



LAW #3 - LAW OF WISE COUNSEL

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Well, uh, good to see you all. Let me open a prayer. Uh, father God, pray for, uh, the Holy Spirit to lead us, to guide us, to help us, to encourage us. Uh, Lord, uh, there are people in the room who they have wisdom to give. They have life experience, they have insight, uh, that would really benefit others. I pray that they would, um, be so kind and generous as to as to share the things that you have entrusted to them. Each of us Lord also has areas of our lives where we need to learn. We need to grow. There are things that we don't know, we don't understand, or we keep doing something and it's not producing the results that, that you would have for us. And so would you please give, give us as well the humility to receive instruction and correction and, and counsel. And so, holy Spirit, we invite you as, as really the source of old wisdom, to bring us wisdom so that we might live lives that increasingly look like the wisest person who's ever lived. His name is Jesus, and it's in His name. We ask these things, amen. Well, what what tends to happen in life is you sort of figure out how it works, and then your life season transitions and you realize you are not ready for that transition. I could still remember when I was in high school, I was most likely to succeed student body president, four year Letterman Man of the Year. And I thought, well, you know, I'm obviously ready to transition to the next season of life, so go off to college. And I remember, I remember going to write my first check, and I realized, I don't know what to put in the blanks. We never covered that in high school. And I remember thinking, well, there's all the, I'm a total stranger. I don't know any of these people. I wonder which ones I should have a relationship with. But I didn't even, I didn't know how to pick a friend or what a good friend was or was not. And there's a lot of, you know, gals running around and I'm dating a gal back at home. And I, I didn't know, well, should I, should I stay with a gal I'm with? And the answer is yes. It's been 29 years, and so far so good. But I didn't know, like, should I, should I date other people? If so, who do you look for? What do you look for? I, I remember, uh, my sophomore year going to look for a house. And I had no idea what to look for in a rental contract. I didn't know what to look for in the fine print. I didn't know what was a reasonable amount to be paying every month. I had no clue. I could still remember as a college freshman opening my mailbox. And the first piece of mail I got was a credit card application. And it said, uh, you know, order this credit card and you can get pizza and a free Frisbee. And, uh, and I thought, well, that's amazing. Who doesn't want a Frisbee? And I can eat pizza? Uh, I didn't know how to read the fine print. I didn't know what was a good or bad interest rate. I had no clue at all. And the credit card applications just kept coming to an unemployed 18-year-old guy. And so, um, what I realized very quickly was I had understood and figured out how to do high school. I had no clue how to buy a car, how to rent a house, how to fill out a blank check, how to set a budget, how to pick a friend, how to date a woman. I, I had no clue for the next season. And, and what God was really gracious to do for me at that time, well, first of all, he saved me. And then I started reading the Bible. And then I got into a really good, wonderful Bible teaching church that was multi-generational, and had some older men. And, uh, I joined a college Bible study and I thought, well, that'll be good. And those were good guys and friends, but I realized they were as dumb as me. Like we'd get together and give our opinion. And let's just say that, that that was not wise counsel. So then I found this older group of men in the church, and they had a men's bible study. And I started going to that. And some of these guys had been married 20, 30, 40, 50 years. Some of 'em had built companies, some of 'em had raised godly kids. Some of 'em made mistakes and were honest about their failures. And as I hung out with those guys, I thought, oh, boy, as, as I'm trying to figure stuff out, those are the people to ask. And that was my first experience, really with wise counsel. And that precedent and pattern has sort of stayed with me my whole life. I've made a lot of mistakes and some of the worst mistakes I've ever made. And the biggest regrets I'll ever have is when I didn't seek wise counsel. And I just sort of plowed ahead with that, I thought was a good idea. And when we need wise counsel, the most is when things aren't working. When we're in a life transition, you move, you didn't have kids, now you got kids, your kids were at home and now they're leaving and you're empty nesters, you've relocated to another state or city, you've entered into another job. Anytime there's a major life transition, there's a lot of things that, that are going to change. And we need wise Council to help get ready for those transitions. And I'm assuming for all of you, you're either in one of those seasons or heading into one of those seasons. And so I wanna talk today about the law of, of wise counsel, and, uh, we'll start with this, uh, the marks of a foolish person, and I'm gonna work a lot out of the wisdom literature. It's a whole genre in your Bible. It's

