

SAGE: Learn Your Lessons

- All right, dudes, Pastor Mark here, welcoming you to join me for "Real Men," Wednesday nights, live here at Trinity Church in Scottsdale or online at realfaith.com. We'll try and post it elsewhere, but they're gonna ban me because I'm in the middle of a special sermon series called "Act Like a Man." If you are offended by that, you need to watch it twice, because you need a lot of work. In each sermon, I'll go through the reasons why God made men, why it's good to be a man, and how to be a man that is a blessing to women and children, like Jesus Christ, the God Man, who is our perfect example. This is gonna be a fun time. It's gonna be super theological, super practical, and, as always, you'll get a bit of comedy. So, dudes, grab a Bible, grab a notebook, put your belt on, show up, get it together. See you on Wednesday. Thanks for coming out. All right, all the new guys. Raise your hand, new guys. All right, can you welcome all the new guys? We're glad to have you. Welcome to "Real Men." Our tagline is, "We build men up to bless women and children." And I'm doing a series up through Thanksgiving, up to Thanksgiving, on what a man is and does, and why God made men. Tonight we're gonna deal with: Sage, learn your lessons. Let me tell you a real encouraging little story before we jump in. I just got back today, landed from Dallas, Texas, and everybody there was in a pretty good mood 'cause the Cowboys won. And if you're a Cowboys fan, we're praying for you, man. Those demons only come out by prayer and fasting, the Lord Jesus says so. But do pray for the Cardinals 'cause if the last are first in heaven, they're going to the playoffs. Until then, it's not looking good, all right? Anyways, I just landed from Dallas, Texas, and I was out last night with my wife, Grace. We were just getting glass of wine or something late at night. And I had a pastor come up to me, pretty emotional. He just landed from Ukraine. He just got out of Ukraine. He's here temporarily, gonna be heading back. He's a young man. And he asked, he's like, "Pastor," he's been podcasting. He's really a nice guy. And he watches "Real Men" every week in Ukraine. And what he said was, he said, "There's a lot of young men across Ukraine that are watching "Real Men." He said, "Thank you for putting it on the internet. Tell the guys we said hi." He said, "Our country's been invaded and we're at war, we're being attacked, and it's hard for us to get together as church." And a lot of the young men are discouraged, but a lot of the young men are tuning in on Wednesday nights, apparently, whatever time it is in Ukraine. So he just asked me to ask you to be praying for the young men and the pastors in Ukraine who are joining us and thinking about what men's ministry would look like in a war-torn country that needs men more than ever, all right? So what we're doing here is really important and it's going out to the world. So we wanna welcome everybody who's joining us online, and we're gonna deal with the topic today of God made you to be a sage to learn lessons. Life is a school. Class is always in session and every day there's a test to take. And I wanna start in the Old Testament. I dunno if you were like me, growing up as a kid, sometimes you watch cartoons, and there was always this episode where a bottle showed up, and out of the bottle came the genie, and the genie would ask, "Give me your one wish and I'll grant it." Well, the genie in the bottle story in the Old Testament is in 1 Kings 3. God shows up to a guy named Solomon and says, "You get one request." So just think about that for a moment. What would you ask for? So he thought about money, which would be nice. He thought about fame, which would be great. He thought about power, which would be incredible. You know what he settled on? Wisdom. He said, "If I could ask for one thing, I'm gonna ask for wisdom. 'Cause if I have wisdom, I probably could make

some money, get some power, have some influence." He decided that the most important thing to ask for was wisdom. So God was so pleased with his answer, God gave him not only wisdom, but wealth, power, and influence. He gave him everything. And the truth is, once you get wisdom, God can then provide the rest. The thesis is this, as a man, it must be that wisdom is the one thing that our Father asks us to ask him for. More than anything, to be a man and to grow in a man must require wisdom. And the day we live in, let me just do a little Q and A with you. Do we have more educated people than at any time in the history of the world? Yes or no?

- Yes.

- Yes, okay. Do we have access to more information than any other people in the history of the world?

- Yes.

- Yes. Are people stupid?

- Yes.

