

**The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven who can answer sensibly – Proverbs 26:16**

A Proverbial Story

By Ted Hildebrandt and Chatgpt

In the bustling city of Tampa, where tall buildings stretched into the clouds and cars beeped in a never-ending chorus, lived a boy named Toby. Toby was ten, loved pizza, video games, and naps—lots and lots of naps.

He was also quite certain he was the smartest person in the school.

“Why go to school,” Toby would say, lounging on his couch, “when I already know everything?”

His parents begged him. “Toby, you need to get up! You need to learn, grow, and work hard!”

But Toby just yawned. “I don’t need to. I watched a documentary once. I know stuff.”

Every day, he skipped school and scrolled through short videos about random facts like “how jellybeans are made” or “how to escape quicksand with a spoon.” He felt wise. He even gave advice to adults—unwanted, of course.

One day, his class was chosen to represent Tampa in the *City Young Minds Fair*. It was a huge competition for smart kids. The teacher, Mrs. Patel, called everyone to prepare. “Everyone must participate, especially you, Toby!”

“Whatever,” Toby said, waving her off. “Don’t worry. I’ve got this. I know enough already.”

Mrs. Patel raised an eyebrow. “It’s a team competition, Toby. You need to practice with the others.”

But Toby was too busy lounging at home, munching on chips, and watching more videos.

Finally, the day arrived. The whole team stood on the big city stage in front of judges, mayors, and even a famous inventor! There were seven students from Toby’s class, and they had worked together for weeks. They called themselves The Sensible Seven.

Then came the final round—a surprise solo challenge.

“Toby,” the announcer said, “you’re up!”

He strolled to the microphone, grinning. “Easy peasy.”

The question: “How would you power a small city block using clean energy in five years?”

Toby blinked. “Uh... put a giant battery on the roof. Maybe throw in some hamsters on wheels. Boom, instant energy.”

The judges laughed, but only half amused.

Then, The Sensible Seven stepped up. They shared their plan—solar panels, wind turbines, a battery storage grid, and a recycling program to reduce waste. Each explained their part clearly and confidently.

The crowd cheered. Toby? He slinked back to his seat, red-faced.

Later, as they all ate pizza under the city lights, Toby finally spoke.

“Okay... maybe I don’t know everything.”

Mrs. Patel smiled gently. “It’s okay to be smart, Toby. But wisdom isn’t just knowing facts. It’s knowing how to listen, learn, and work with others.”

Toby nodded. “Starting tomorrow, I’ll join the team.”

“Tomorrow?” his friend Max teased. “That sounds like sluggard talk.”

Toby laughed. “Okay, tonight. But first—one last slice of pizza.”

And from then on, Toby still loved naps and pizza—but he also loved learning, asking questions, and being part of the team. He was still smart—but now, he was a little wiser, too having learned of the old proverb: The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven who can answer sensibly,” Proverbs 26:16.