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A TALE OF TWO TREES

(episode 013)

theme: A steady diet of God's word is the best way to live a happy, healthy life. **scripture:** Psalm 1
quote: "Blessed is the man who[']s delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night." Psalm 1:1a,2 **summary:** This "Radio Theater of the Air" episode features two trees, Albert and Bernard, who each choose a different place to set down their roots. Albert chooses a spot by the river where he will receive plenty of water and sun. Bernard, not wanting to put up with the sound of rushing water and croaking frogs, chooses another spot where a number of other trees are already planted. When dry weather comes Albert is well-nourished by the river and brings forth much ripe fruit. Meanwhile Bernard finds himself competing with all the other trees for the precious water, and his fruit is sparse and small. Eventually he is like the chaff that the wind blows away.

God has given us His word to teach us how to live. Psalm 1 instructs us not to take advice from those who rebel against God, nor to live as they live, nor to be counted among those who scoff at God. Rather we are to think about and meditate on God's word, considering what He says and putting it into practice in our lives. This is the sure way to be blessed in this life.

SOLOMON & THE IMPORTANCE OF WISDOM

(episode 020)

theme: Acquiring wisdom is the key to a successful life. **scripture:** Proverbs 9:10; 2:10-12; 4:7; 16:6; 19:8; 24:3,4 **quote:** "The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding." Proverbs 4:7 **summary:** Nit Whitly travels back in time to talk with King Solomon, who is busy writing the book of Proverbs. Solomon imparts to us the importance of wisdom with several entries into this book.

Such as, to reverence God is the beginning of wisdom - realizing His superiority over us. He knows much better than we do how things are and what is the best way to live our lives. To know God is to have understanding. Solomon also tells us that the one who gets wisdom shows that he loves himself, and that the one who remembers what he has learned will find good. It's through wisdom that a person's life is successfully built and firmly established, and by utilizing wisdom they will enjoy many good things.

The importance of taking advice from God can never be underestimated.

GO TO THE ANT

(episode 048)

theme: Foresight and hard work equals success. **scripture:** Proverbs 6:6-11 **quote:** "Go to the ant...Observe her ways and be wise." Proverbs 6:6 **summary:** Nit Whitly travels to the world of bugs to interview an animal that the book of Proverbs tells us we can learn something from. His guest is an

ant, and what we can learn from him is a good, strong work ethic. The ant doesn't have a ruler or boss over him, but still works hard gathering and preparing the things he'll need to make it through the year.

By contrast, we meet another bug who is too lazy even to lift his hand to his mouth to eat. It doesn't take much to imagine which of these two will be better off in the long run.

There are several valuable lessons for us to learn. First, there is no substitute for hard work. Anything we do, if we are to succeed, will require us putting our hand to the task and working. No one becomes good at anything, whether it's sports, music, math or science without working at it. Day in and day out; practicing, studying and applying ourselves.

Secondly, we need to see the value in what we are working at. A lot of us don't like school, but if we are to succeed in life, it's valuable to have knowledge. The more we know and the more we practice and work at what we know, the more likely we are to succeed. Laziness leads to poverty and failure.

Don't despise work, embrace it. Go to the ant, observe her ways and be wise.

TORTOISE & THE HARE [part one]

(episode 051)

theme: Nobody likes a bragger. **scripture:** Proverbs 27:2 **quote:** "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger and not your own

lips." Proverbs 27:2 **summary:** All the animals in the forest looked forward to the annual forest picnic every year, except for one event. That was the foot race, and it was because every year the hare would enter and every year the hare would win. It wasn't his winning that bothered them, it was the way he bragged about it. It got to the point where no one wanted to race against him, and it looked as if one year nobody would. But then, a lone voice from the crowd took up the challenge. Who would be willing to race the hare and put up with his constant bragging afterwards?

We all have things we have done or things we can do that we are proud of. It's a good thing to enjoy our success and we want to share our joy with those around us. But we must be careful that in our sharing we don't become boastful and/or arrogant about it. It's not a becoming thing to praise ourselves. It's not wise either, because at some point we may run into someone who's better than we are. This has a way of cutting us down to size.

TORTOISE & THE HARE [part two]

(episode 052)

theme: Pride goes before destruction **scripture:** Proverbs 16:18 **quote:** "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." Proverbs

16:18 **summary:** Every year at the annual forest picnic the hare would enter the foot race and beat whoever raced against him. His constant bragging afterward was very annoying to all the other animals. It got so bad that one year it looked as if no one was going to race him. But, from out of the crowd, a challenger stepped forward. It was a tortoise. All the other animals stood in amazement. The tortoise was certainly one of the slowest animals in the forest. For him to race against the hare seemed ridiculous. But the tortoise was unperturbed.