- Yes, okay. Okay, so apparently, going to school and having information doesn't make you wise. You can be absolutely stupid and make a series of stupid cataclysmic decisions. As men, the question that determines your worth is, "Well, what was your grade point average?" Or, "What's your IQ?" Or, "What degree do you have?" Or, "How much money do you make?" We don't ask anyone, "Are you wise or foolish?" And the truth is, we have a lot of people that have an education or they have a lot of information, but they have no wisdom. And this is the crisis in our culture. This is the big problem that we have. And I'll just give you one example. So we recently, well we didn't recently, I didn't vote for this, but political leaders decided we're just gonna forgive school loans, okay? Well, people bought things they didn't have money for. Is that stupid, okay? And now they can't afford to pay for the things that they went into debt for 'cause they couldn't afford to pay for it in the first place. So let's just give them money and that'll fix the problem. You're like, "Will that fix the problem or would wisdom fix the problem?" 'Cause here's what I've seen. If you go into debt and you're stupid, and then you don't get wisdom and we pay off your debt, you go into new debt 'cause you're still stupid. Wouldn't it have been great if our country said, "Hey, before we give you the money, you need to take a class on how not to be stupid with your money." But we don't do that 'cause our country's run by stupid people. It's a problem from the top down. What we wanna talk about is wisdom. And what we wanna talk about is why and how God gives wisdom. And the world we live in is explained in Romans 1:22. Claiming to be wise, they were all a bunch of fools. Oh, I know what to do with sex, and money, and gender, and family, and government, and life. I was like, "No, you don't. It's not working. You're all stupid." And our country is just filled with stupid. And our culture is filled with stupid. And the result is that we are measuring everyone's knowledge but not their wisdom. Knowledge is good, but by itself it's not enough. When it comes to wisdom, wisdom is mentioned, the wise or wisdom, 400 times in your English Bible. It's a big theme. Let me just give you a little difference

between knowledge and wisdom, 'cause how many of you went to school and you got a degree, but not wisdom, right? How many of you graduated and you didn't know what to do with your career, with your pots, your pans, your genitals, your credit card, your schedule, or your accountability group of Jose Cuervo, Jim Beam, and Johnny Walker. You're like, "I don't know what to do with any of the practical stuff in my life, but I got a degree." Well, knowledge tells you what to believe, wisdom tells you how to behave. Knowledge gives you facts to learn, wisdom gives you faith to live. Knowledge will challenge your mind, wisdom will change your life. Knowledge is about information, wisdom is about transformation. Knowledge comes from school, wisdom comes from the spirit. You can't have wisdom without the Holy Spirit. We're gonna get into that. Knowledge helps you get good grades, wisdom helps you live good lives. Knowledge is loved by the haughty, wisdom is loved by the humble. And knowledge is theoretical, wisdom is practical. You can get a master's degree and not know what to do with your money. You can get a master's degree and not know what to do with your schedule. You can get a master's degree and not know what to do with your diet. You can get a master's degree and have no idea how to pursue or marry a woman. You can get a master's degree and have no clue on how to be a husband. You can have a master's degree and have no clue how to be a father. Education is not bad and knowledge is not evil, but without wisdom, it just leads to a bunch of highly educated people who are educated beyond their intelligence, and think that they're wise, when in fact they're foolish. That's the world we live in. Most of what you guys have been told about being a man is stupid. It's not wise, it's foolishness. What we wanna talk about is wisdom. And I wanna talk about wisdom in regards to maturity. And the point is this, that to be a man is to grow in wisdom. And I'll show it to you. Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 13:11, "When I was a child," really little guy. How many of you are dad's of little guy? Little guy here. "I spoke like a child, I reasoned like a child." He's like, my vocabulary, my thought process, my decision making was childish. "When I became a," what?

- A man.

- "A man." So he's distinguishing between life stages. "I gave up childish ways." Here's my question. Is it a sin to be a child or childish? No, not if you're a child. You can't look at a four-month old and be like, "Stop acting like a baby." They are a baby, that's how they act, okay? It's not a sin to be childish unless you're a man. And when you're a man and you're acting like a child, that's the problem. So there's no sin in being childish if you're a child. The problem is being childish when you're a man. So here's the life stages. First is a baby. And I'm gonna talk about decisions and provisions. If you're a baby, what decisions do you make? You make no decisions. Your parents make... And what provisions do you make? How many of you are a dad and your child is not economically contributing to your household, right? They're only in that loss, right? You just filled out your taxes and you didn't get to put in the line item where the baby's contribution really bumped you a tax bracket. When you're a baby, all the decisions are made for you, and all the provisions are made for you. So then you get a little bit older, you're a child. This is around your school age. You're not independent, but you now have a little bit of freedom and autonomy. Let's say you got a kid in third, fourth, fifth grade. Did they get to make some decisions? Yeah, I mean, they go to school, they gotta decide. I'm gonna obey the