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon. Job in the New Testament includes the book of James. It's a whole genre of literature called the Wisdom Literature. And the point of the wisdom literature is to help you understand the difference between wisdom and folly. And so there's a lot of juxtaposition between these two categories. We tend to think in terms of sin and holiness, and that's one of the Bible's categories. One is also foolishness and wisdom. Foolishness and wisdom. And it compares and contrasts these people. So Proverbs 13:20, whoever walks with a wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm. What it's talking about here is who you do life with, who you're in relationship with, who you invite into community, that there will be people you work with or maybe extended relatives, family members, uh, people that you grew up with, people that live in your immediate vicinity, uh, where your home resides. But what we're talking about here is who you choose, not just circumstances determining, but you choosing. I'm gonna pull these people close to me and I'm gonna do life with them. And what he's saying is, if you become, uh, the kind of person who chooses foolish people to do life with, what do you do? You hurt yourself. A lot of times we think if I find foolish people and I do life with them, that'll be so that we can have fun. And it never ends that way. It always ends up with a lot of pain and hurt. How many of you, you had foolish seasons of your life. You wanted to go out and do foolish things. You picked some foolish friends, and you went out and did foolish things together, and all you did was hurt yourself. Right? Amen. Okay, those of you who are honest, raise your hand. Um, and the, and the rest of you weren't paying attention. So anyways, but whoever walks with a wise becomes wise. And so it's, it's asking, okay, who am I gonna pull near me in relationship? A foolish person to give me counsel and do life with, or a wise person that I can learn from and glean from and walk with? This is one of the most important lessons that we teach our children. How to pick a good friend, how to be a good friend. Uh, in addition, uh, I wanna tell you a little bit about foolish people. We wanna spend a bunch of time there, but you need to know that some people are foolish. This is really important because sometimes if you're struggling, there are people that are just gonna give you their idea, their opinion, their advice. Have you ever known that? Um, when my wife was pregnant, everybody we met at the grocery store decided it was time to tell her something I could, I couldn't believe it. Women would just walk up to my wife and they'd say, you need to do this, you need to do that, you need to do this, you need that. I'm like, these are total strangers in the line at the grocery store who feel like, because my wife is pregnant, class is in session. And they're, they're lecture. If you don't choose wise count. So what happens is, whoever you are around, if they see that you're struggling, suffering, frustrated, or if you leak or vent, if you ever done that, you're a little frustrated. People are like, what's wrong? You tell 'em. And then you're inviting them in, and now they're giving you counsel and they're giving you advice, and then you realize, I shouldn't have invited you in. You are not the best person to get this answer from. The Bible tells us that certain people are foolish, so that we don't just leak, vent, invite everybody in, tell 'em all of our business, and then them think that it's, you know, free range and open season to speak into our life. And here's the marks of a foolish person. They deny reality. Uh, a foolish person. You can meet with them and you could say, you know, if you don't get a job soon, you're gonna lose your house. And like, nah, it'll work itself out. Actually, it'll work itself out by you being homeless. That's how it's gonna work itself out. Your wife and you are not doing good. If you guys don't get some help and work on this, this marriage ain't gonna make it. Ah, she'll get over it. Ah, maybe not. Look, your kids are not walking with the Lord and you haven't really followed up with them and pursued. And if you don't, soon they're gonna get themselves into some real trouble. Ah, you know, God will figure it out. They deny reality. Some of you are in business, some of you're in management positions, and you have employees that just deny reality. That's not working, that's not gonna be okay. That's not gonna produce a result. A foolish person wants reality to accommodate them. They don't wanna accommodate reality. A foolish person also is one who shoots the messenger. So you come and you bring reality to them, and they're like, well, you're not perfect. Who are you to judge you? You did this wrong. And all of a sudden the topic is turned from, from their life to your life, and they're trying to discredit you as a source. And if you have a teenage child, have you ever experienced this? It happens. Amen. They lack teachable humility to learn requires humility to learn requires, I don't know. And you do, you speak, I listen. People who are foolish, they, they have a very difficult time being teachable and have a very difficult time being humble. And those two

