

NO SHORTCUT

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, NIV)

FALL IS DAYS AWAY AND THE HARVEST IS COMING. Are you preparing to bring in the crops you planted some weeks or months ago?

This probably seems like an unlikely question in the usual context of our devotional studies. Not too many of our readers are farmers. Only a few more are backyard gardeners, tending their own tomatoes and snipping their own herbs. We're golfers, for Pete's sake. What we like to see growing is green grass.

Enter Ben Crane. Ben is a five-time winner on the PGA Tour with two widely-known reputations: one for slow play, the other for supremely funny music and "workout" videos. What you may not know about Ben Crane is that he not just a professional golfer; he is a professional golf nerd. Mr. Wild-and-Wacky is also Mr. Mission-and-Method. He sets his habits and will not waver from them—unless the statistics tell him it's time to change.

I'd guess that you're more like me. You have your to-do list and you intend to get to it all, but when and where and at what pace are somewhat random. After all, you spent a long time earning your place, even becoming your own boss. The reward? Arranging your appointments and the duties of your day as you want them.

And then you run into the Ben Cranes of this world. Sixteen years on Tour and more than \$20 million in career earnings. An early adopter in raising awareness about combating sex trafficking in Asia. Devoted husband and dad of three. But here is what Ben told author and branding champion Donald Miller in a podcast last year: "What I keep reminding myself is not true is that I'm going to find the silver bullet... that I'm going to come across a way of thinking, and it will just get easier."

Where Crane and Miller go from there is something you want to listen to in its entirety, but here's the gist: You have to do the work. There is no shortcut.

Solomon wrote that he knew the same from watching the ant, that tiny creature committed daily to doing what it takes to survive and thrive. You won't find glamor in this approach and maybe no accolades. But you'll find wisdom in it and success. Lay a plan and follow it. Even the most gifted must work hard to reach their goals.

Opening questions To what measure is the present quality of your golf game connected to the time you spend working at it? • How attentive are you to pursuing the biggest goals in your life?

READING Proverbs 30:24-28; Colossians 3:22-23; 1 Timothy 6:6-10

The power of good habits (Proverbs 30)

Ben Crane told Donald Miller, "Tomorrow's great performance is today's great habit." How is this on display in the world of nature (think also of Proverbs 6:6-8)? What reordering of habits might you need to do to maximize the work and life to which God has called you?

God-honoring work (Colossians 3)

According to this passage, what kind of work honors God? How does this apply even when you are the boss (or self-employed)?

The product of our work (1 Timothy 6)

What kind of perspective on work and goals does this passage help you maintain?

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2017 Links Players International. Ben Crane's conversation with Donald Miller is here: <http://buildingastorybrand.com/episode-12>