teacher. I'm gonna be friends with this person at recess. I'm gonna do my homework. They do start to make some decisions, not all the decisions. And they don't start to make provisions for themselves, but they start to take responsibility. "Hey, make your bed. Hey, pick up your shoes. Hey, put your lunch together, put it in your lunch box. You're big enough to make a sandwich." So now they're starting to take on more responsibility. The next stage is adolescent. This is like the teen years. They may start to have some decisions. They get to decide maybe if they're gonna go get a job, where are they gonna work? If they get a car, then they get to decide where they're gonna go. They're getting some autonomy. Maybe they get a phone. They get to decide what websites they surf or what people they communicate with, what friends they choose. If they play a sport, whether or not they're gonna give it their all or quit, or whether they're gonna listen to their coach, or just be that difficult kid on the team. And sometimes then they, at some point, ideally, they start making some provisions. How many of you got your first job in your teen years? You weren't yet ready to launch and pay your own bills, but you were starting to get some of your own spending money. You're like, "No, my dad, my mom, they're still paying most of my bills, but I'm starting to generate some revenue. I need to pay for my own car insurance, or my own gas, or if I wanna go out on a date with a girl, I gotta figure out a way to pay for a burger. Those are my responsibilities now." You're seeing this slow sliding scale from complete dependence to independence. The next phase is a young adult. How many of you guys are kind of college-ish age, right? So, you guys, we are very honored to have you, and you are sort of in the middle, okay? You're not fully independent because you're in college. So your parents are still probably making some of your decisions, but you're making a lot of your own decisions. And you're making some money. You should be working, generating revenue, but because you're in college, you probably can't go full into your career path, so some of the provision is coming from your parents. So, at this point, if there's a line between dependence and independence, it's around this time that with your decision making, you've crossed the line, with your provision earning, you're approaching the line. And then what we've got after the young adult, we've got the adult. This is where you're launched. And what this means is, well, let's just ask the dads, the dads of older... What does it mean that a kid is launched?

- They're off the payroll.

- They're off the payroll. They're off the payroll. You're like, "You know what, I no longer have a line item for my son." If your your son's like, "I got a dad. I'm working a job, I'm paying my bills." And magical things happen at this age, like you get your own insurance. Magical day. You pay for your own cell phone. And then this is bonus round, you get your own health benefits. This is your dad's, I mean, your dad's really having a great day when these things happen. You've officially launched. What other things happen when a son launches? They move out. They leave. So now you can walk around the house in your underwear like you've always wanted to, but you couldn't 'cause your kids were there, and you don't wanna pay for trauma therapy. Now you're like, "Finally, we've arrived at my happy place." They leave. And here's the big idea: They don't come back. That's the big idea. You don't want a yo-yo son. He's like, "Dad, I'm launched. I'm back. I'm launched. I'm back." Launched, cut the string. Good luck, son. I'm praying for you. What else does it mean that a young man launches? He picks his own church, he chooses his

