

A snail is the central focus, racing on a red track. It wears a red headband and a white bib with the number 5. In the background, other snails are visible, and a crowd of spectators is blurred under a bright sky with colorful confetti.

# THE STUDY OF THE *Snail*

SLOW, STEADY, SURE:  
LESSONS FROM THE SNAIL

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# STUDY OF THE SNAIL

*Slow, Steady, Sure: Lessons from  
the Snail – A Sermon Booklet for  
Apostolic Pentecostal Discipleship*

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## Preface (brief)

My booklet uses the biblical wisdom tradition, rabbinic motifs, and Apostolic Pentecostal theology (Acts 2:38) to draw spiritual lessons from the humble snail. Classical Jewish literature does not always speak directly of a “snail” in Proverbs, but the biblical and rabbinic habit of learning from small creatures (e.g., Proverbs 6:6; Proverbs 30:24–28) and the rabbinic discussions about the chilazon (the sea creature used for tekhelet) provide analogue material. Where rabbinic sources do not speak directly about snails, I draw pastoral analogies consistent with Jewish and Christian interpretive practice. Where helpful, specific scriptural citations are given for reading and reflection.

### Scripture Readings for the Service

- Proverbs 6:6–8 (Go to the ant...)
- Proverbs 30:24–28 (Four small things...)
- Selected Psalm (e.g., Psalm 62 or 121 — for steadfast trust)
- Acts 2:38 (repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Spirit)
- Galatians 5:22–23 (fruit of the Spirit)
- Hebrews 12:1–3 (perseverance/run the race)

### Short note on Jewish sources

- Proverbs' wisdom-poems commonly draw ethics from animals (ants, conies, locusts, lizards); rabbinic and medieval commentators take these as exemplars of industry, foresight, humility, community, and clever survival.
- Rashi (and other classic commentators) on Proverbs emphasizes practical moral lessons in such verses, inviting the reader to imitate the virtues of small creatures (diligence, foresight).
- The Talmud and Midrash contain discussions about small sea-creatures in the context of tekhelet (the blue dye) and about “small but wise” creatures; the chilazon (a mollusc used for tekhelet) is notable for producing great beauty from a hidden life — a rich metaphor for hidden holiness and costly preparation. (If you want precise citations, I can supply Rashi's specific comments on Proverbs passages and Talmudic references to the chilazon.)

The snail as biblical and rabbinic metaphor — core themes and short readings

1. Slow, patient progress (Proverbs 6:6; 30:24–28)

- Theme: Wisdom values measured, sustained effort over flashy speed.
- Insight: Spiritual growth is often gradual — sanctification is a steady walk, not a one-time sprint.

2. Steadfastness and perseverance

- Theme: The snail persists despite obstacles and moves by steady, continual effort.
- Insight: Faithfulness in prayer, in community, and in witness requires perseverance; “running the race” patiently honors God.

### 3. Carrying one’s home — humility and dependence

- Theme: The snail carries its house and retreats when threatened; it is both self-contained and vulnerable.
- Insight: Christians are called to live with humility: the “home” is the presence of God within us (sanctified life); yet we practice dependence (retreat to prayer, reliance on the Spirit).

### 4. Hidden labor, quiet holiness (tekhelet analogy)

- Theme: The chilazon/sea-creature yields a precious dye by hidden toil; small creatures accomplish great effect unseen.
- Insight: God values the hidden work of the heart; quiet obedience produces beauty for God’s glory.

### 5. Protective rhythm: boundaries and wise withdrawal

- Theme: A snail can withdraw into shelter; wisdom knows when to retreat, to rest, and to protect what matters.
- Insight: Discernment includes seasons of silence, withdrawal, and restoration so you can minister with longevity.

## 6. Humility and smallness as teaching tools

- Theme: Proverbs repeatedly praises “small” creatures for practical wisdom.
- Insight: God often chooses the small and unlikely to teach and to lead; humility opens the way for God’s power to work.

