



# Ant Season

*by Karen M. Leet*

**S**weet breezes, gentle rains, flowers everywhere—a beautiful time of year. Only thing was, it was also ant season. One moment there were no ants in my house. Next moment they were swarming through the dog food bag on the pantry closet floor. Where'd they come from? How could they have appeared so suddenly? And why was it so difficult to get rid of them?

I threw out the 15 pounds of dog food to try to head off the ant problem. I scrubbed the surrounding area with pine cleaner

to make the area clean and food-free. I followed directions for several home remedies to chase them away.

Nothing worked. I kept on scrubbing and spreading around whatever friends and family suggested would get rid of them. Mostly I don't mind ants. I have a live-and-let-live philosophy, as long as they stay on their territory and I stay on mine. Their territory did not include my dog food bag, and it did not include the graham cracker box or oatmeal container.

The harder I worked at getting rid of them, the more ants appeared. One moment the shelf was totally empty, next moment ants dashed back and forth, raiding my food supplies.

I worked harder to get rid of

*Nothing big ever came  
from being small.*

them. Someone suggested chalk lines to keep them out. I knelt on the floor drawing chalk lines everywhere. Someone else suggested dryer sheets, so I spread dryer sheets all over the place. Someone else promised that whole cloves would send them running elsewhere, so I tucked cloves here and there, then fussed at the dogs to keep them from grabbing the cloves.

Nothing worked. Ants ran across the cloves, found gaps in the chalk lines and raced over dryer sheets. I discovered stray ants on the kitchen counter, beside the sink and even masses of them in the basement bathroom, though what the attraction there could be, I never did figure.

I began dreaming of ants. Everywhere I went in the house, I watched for them. I got a creeping sensation along my spine, as if ants marched up and down my back.

I prayed. I pondered ways to de-

feat them. I kept recalling Bible verses about the industriousness of ants. *Sigh.* My life became obsessed with ant patrol. I carried a flashlight to search dark corners, expecting that the marauders would show up unexpectedly. I moved food supplies from place to place to keep ants from discovering where I'd hidden the goodies.

How, I wondered, could such a tiny creature become such a terrible menace? How could my life become focused so largely on something so small I could scarcely see it without a magnifying glass (except when there were dozens clustered together?) How could something so minor turn into something so major?

As I knelt on the floor yet again, hunting down ants, I was struck by a thought. Sin was a lot like ants. It could start so small you hardly noticed it. You might tend to ignore it, hope it would go away, say a quick prayer then get on with your life.

But if you ignore sin, it doesn't go away. Same as with my ant problem. Ignore sin and it gets bigger—the problem becomes so large it can take over your life.

Sin can sneak into all sorts of nooks and crannies of your life, just the way ants creep into dark corners and thrive there. And sin multiplies the same way ants seem to do. One minor sin leads to bunches more. And once those sins get a solid foothold, they go wildly out of control.

So, as I scrubbed and searched the cabinet corners for ants, I began praying for God to reveal those hidden sins that so easily creep into my life and into my family's lives. Selfishness, gossip, greed—there were so many tiny, little sins that could get past my attention and sneak into the corners of my life when I wasn't noticing.

Unlike ants, there is no one season when sin sneaks into the pantry. Sin can sneak in any time: when we're stressed, busy, preoccupied or even excited about good news. We can easily miss the early signs of sin working its way into our lives, just as I'd missed those first sneaky ants getting into the dog food bag.

Now, whenever I spot an ant, I think of those small sins that might be creeping in as stealthily as those ants. I think of what I need to do to cut off those small sins before they become huge and unmanageable, before they get as out of control as my pantry ant problem got. I remind myself to turn those small sins over to God—to ask His forgiveness, to seek His aid in tossing them out of my life. Then I pray that He will help me stay alert to catch any more sin before it becomes a major disaster. Only God can get us through the crises in our lives, whether they are sneaky sins or marauding ants. Nothing is too difficult for Him. †

*Karen Leet lives in Kentucky.*

## Early Spring

Beyond an open window  
 The sound I listen for  
 Is that of Spring,  
 Light-green leaves moving,  
 Certain slant of sunlight,  
 Touch of warmer wind,  
 Thin butterfly wings  
 Ascending,  
 Lingering scent  
 Of lilac—  
 A small yellow bird's  
 Intermittent song  
 Of celebration.

—William Beyer