own walk with God. He picks his own friends, he starts to find his wife, he chooses his career, he pays his bills, he stands on his own two feet. True or false, we're not doing good in our culture at this stage. This is a catastrophe. And what we had during the COVID season was, all right, all you young guys drop outta school, quit your job, move in with your parents, sit on the couch, wear a mask, and the government will send you money. All that is is that's just neo-nursing. That's just a bunch of guys who are literally just, I won't say it, but of the government. They're not men. They're not moving forward. They're boys who are moving backward. We took a whole generation of young men who should have been moving toward independence, and guess what we did? We moved them back toward dependence. Dependence on their parents, dependence on their government. Now they're struggling with mental health, and they're depressed, and they should be, because you are made to be a man, not to be a child. They've lost their purpose, they've lost their way. Some have lost their confidence. Because they don't have wisdom, they don't know how to get a job. They don't know how to make money. They don't know how to pursue a woman. They don't know how to get married. They don't know how to buy a house. They don't know how to raise a kid. So they just sit home with mental health rather than going out and doing things. And because they don't understand wisdom and they don't know what to do, these guys literally, you can look it up, when they wanna take a girl out, they go to YouTube, and type in, "How to date a girl?" 'Cause they don't know. And when they need a job, they go to YouTube. All of a sudden, YouTube is the closest thing they have to a father. They dunno how to get a job. They dunno how to make a dollar. They dunno how to date a girl. They dunno how to buy a house. They dunno how to change a tire. They dunno how to take a punch. I mean it's catastrophic, okay? So then the next season, once you're adult and your launched a mature adult, now you're not just... So when you're an adult, you take responsibility for you. When you're a mature adult, you also take responsibility for someone else. Young married guys, raise your hand, okay? Young married guys. How many of you young married guys, you're feeling the pressure of like, "That's my wife." Like, "Okay, I'm responsible for her." All of a sudden, up until that point, you could be very selfish, almost live a reckless life. Like, "Well, if I flame out and blow all my money and make mistakes, it's just me." Once you got a wife, she's gonna talk to you about it, okay? And you're like, "Okay, I better hold it together 'cause she's depending on me, and if I love her, I need to not only take care of me, I need to take care of her." This is why many men don't get married. It's not that they don't wanna be with a woman, it's that they don't wanna take on the responsibility. This is why we have a culture of cohabitation rather than marriage. And then, so you're responsible for yourself, that's an adult man. And then you marry a woman, you take responsibility for her well-being, and then you had a child. How many of you are dads with little kids? How many of you young dads... We're honored to have you. You feel that burden? More than when you were... When you're a single guy, you're like, "I gotta make money." When you have a wife and kid, you're like, "I have to make money." All of a sudden it's like, "My kid needs to eat, my family needs a home. At some point, my kid's gonna need to go to school, they're gonna need clothes, they're gonna need a doctor, they're gonna need a dentist." There's some practical stuff that a man at this phase starts thinking about, that he's never thought about. Because up until that point, all he's had to think about was himself. His wife gets pregnant, he's like, "Oh, we need medical insurance. Yeah, well, the kid's born, we're gonna need a crib and a

car seat, and something other than a motorcycle to travel around on," right? Then what happens is a very mature adult is more like a grandparent. They're not just responsible for themselves and for others. They're now looking at multiple generations in a legacy. So this is a guy who runs a company and he's employing lots of people in families. This is an older man who's coaching up one, two, three generations of younger men. This is a guy who's not just taking care of himself and his wife and his kids, now he's also putting an arm around the grandkids. "Let me pray for you. Let me bless you. Let me love you. Let me set up my finances so that I can try to get the wealth down to the next generation." 'Cause Proverbs says, "A wise man leaves an inheritance for his children's children." And the government's always trying to get in the waterfall and pickpocket the legacy, okay? And these are the things that a very mature man thinks about. I'm fine, my wife is fine, my kids are fine. How do I help my grandkids launch, okay? How many of you guys are, I know none of you are in the baby phase, and if so, some horrible parent dropped off the child in the wrong room. But how many of you guys are, in that school age, you're a child? How many of you guys are in that season of adolescence? It's the teen-ish years. How many of you are in the young adult college age? You're in the process of launching. How many of you are those young adult guys? You've launched but you're still single? How many of you are those guys who are mature adult? You got a wife, you got kids, you got a company, you got responsibility. How many of you are more in that very mature category and now you're thinking about generations at your family and maybe also at your company? Here's what's happening in our culture. We have two crises, two simultaneous crises. Number one, true or false? The young men are not moving down the continuum. They're not. They are delaying their responsibilities and maturity as long as possible. That's not wisdom, that's foolishness. We have created this indefinite life stage. It used to be that adolescence or young adulthood was in your teens, and then we moved it into your twenties, and now we've moved it into the thirties. The average man is over 30 when he marries for the first time. That means for 30 years he's been single. And it's not a sin to get married later, but it is a sin if it's because you're irresponsible and you don't want to grow up and take on masculine responsibility. This is why men who are godly and wise are probably going to get married younger than the other guys. Because they're not gonna just live with their girlfriend. They're not just looking for a good time. They wanna have a good marriage, raise a good family, leave a good legacy. One of the crises we have is young men are literally frozen. They are not moving forward. They're not. They're not getting jobs. They're not starting careers. They're not leaving their parents home. They're not launching independently. And, instead, what they're doing, they're dating, relating, and fornicating. They're impregnating with no intent of fathering. So we have a cultural crisis where boys who can shave are creating babies but not fathers. That's our cultural crisis, okay? The other crisis that we're having is not just with the young men. Let me say this, for you, younger men, let me give you a fatherly word advice I give my own three sons. The sooner you start taking on responsibility, the further ahead you are. Think of it like a NASCAR race. Right now, every guy is drunk in the pits with the trophy girl. That's where they are. If you get your car out of the pits and start running your laps, you will have... If you're a guy who's in his early twenties, and you just decide, "You know what? My goal is to mature, to take on responsibility, figure out my degree, or my trade, or my job, find my wife, buy my house, start my responsibility." You are 10... Hear me in this. You are 10 years ahead of the average guy.