### Applying these themes in Apostolic Pentecostal life (Acts 2:38-centered)

- Repentance as reorientation: Like a snail’s slow but decisive direction, repentance reorients the whole life toward God.
- Baptism in Jesus’ name: The snail’s immersion/retreat imagery can remind worshipers of the cleansing public commitment of baptism — a visible turning.
- Receiving the Holy Spirit: The snail’s hidden life made beautiful (tekhelet metaphor) mirrors how the Spirit indwells and transforms inward life, producing visible fruit in time.
- Sanctification as a steady pace: Emphasize continual dependence on prayer, Scripture, and the gifts of the Spirit rather than impatience for instantaneous perfection.
- Witness: A snail’s trail is visible even if movement is slow — our faithful, consistent witness leaves a mark (acts of love, consistency, testimony).

## Sermon outline (approx. 25–35 minutes)

### 1. Opening illustration (2–3 minutes)

- Tell a simple true-or-parable style story about observing a snail and noting its steady motion and shell-house. Pose the question: “What can this small creature teach about following Jesus?”

### 2. Read Proverbs 6:6 and Proverbs 30:24–28 (2 minutes)

- Briefly note the biblical habit of learning from small creatures.

### 3. Exposition: Four sermon points (16–20 minutes)

- Point 1: Patience and steady progress — show why spiritual maturity takes time. (Scriptures: Hebrews 12:1–3; Galatians 5:22–23)
- Point 2: Hidden holiness — like the snail/chilazon, God produces beauty from hidden obedience. (Scriptures: Matthew 6:6; Acts 2:38)
- Point 3: Humility and portable dwelling — we carry Christ within; humility is strength. (Scriptures: Colossians 1:27; Philippians 2:3–8)
- Point 4: Perseverant witness — steady faithfulness leaves a trail. Application to community life and evangelism.

### 4. Application and pastoral challenge (4–6 minutes)

- Practical steps: daily prayer, Scripture habits,

accountability, baptism preparation, expectation of the Spirit, patience for growth.

- Invitation for repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, and expectation for the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

5. Call to respond (2–3 minutes)

- Offer a short, clear altar call: prayer for repentance, baptism scheduling, prayer for filling of the Spirit, or commitment cards.

6. Closing prayer and benediction (1–2 minutes)

### Leader's notes and illustrations

- Use a physical snail shell as a visual. If live snail not appropriate, a picture works.

- Testimony: invite a mature believer to share a short account of slow spiritual growth that eventually bore fruit.

- Tiny practices: encourage “snail disciplines” — five minutes of daily silence, one small habit kept weekly, a five-minute Scripture recollection.

### Small group discussion questions

1. Which of the snail's “virtues” spoke most to you — patience, humility, hidden labor, protection, or perseverance? Why?

2. Where are you trying to sprint spiritually when

God calls you to steadiness?

3. How does Acts 2:38 (repentance, baptism, Spirit) shape your understanding of slow growth?

4. What are one or two “snail disciplines” you can adopt this week to foster steady spiritual growth?

### Prayers (brief templates)

- Prayer for repentance and turning (leader reads; people respond silently).
- Prayer for baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit (inviting Acts 2:38).
- Prayer for perseverance for those weary.

### Suggested hymns/songs

- Choose songs emphasizing steadfastness, dependence on the Spirit, and humble service (e.g., “Spirit of the Living God,” “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus,” “Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”).

### Short recommended further reading (to guide study)

- Proverbs (read chapters 6 and 30)
- Rashi’s commentary on Proverbs (general study of his method and comments on verses that praise small creatures)
- Rabbinic texts and notes on “small but wise”

creatures and the chilazon (e.g., discussions in rabbinic literature regarding tekhelet)

- Apostolic Pentecostal resources on Acts 2:38, baptism in Jesus' name, and Spirit empowerment

### Closing exhortation (one-paragraph)

God often teaches through the small and the slow. The snail reminds us that quiet, consistent faithfulness — patience under pressure, hidden obedience, humble dependence, and steady witness — is the way of wisdom. As brethren committed to Acts 2:38 repentance, baptism, and the Spirit, let us model a steady sanctification: repenting daily, being baptized, receiving the Spirit, and walking humbly and persistently so the beauty of God's work may be made manifest in us and through us.

Written By Elder Keith Joel Walker