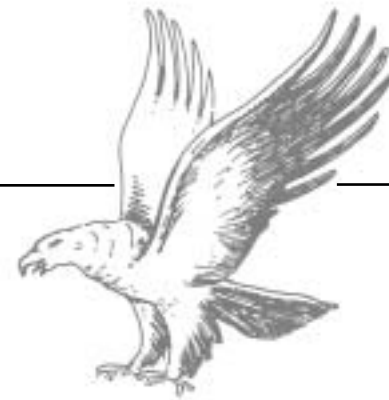


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



July 11, 2010

Rise and Shine!

There are many factors to success in life. But one is so simple that anyone can do it — if we really want to. The payoff can be enormous.

“Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out from Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over” (Josh. 3:1).

“And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the Lord” (Josh. 6:12).

“So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken” (Josh. 7:16).

Joshua had the difficult task of leading the Israelites in their conquest of Canaan. There were difficult decisions to make, battles to plan and fight, disciplinary measures to enforce. It was a heavy responsibility for any man. But Joshua performed his role well, in part because of a simple personal habit revealed in these opening verses: he started every day early.

Joshua is not the only early riser we read about in the Bible. Jesus also was in the habit of getting up early to begin each day. “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary

place; and there He prayed” (Mk. 1:35). This quiet personal time played an important role in helping Jesus stay focused on His life’s mission.

Joshua and Jesus illustrate a behavioral trait that has a long history of benefits. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, wrote, “It is well to be up before daybreak, for such habits contribute to health, wealth, and wisdom.” People who start their days early tend to be more energetic and productive. Their sleeping pattern is indicative of a deeper outlook on life. They take on each new day the same way they take on life: with eagerness. That sense of urgency touches everything they do throughout the day. Over a lifetime, the result is almost always a higher level of success, in a variety of measures.

Like every other human behavior, one’s sleep pattern is a habit ingrained by years of practice. If a young person is not trained in childhood to get up early, he will likely develop the habit of “sleeping in” as much as possible. The result is usually a slothful attitude toward work and life.

How can one develop the habit of getting up early? Start with the premise that the human body needs six to eight hours of sleep every night. It is no surprise that most late sleepers also go to bed late. So the simple rule is, if you want to get up earlier in the morning, then you need to go to bed earlier the night before. In other words, *the secret to a successful day is what you do the night before*. The Bible confirms this connection. Notice that the creation days were reckoned from nightfall (“so the evening and the morning were the first day,” Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, etc. That’s why the Jewish Sabbath begins on sundown Friday.) And recall the maxim made famous by Benjamin Franklin, “*Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.*”

Josemaria Escriva called the moment that we arise each morning “the heroic minute,” for in that minute, we choose to sacrifice personal comfort for the greater good of accomplishing something important with our life. Set that minute early each day, and your life will count for so much more.

– David King