You are 10 years ahead of the average guy. In addition, you're not wasting those 10 years. You're investing them. You're not wasting them on five broken, traumatized dating relationships. You're investing them in one marriage. You're not risking having a bunch of children out of wedlock. You're investing your life preparing to be a father. You're not wasting your money on alcohol, and nightlife, and stupidity, and guy stuff. You're investing it in a home. You're investing it in a future. The absolute collapse of our culture is an incredible opportunity for you young guys to get ahead. How many of you older guys agree with me on this point? It's an amazing opportunity. So for you younger guys that are in here, you're like, "Okay, I wanna grow in wisdom. I wanna figure this out." That's why the older guys are here. You're like, "I don't know how to marry a woman." Find a guy who's been married for a while and his wife is still smiling, and take notes. You're like, "Okay, I'd like to be a dad." Okay, find a guy who's got some kids who still like him. Say, "I wanna come over for dinner. I wanna see you and your wife in your natural habitat." It's like going to the zoo. I just wanna see you in your natural habitat. I wanna see what this works. That's where I started. I was 17, met Grace, 19, got saved. First thing I did, I found an older guy, godly, married, 11 kids, one wife. I was like, "Apparently they get along," you know? And I was like, "Hey, can I come over to dinner at your house?" He's like, "Yeah, come on over." So I got to see him pray with his kids, and hang out, and be with his wife. I was like, "Ah, okay, this is what it looks like. 'Cause this is what I want. I wanna get married when I have kids. I wanna be a dad. I don't want my kids to grow up hating me and write punk rock songs about how I ruined their life. I wanna actually have a family." And so, we did. And then on Friday nights we babysat their kids and they got date night. And it was our way of serving the family as they let us peer into their world. The other crisis, young men are not moving forward. Let me say this to you. If you're a young man, you're like, "Well, I wanna figure out how to get a job." Let your table lead now. There are recruiters and employers in the room. So you're like, "I wanna find a trade." There are guys who own businesses in the room. And let me just tell you on behalf of the business owners, they can't find anybody to work. True business owners can't find anybody to work 'cause all the young guys are at home voting for socialists to take their money so they don't have to go to their job. It's very frustrating. If you wanna figure out how to buy a home, tell your table lead. There are mortgage brokers and real estate agents in the room. If you wanna get married, tell your table lead. There's a premarital class. You wanna be a good dad, there's a parenting class. We're the guys here to help, amen?

- [Congregant] Amen.

- So one of the big crisis for young guys is they're not moving forward. And, actually, the last few years they're sliding backward. The other is for the older men. Older men who are foolish, when they're just entering into their prime, they self-destruct. We call this a midlife crisis. So go back one please. That is where a guy gets to number six and then decides to go back to number three. See that? He's like, "My wife is 51. I'm gonna trade her in for three 17-year-olds." It's that guy. Shots fired, Scottsdale, Arizona, okay? And what it is, it's a guy who decides, "You know what? I don't wanna continue to learn my lessons, move forward, take responsibility, finish my race well, so I'm gonna go back to my college days. I'm gonna have a midlife crisis. I'm gonna get a hot car. I'm gonna find a gal who's got a father wound. I'm gonna implode my family. We're

