

Week 26—Sharpening

Read

One man challenged another to an all-day wood chopping contest. The challenger worked very hard, stopping only for a brief lunch break. The other man had a leisurely lunch and took several breaks during the day. At the end of the day, the challenger was surprised and annoyed to find that the other fellow had chopped substantially more wood than he had. “I don’t get it,” he said. “Every time I checked, you were taking a rest, yet you chopped more wood than I did.” “But you didn’t notice,” said the winning woodsman. “that I was sharpening my ax when I sat down to rest.”¹

¹ Brett Blair, Sermon Illustration, 1999, quoted in *A Children’s Leader Devotion* (Lake Forest, CA: Saddleback Church), Week 35.

Reflect

Cutting logs with a dull ax makes you work harder. A wise man will sharpen his ax. In the same way, wisdom can make any job easier. (Ecclesiastes 10:10 ICB)

Respond

Are you being efficient and effective in your ministry? I would hope the answer is yes to both, but first we need to understand what each word means. Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness comes by doing right things. When it comes to reaching and teaching the children of our community, how efficient and effective do you feel? Are you taking time to stop during the week to spend time with God and let Him sharpen your axe? Do you feel like your axe is sharp or dull? What can you do this week to sharpen your axe for the ministry to which God has called you? What are your thoughts about the verse for this week?

Write your thoughts here:

Prayer Requests for yourself, your students, and others with whom you serve in ministry:

Remember

Don't work harder; work smarter.