**Wealth gained from get-rich-quick schemes will dwindle,  
but whoever gathers little by little makes it grow.  
Proverbs 13:11 – A Proverbial Story   
By Ted Hildebrandt and Chatgpt**

In the small town of Fernridge, two childhood friends, Nate and Elijah, found themselves on very different paths after college. Nate, ambitious and eager, was drawn to flashy investment ads and promises of overnight wealth. Elijah, quiet and methodical, returned home to work in his father’s hardware store, saving a little from each paycheck.

One summer afternoon, Nate returned to Fernridge in a rented sports car, wearing a designer suit and sunglasses that barely hid his excitement. “Elijah, you’re wasting your time in that dusty old hardware shop,” he said, grinning. “There’s a crypto fund I got into last month that’s already doubled my money. You’ve got to ride this wave before it’s too late!”

Elijah shook his head. “I’d rather not bet what I don’t want to lose.”

Nate laughed. “Suit yourself, but I’m just getting started.”

By fall, Nate had moved to a luxury apartment in the city, posting photos of lavish dinners and rooftop parties. His fortune soared—or so it seemed.   
  
Elijah, meanwhile, quietly invested his modest savings into a nursery and a greenhouse attached to his father’s hardware store. He would be the manager of this new venture. It wasn’t much at first, but he built a loyal customer base with honest service and consistent quality.

A year passed. Then two.

In the third year, Nate came back to Fernridge unannounced. His sports car was gone, replaced by a rusty old sedan with a cracked windshield. The suit was replaced with worn jeans and tired eyes.

Elijah spotted him sitting alone on the bench outside the hardware store and brought him a coffee.

“What happened?” Elijah asked gently.

Nate stared into the cup. “Everything crashed. The fund crashed. I chased one shortcut after another, trying to recoup the losses, but it only got worse. I'm in debt now... no job, no savings.”

Elijah nodded slowly. “I’m sorry to hear that.”

Nate glanced at his friend’s modest storefront, now expanded with a recently built greenhouse out back. “How’d you do it?” he asked.

Elijah smiled. “I remembered something my grandfather used to say. *‘Wealth gained from get-rich-quick schemes will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little makes it grow.’* So, I took it one day at a time, worked my tail off, and saved every penny I could. It wasn’t much at first, but it has grown.”

Nate sighed, then looked at Elijah with hope. “Do you think you’d have room for a helper?”

Elijah nodded. “Only if you’re willing to get some dirt under your nails and help me with some of the accounting.”

The next morning, Fernridge woke to see two men tending to herb beds, side by side. The sports cars and dreams of instant wealth were gone, but something far sturdier had taken root in their place: the quiet, lasting strength of steady work coupled with incremental saving little by little just as the old proverb said: “Wealth gained from get-rich-quick schemes will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little makes it grow” (Proverbs 13:11).