gonna split everything I've ever worked for. The attorneys are gonna set a pile of money on fire, and I'm gonna go back and relive my college days." Okay? So this is the crisis in our culture. The young men are not moving forward, they're stuck, and the older men are going backward, which is why we have an absolute crisis in healthy, godly, masculine leadership from top to bottom in all of Western society. And until or unless that problem is fixed, we are a doomed culture in decline. We're a doomed culture in decline. So that being said, how do you get wisdom? Not just knowledge, but wisdom. Not just an education, but wisdom. This is the gift of the Holy Spirit only available to God's sons. You can't get wisdom apart from the Holy Spirit, which means the reason that there's so much foolishness among men young and old is 'cause they don't have the spirit of God. But if you're one of God's men and you belong to the Lord Jesus, guess what? You have access to the spirit of wisdom. And here's what it says. Ephesians 1:16 and 17, he says, "Remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory," it's the whole trend here. There is the son, there is the Father. "May give you the spirit of wisdom." The Holy Spirit brings wisdom. You don't need to be smart to be wise. You need the Holy Spirit. You don't need to be educated to be wise. You need the Holy Spirit. James 1:5 says this, "If any of you lacks wisdom," can we all just raise our hand? Anybody got something in their life they need to figure out? "Let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him." Here's what God is saying. Here's what God is saying to you. If you were a son of God, and you come to the Father and you're like, "Father, will you help me? I need wisdom on how to overcome an addiction, how to make money, how to love a woman, how to raise a kid, how to buy a house, how to study the Bible, how to lead at my company, how to build my career." Do you think that the Father would look at any of you and say, "No, son, I'm not gonna help." How many of you, if your son came to you and said, "I wanna do the right thing. I really need your help." What's your answer? Think, "I'm so excited to help!" I just had a meeting before this with one of my sons. He's running some plans for his future by me. He's like, "Dad, I wanna run this by you. Will you help?" Answer? Woo! Every day I wake up and I hope that I get to do that. You're a son, he's a father. If you just look at the... If you just pray, "Father I need wisdom," for whatever it is, the Father never looks at the son and says, "No." This is the prayer I pray more than any other prayer. I pray James 1:5. "God, I don't know what to do. Teach me, God. I don't know." 'Cause here's the big idea. Whatever season of life you're in, you've never been there. So you're like, "I nailed it in college, and then I got a job. I don't know what to do." So you're like, "I got a job and I was doing a good job, then they promoted me to management. I don't know how to manage. And I was doing good, then I got a girl. I don't know what to do with the girl. And then she had a kid. Oh, boy. I don't know what to do with the kid. Oh, it's a girl. Now I really don't know what to do," all right? Every season of life... "Now I'm raising a teenager. I never raised a teenager. Now my kids are launching. How do I help 'em launch? Now I'm a father-in-law. I've never been a... I've never been here. And now I got grandkids." Okay, every stage of life, it's the first time you've been there. And you're just gonna need wisdom for every stage and phase of life. So then he says this in Proverbs 13:20, "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion," it's a typo, "of fools will suffer harm." So if you wanna grow in wisdom, you get it from God and what? God, the Holy Spirit. And, oftentimes, God the Holy Spirit works through people. Says if you walk with a wise, you'll grow wise. You walk with fools, you'll grow foolish. Here's a big idea. You show me your friends,

