with something very large. Luke 16:10a (NIV)*

SLIDE: Theme

What's up, friends? Good to be together today. Not sure if you were here a couple of weeks ago, but we took some time to chat about New Year's Resolutions. You know, those goals and promises we make for ourselves to get better at something or improve something about our lives. Well, here we are a few weeks into January, and I'm wondering: How are those New Year's Resolutions coming along? Take a moment and chat with someone near you about your resolutions. What were they? How are you doing at keeping them? Or if you didn't make resolutions, why not? Is there any sort of goal you can still make and get started on?

Alright, take the next couple of minutes and chat! AAAAAAND go!

AUDIO: *Play the Spotify playlist quietly*

Kids turn and talk with each other. After a few minutes, bring them back together. Allow them to respond with their answers. Chat through them as you have time.

Wow. Great work, everyone! It's good to hear that you're starting 2024 off by taking responsibility. Which is great because all month long that's what we've been talking about.

SLIDE: Virtue

Responsibility is **showing you can be trusted with what is expected of you**—even when you put those expectations upon yourself, like those New Year's Resolutions.”

But let's be honest. It doesn't really matter if we make the expectations or someone else—like a parent or teacher—gives us the expectations, some of those take work, right? And it's work that we might not always want to do. We know that taking responsibility and following through on what's expected of us is important. We might even know that we can trust God to help us follow through. Yet, we face these moments where sometimes it seems easier NOT to follow through.

When we face those moments, what should we do? What can motivate us to keep going when it's difficult? Is it easier just to give up? Or is there something else we should be thinking about when it comes to this idea of working hard and following through? And what is that?

These are all great questions to ask, especially at this time of year. When we have big questions like this, it's important we find some big answers. We can find all sorts of big answers in the Bible! Remember, the people who wrote the Bible had personal experiences with God, and God inspired them to write down what they experienced and learned along the way so others could learn and grow in their own relationship with God. Let's check out some of that wisdom today!

VIDEO: *The So and So Show* (11:46)

You know, it can often feel like the goal of life for many people is to avoid doing work at all costs . . . or to get away with the least possible amount of work. But the more we understand what God was doing at the beginning of time, along with Solomon's wisdom, we can start to see that you and I—and everyone actually—were made to work hard.

Think about it, there are times when someone else might tell you what to do . . . like someone at home asking you to clean up a mess or finish your homework. You might want to do ANYTHING else but clean or do homework, but in those moments, think about those ants . . . how might they respond? How can Solomon's teaching about them motivate us to do our own work?

We can also work hard without someone asking us first. We can take responsibility for HOW we work and make sure we are putting our best effort in every time. If we see something that needs to be done like a dishwasher that needs to get emptied or laundry that needs to be folded, we can step in and take care of it without being asked."

Remember, the ants also teach us WHEN to work. Because they are willing to work hard during harvest time, they can rest well in the winter and stay warm together below ground. We were made to work hard and work well, but God also made us to rest. But don't just stare at a screen. Find people you love and enjoy and spend time with them. Get outside. Discover something new. Work hard AND rest well!

Listen to what Jesus said in our memory verse, Luke 16:10.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

Suppose you can be trusted with something very little. Then you can also be trusted with something very large. (Luke 16:10a, NIV)

Let's show we can be trusted by living the way Jesus said to live.

Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

When have you had to work hard? When is the last time you remember really having to put an effort into the work you were doing? How did it go for you? You'll get the chance to chat more about ants and God's design for work. I bet you'll come up with all sorts of ways you can work hard this week. Before you head out, let's pray and ask God to help us learn what wisdom we can learn from the ant today! Let's pray!

SLIDE: Theme Background

Large Group Leader leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard.

OFFERING

Last week we told you about our brand-new ministry we are raising money for with our offering. Does anyone remember what it is? Yep...Morning Star Mission. It's a mission right here in Joliet, IL that helps people who are struggling financially. If you brought your offering, go ahead and put it in the container. Let's look at this video of a family of 6 who lost their home and needed help.

VIDEO: Family of 6 live in car

What a great mission to support. Morning Star changes lives! See what you can do this week to raise some money for this awesome mission.