When the race started, the hare shot quickly in front. As he neared the finish line he looked back and could not even see the tortoise. Being distracted by some fresh carrots growing in a nearby garden, he stopped and ate some of them. Afterward, feeling a little tired, he decided to take a nap. Looking back again and still not seeing the tortoise, he lay down and soon fell asleep.

Meanwhile the tortoise was diligently, if slowly, giving the race his all. While the hare slept, he kept at it. After a while he passed the spot where the hare lay asleep. It wasn't until he was near the finish line that the hare woke up and noticed what was going on. He got to his feet and ran as fast as he could, but could not catch the tortoise in time. The tortoise had beaten the hare.

Pride in ourselves is usually a good thing. But if taken too far it can cause us to become proud and haughty. When we elevate ourselves too high, we set ourselves up for a great fall. Let's imitate

Jesus instead. He is God, yet He humbled Himself and came to earth to live as a man, and, becoming a servant, He gave Himself up and suffered and died for our sins. The path to true greatness comes not from elevating ourselves, but from lowering ourselves and seeking to serve God and men.

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

(episode 078)

theme: Being honest is always better in the long run. **scripture:** Proverbs 12:19 **quote:** “Truthful lips will be established forever, but a lying tongue is only for a moment.” Proverbs 12:19 **summary:** It has been said that if you practice lying, you’d better have a good memory. This is because if you don’t tell the truth, you will have to remember what it was you said that wasn’t true in the event you have to repeat the lie.

Also, getting caught in a lie is embarrassing. But as bad as that is, the long-term effects of being exposed as a liar are worse. When you lie, especially if you develop a reputation as someone who lies, you find that even when you tell the truth people are less likely to believe you. Damage of this kind usually takes a long time to undo.

Telling the truth may not always be easy or the most comfortable thing to do. But it is always the best. You may have to be tactful in how you present it, but it is better to endure the discomfort and hardship.

If you practice being honest and truthful, you will find that you will develop a reputation as one who can be trusted to be fair. Someone who people will not need to doubt.

Besides, lies have a way of spiraling out of control. Just like a fly in a spider’s web. He gets caught, and the more he tries to struggle free, the worse it usually gets. Until he’s so entangled that he can’t get free.

Honesty is not always easy, but it is best. It feels good to have a clear conscience before God and man.

A GENTLE ANSWER

(episode 082)

theme: Giving a gentle answer to someone who is angry can work great wonders. **scripture:** Proverb 15:1 **quote:** “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” Proverb

15:1 **summary:** Most of the time when we are confronted with an angry comment or remark our first reaction is to return the comment or remark in kind. In other words, we want to return anger for anger. The book of Proverbs contains a lot of very practical advice, and Proverbs 15:1 is one of them.

When someone greets us with angry words we should not respond with angry words in return. But we find that if we answer gently [and more than one gentle response may be necessary depending on how angry they are], many times that wrath will be turned away. One the other hand, responding with angry words tends to make the anger level rise.

There is a principle of reciprocity. This is where, for example, if someone were to slap you on the cheek, the natural response would be to slap them back a bit harder. This would cause them to want to slap you a second time, but a bit harder than you slapped them. Which would cause you to slap them again, harder. And so goes the pattern. But if, after that initial slap in the face, you don’t respond with a slap, there is a good chance that the whole encounter could take a different turn.

Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 5:38,39. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, you are to offer him your left as well. This way the spiral downward of reciprocal slaps would not have a chance to get going.

This doesn’t mean that we become a punching bag for people who are angry, nor is it a guarantee that all anger can be dissipated in this way. But it is a way to take the “high road” in settling disputes and dissipating anger. Take it from Buster, in our story, harsh words can have harsh consequences.

THE MOUSE WHO CRIED “CAT”

(episode 089)

theme: A man's words will come back to him for good or evil. **scripture:** Proverbs 12:14; Proverbs 18:20 **quote:** "With the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach will be satisfied; He will be satisfied with the product of his lips." Proverbs 18:20 **summary:** In this episode of "Radio Theater of the Air" we find Jasper and Buster, the two mice, looking for something to do. Buster decides to have a little fun - at least what he calls fun. The mice were always on the lookout for the cat, and they had decided if any one of them was in trouble he could call out and the others would come to help him. Buster thought it would be fun to give out a false alarm. He called "cat" when there was no cat. All the other mice came running to his aid only to find him laughing at them. He pulled this prank a few times with the same result - a good laugh for him and great aggravation to the rest.

One day Buster really did find himself face to face with the cat. But when he called out for help all the other mice assumed he was pulling another trick on them and didn't come. It ended up costing Buster a good swat that sent him flying through the air.