I'll show you your future. If the guys you know, they're really good at drinking, and gambling, and running around on their wives, you're not gonna end up more like Jesus hanging out with those guys. They may be your ministry, but those are not your brothers. You find guys that are ahead of you. They're in wisdom. Walk behind them. Find guys who are alongside of you. Walk with them. Here's the big idea. This is why we're here. To find those guys. That's why you're here. Find those guys. Where are the guys that I can walk with or maybe the guys that are a few steps ahead of me that I can draft behind? Where do you get wisdom? Well, it comes from the scriptures. So it's time in the Bible. Prayer and worship. Bringing your burdens to God, asking him for wisdom. Conscience, sometimes you're just like, "That's just stupid. That's a bad idea." Don't break your conscience, you're gonna need it. Some things aren't sinful, they're just stupid. Amen? Right? We've all been that guy. You're like, "It doesn't say in the Bible," you know? "Not to BMX bike without a helmet." No, it's just a dumb idea. Experience. You do something, it doesn't work. Don't do it. Crazy idea. Wise counsel is finding somebody who knows more than you. "Hey, you're a mortgage broker? I never bought a house. How do you get a house as a first-time home buyer? Are there any shortcuts to that?" "Oh, there are. There are first-time home buyer programs." "Great, I didn't know." "I've never had a kid before. So what are some things I need to know about being a dad?" "I'm getting married, going on my honeymoon. Never been on my honeymoon. I was homeschooled. I've never been out of the house. What do I do on my honeymoon?" Okay? And also, God works through godly authority. And part of the reason that we have a stupid culture of foolishness is there's no respect for any authority. God gives a father to give you wisdom. God gives a good boss to give you wisdom. So these are the places that God gives wisdom. The point of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in a man is to make him filled with wisdom so that he becomes like who? Jesus. Jesus. And the goal is to become mature for every phase and stage of life. Let me share it with you. It was prophesied in Isaiah, 700 years before Jesus was born, "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him. The spirit of wisdom." How did Jesus live his life? Well, wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Luke 2:40, "Jesus grew, became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God," that's the Holy Spirit, "was upon him." He's around the age of 12. It says, "They found Jesus in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions." What he's doing, he's finding guys who were older than him, and he's building relationships with them. "All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers," 'cause he had wisdom. This is a crazy line, let me explain it a moment. "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and favor with men and God." Let me explain this. So, Jesus, he's fully God, fully man. God become a man, okay? This is just... I'm summarizing church's greatest histories. Fully God, fully man. He's God become a man. And then the thing that people struggle with is, "Well, how did he live his life?" Answer? By the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, he wasn't as fully God, but he set aside, I'll call it "the continual use of his divine attributes," so that he could humbly live... I'm summarizing a lot of the Bible here. He could humbly live like who? Like us. So when it says he was tempted, he was tempted as we are. When he was hungry, he was hungry. When he was thirsty, he was thirsty. And when he grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with men and God, he was learning and growing. Question. Does God need to learn anything? No. Jesus set aside the continual use of his divine attributes. Didn't lose them, didn't use them, and chose to live like we do, and to grow up like we do. To look at the phases, he started as a baby, then he became a child, and then an adolescent, and

then a young adult, and then an adult. And then he atones for the sin of the world, which makes him a very mature adult. He takes care of everyone. The debate then is, well, how can we be like Jesus? The answer is by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to make you mature and wise like Jesus at whatever life stage you're in, okay? Again, he had all the divine attributes, but he chose not to use them. In the same way, some years ago, I was out at a gun range. I don't shoot a lot, but I was out with a buddy of mine, and he's a good shot, he wanted to see how good he was blindfolded. So I got far away 'cause I wasn't sure how this was gonna work. So when my buddy goes to shoot blindfolded, is he blind? Nope, he has sight. He's just choosing not to use it. Jesus knows everything and can do anything, but while he was on the earth, he chooses to live as we do humbly and simply. So here's the big idea. Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with men and God. Do you know what that means? He was perfectly mature for every life stage. So was Jesus perfect? Was he a perfect three-year-old guy? Yeah. But did he act like a 43-year-old guy? No, he was three. So if you would've seen Jesus when he was 13, was he mature for 13? Yes. But did he act like a 33-year-old? No. When Jesus was 23, was he mature for 23? Yes. And when he was 33, he was mature for 33. The big idea is this, men measure wisdom and maturity based upon life stage. And if a kid is acting like a three-year-old, that's not a problem if he's a three-year-old, but what if he's a 33-year-old? Well, that's a problem. So you've gotta evaluate yourself. How old am I? How mature am I? How wise am I for my age, for my life stage? And Jesus grew. So you're gonna need to grow. Jesus learned. So you're gonna need to learn. Jesus matured. So you're gonna need to mature. I'll close with this, 'cause I'm running a little bit short on time. Let me give a word first and foremost to the young men. To the young men, don't compare yourself to the other guys in your generation. Try to figure out what Jesus looked like at about your age. The guys in your life stage and age, are they more or less mature than they should be? They're less mature. And ask yourself, what would it look like for me to be mature at my age? And that's why we're here. So that the Holy Spirit would give you wisdom. The two additional scriptures I've got is Jesus says that, "The Father will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." And he says in Luke 11:13, "The Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. So, here's the big idea, God is a father, okay? Jesus is the prototype of what a mature son looks like. Baby, child, adolescent, young adult, mature adult. God the Father sends God the Son to save us from our sins and to set the pattern, the precedent, and the prototype of what a mature man is filled with the Holy Spirit, growing in wisdom, always learning. The Holy Spirit is the one who comes into you as the Son of God, to make you like Jesus, the Son of God. So what does wisdom look like? It looks like the Holy Spirit making you like Jesus. That's exactly what it means. For those of you who are fathers, let me say something that'll change, revolutionize your parenting. If Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, favor with men and God, did he learn through a process? Yeah. Did Jesus ever commit a sin? Never. Did he learn through trial and error like every human being does?