Our words carry a lot of weight. By them people will form an idea of what kind of a person we are. Are we someone who's words reveal a kind and honest person, or, do our words reveal an unkind and dishonest one? Do we gossip about others or tease them in ways that hurt them, or do we only speak well of others?

Buster's words came back to hurt him, let's not make the same mistake.

A JOYFUL HEART

(episode 102)

theme: A joyful heart is like a medicine. **scripture:** Proverbs 17:22 **quote:** "A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones."

Proverbs 17:22 **summary:** Dim Whitly has a favorite radio personality. It's Glumkin the Clown. But listening to Glumkin on the radio makes his cousin Nit realize how important a joyful heart can be.

Each phase of life has both good and bad aspects to it. Some advantages and disadvantages exist in every situation we find ourselves. What makes the difference is the condition of our heart.

Proverbs 15:15 says, "All the days of the afflicted are bad, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast." A despondent and anxious attitude can make even the best of situations seem bad - for fear of what can go wrong or how it could be better. But to the one who has a joyful heart, even the most meager conditions hold something to enjoy.

By looking for problems and shortcomings we can ruin any chance at enjoying ourselves, yet by looking for blessings and good we can ensure peace and happiness.

Proverbs 17:22 even tells us that a joyful heart is like good medicine. It adds good strong health to our lives.

Dim Whitly may enjoy Glumkin's show, but no one would enjoy his life.

LESSON OF THE MOUSETRAP

(episode 106)

theme: Sin may use some tempting bait, but in the end it will harm us. **scripture:** James 1:13-16 **quote:** "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

James 1:14 **summary:** This episode of "Radio Theater of the Air" finds Jasper and Buster, two mice, learning an important lesson from a mousetrap. Their mother had warned them about mousetraps, and while Jasper believed her, Buster wasn't quite so convinced that they were as dangerous as she said they were.

When they came across a mousetrap one day, Buster saw how delicious the cheese in it looked. He was sure that even though other mice had been caught in them, he was clever enough and fast enough to get the cheese without getting hurt. His folly cost him a swat across the room.

Sin is a lot like a mousetrap. Our own lust is the bait. That lust can be many different things, and it will be different things for each one of us. But it entices us because it's something we desire and

something we think will give us pleasure. But when we reach for that bait, the trap shuts and we find ourselves in trouble. Sometimes the trouble is more serious than at other times, but it's trouble none the less.

Sometimes we are even aware of the dangers, but our lust is so strong that we are willing to risk those dangers to enjoy that bait, even if for just a short time. Sometimes we think we're too clever or too quick to get caught. There are many things we can think to convince ourselves it either okay or worth the risk. But it never is.

Let's learn a lesson of the mousetrap. Decide before you come across the bait that you will say "no" to sin and "yes" to godliness.

A VISIT FROM UNCLE LOUIE

(episode 119)

theme: It's good to learn from your mistakes, but it's better to learn from someone

else's **scripture:** Proverbs 12:15 **quote:** "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to

counsel." Proverbs 12:15 **summary:** In this installment of "Radio Theater of the Air" Jasper and Buster learn a valuable lesson from their visiting Uncle Louie.

We have been told that we should learn from our mistakes. This is good advice. It's a way of gaining something even from our mistakes. Many great achievements and inventions were built upon learning from mistakes.

But it is also good advice to learn from someone else's mistake. Chances are, whatever stage of life we are in, whatever activity we are starting, in whatever circumstance we find ourselves, someone we know has been there and done that. A part of their experience will probably be mistakes they made. By availing ourselves of their counsel we can learn from them those things that led to set-backs and failures, thus avoiding making those same mistakes ourselves. Dangers and obstacles have ways of appearing where we least expect them, or where we had no idea one would exist.

It's a wise person who seeks out counsel from those who have gone before. Let's learn from our mistakes, but only if we can't learn from someone else's first.

TO EVERYTHING THERE IS A SEASON

(episode 123)

theme: There is a proper time for everything. **scripture:** Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 **quote:** "There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event

under heaven." Ecclesiastes 3:1 **summary:** There are times when we should laugh, and there are times when we should cry. Both are proper, but only at the proper time. It is not the time for us to laugh when someone has experienced a disappointment. That's the time for us to cry with them. On the other hand, when someone has experienced a happy event, it would seem strange if we were crying and in mourning. Romans 12:15 tells us to, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

For a farmer, there is a proper time to plant and a proper time to harvest. The two times can't be reversed. He can't harvest a crop before he plants it. Neither can he plant his crop in the fall and try to harvest it in the spring. He must first plant his crop in the spring, and then harvest it in the fall.

Things that are fine at one time will be improper at another. We need to be discerning and use wisdom to understand what we should say or do in every situation. There is a time for every purpose under heaven.