- Yes.

- Yes. I've gotten in trouble saying this, I'll be careful how I say it. Some years ago, I said this, and a couple of newspapers took a shot at me. Jesus never sinned, but he was human. So do you think when Jesus was a seven-year-old boy, and Joseph gave him his first bike, and he

jumped on the bike, do you think he immediately, no training wheels, just off he went, flipped, jump. He's ready for the X Games. Do you think he was there? No. He was seven, so he had to learn how to ride a bike. He never sinned, but he had to grow and mature. When Jesus learned to read and write, do you think they just handed him Plato at the age of six, he read it and understood it, then taught it to others in the original language? Or do you think he had to learn his alphabet and how to read and write, and add and subtract just like the rest of us? Just like the rest of us. We tend to think of Jesus as perfect. He was and is, but we don't see his process. And this is where some of you men can really discourage your sons and other men if you don't allow them to be human. Human beings sin, but it's not a sin to be human. You can be filled with a Holy Spirit, not even in sin, and figuring it out through a process. True or false? True. Some of you grew up in religious homes where you had to do everything perfectly. The point is, there's a difference between being a human being and sinning. I raised my three sons this way. I would tell 'em all the time, "That's not a sin, that's just a mistake, and you're a human being, and we make them, and that's how we learn by making mistakes." First time I saw a curve ball, I did not hit it. I did not. I'll be honest with you. First time I saw curve ball, I did not hit it with the bat, but I did hit myself. That's what I did with the curve ball. I go over to my dad, I'm like, "Dad, what was that?" He's like, "That's a curve ball." I said, "I don't know what to do with a curve ball." He's said, "Son, you gotta learn." All of life is just figuring out, "Okay, that's new. I've never done that before. I've never been here before. I don't know what I'm doing." Does that mean you're a sinner or you're a human being? No, you are a sinner, okay? Make that clear. But when you're a human being, you know what you need? Grace. The Holy Spirit. Trial and error. Figure it out. A good coach in the process. I want you guys to know that if you're not where you should be, we're here to help you get to where you should be. We're here to build you up. We're not here to beat you up. We're not here to say, "You should be here and you're here." We're saying, "We're glad you're here. We're gonna help you get there." As men, we don't want harsh accountability, we don't want legalism, we don't want judgment, we don't want chest-beating, we don't want fakery. "I've got it all together." We call it real men, not perfect men. Just say, "You know what? I'm mature here. I think I could help some guys. I have some wisdom. I'm not mature here. I need some guys to give me some wisdom." And we're all gonna get better together, amen? So wherever you're at, just start where you are. And here's what I find. God the Father is so gracious. There's guys in this room that two years ago were drug addicts, and now they're ministry leaders. There's guys, three years ago, were living with their girlfriend, and now they both got saved and baptized in their Father's. There guys in this room that seven months ago they were potheads, and now they're working jobs and moving out of their father's house. The point is simply this, the Father is so gracious, and the Spirit is so powerful, that if the sons will just look at the Father and say, "You know what? I need some help here." He'll send the Holy Spirit to allow you to move, and pivot, and change. And if you're in sin, he'll forgive you and overcome it. And if you're not in sin, he'll be patient with you in the process through your humanity. I'm just gonna leave it there. Father, we invite the spirit of wisdom, the Holy Spirit. God, whether a guy is 15, 25, 35, 45, 55, 65, 75 or 85, he's never been here before. This is all new for him. He's figuring out how to be wise here, how to be mature here, how to be a good son here. Lord Jesus, thank you that you came as a man, that you entered into the process of maturation. That you know what it's like to be where we're at. You know what it's like to deal with

what we're dealing with. God, I pray for those who have a spirit of condemnation, that you would lift that, replace it with a hopeful, helpful, healing spirit of conviction. And, God, I pray that we wouldn't try to be less human than Jesus. If Jesus was fully human, then we get to be fully human. If he learned along the way, we get to learn along the way. If he got to figure it out, we get to figure it out. And if he wasn't sinning, being human, it's not a sin for us to be human. So God help us to give our sin to you when we sin, but just give our humanity to you for the help that we need. And God, I thank you that in this room there are men with wisdom, that help the other men grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with men and God. And thank you that together we can all become more like Jesus in whose name we pray. Amen. Love you, guys. Thanks.