inextricably go together. Now, here's one of the things about foolish people. Sometimes they can be really fun life of the party because they don't think about consequences. They deny reality. They don't think about cause and effect. And so sometimes these are very fun people, but they're not responsible people. And if you pull them close to you, they may be fun, but they're not gonna be helpful. And lastly, here's what a foolish person does. They either listen to no one or they listen to everyone, right? A foolish person who listens to no one. It's like I told you. And they're like, I'm not listening to you. Okay, well, who will you listen to? 'cause this person talked to you and that person talked to you, and this person talked to you, and you won't listen to anyone. Or a foolish person listens to everyone. To everyone. Um, there is, uh, one woman that grace and I counseled, this was many years ago, but she was in a very bad marriage with a very, very, very dangerous man. And that was reality. And so we brought it to her. And what he was doing was very dangerous, very violent for her and the children, they're in a very dangerous position. And we said, you know, you need to get some distance between yourself and that man. And she's like, oh, okay. And then we see her again. So how did it go? She said, well, I, I didn't do that. Why? She said, well, after I talked to you, I talked to so-and-so, and they gave me different advice, and then I wanted to talk to so and so, and they gave me other advice. And then I went and talked to so and so, and then they gave me even different advice. And then I got so confused. I don't even know what to do. Right? It's, it's advice from everyone. A foolish person takes advice from no one or advice from everyone. A wise person is careful who they invite in, disclose to and seek feedback from next point wise people. Proverbs one, seven, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Fools despise wisdom and instruction. Um, what he's saying is, when you go to give some information to a foolish person, they won't retain it. They're like a bucket that has no bottom. Their parent told 'em something, they didn't listen. Their boss told 'em something they, they wouldn't learn. They, they're, they're just not going to retain any of it. Conversely, what guides a wise person is a fear of the Lord. What this means is a reverence and honor a recognition of God, a recognition that I come from God, I will return to God. I give an account to God. My life belongs to God. My decisions are ultimately going to be rendered wiser, foolish by God that I don't live this independent, autonomous, isolated life. I live this life. Like the theologians would say, Coram deo in the face of God. And so they're, they're trying to figure out, Lord, what do you want? Lord? What would be right in your eyes? God, what would be obedient to your word? God? What would your son Jesus say or do under these circumstances? So what a, what happens with a foolish person? A foolish person lives by what the Bible calls the flesh. They're always sort of indulging their sinful nature. Conversely, a wise person lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. They invite the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom. Uh, just as the Holy Spirit gave wisdom to Jesus during his earthly life, a wise person also embraces reality. You can bring them an issue and they will say, thank you for showing me. And they'll deal with reality. Some of you are medical doctors. Uh, some of you are business leaders. Some of you are consultants, some of you are attorneys. And your job is to bring reality to people. And a foolish person will deny reality. I'm, I'm healthy. No, you're not. Uh, this lawsuit's not a big deal. Yes it is. That contract will work itself out. Uh, no, that's gonna take some work, right? This company is gonna do great. Um, actually the numbers don't indicate that. And a wise person embraces reality. They say, Hey, thank you. 'cause now I can adjust myself to reality rather than denying reality and wanting reality to adjust. To me, what happens as well is why wise people have empathy for others. What foolish people do, they, they will push a lot of pain onto other people. So they'll be irresponsible and they'll push their duties onto others. That's why irresponsible people are always looking for overly responsible people to pick up their responsibilities. But what a wise person realizes is, my decisions impact you. They affect you. How did that make you feel? That hurt you. I'm so sorry. Uh, you know, dear wife, uh, when I didn't pick up the kids from school and you had to drop everything and go do it, I really messed up your whole day. I'm sorry. I'm not the center of the universe. My decisions impact and affect you. And I have empathy, sympathy, and compassion. I see it from your perspective. And I see how the decisions I make are impacting you positively, negatively. That's a more mature and wise person. They also take responsibility for themselves, right? This is my marriage. I'll work on it. This is my company. I'll work on it. This is my walk with God. I'll work on it. These are my responsibilities. And I don't expect you to, you know, save my marriage, fix my business, or make me closer to Jesus. You can gimme wise counsel, and I'm gonna

act on that. I'm gonna take responsibility for my own life. And then they think in terms of legacy, foolish people think about a good time and wise people think about a good legacy. This is if you're a married man, this is where, or you're, or if it's a married woman, you start thinking about your kids and your grandkids. You start thinking, okay, what about the future? Um, the proverb says that a wise person leaves an inheritance for their children's children. That's wisdom, thinks generationally. Wisdom thinks in terms of legacy foolish people. Part of their MO is they have no sense of delayed gratification. So they can't save money for a car. They go out and get a really bad loan with a high interest rate, and they drive it off the lot and it immediately depreciates and they're upside down. So if they get in trouble, they can't even sell it and come out, even no sense of delayed gratification. This is the single guy who says, I really like to have sex. And boy, if I gotta get a job and marry a woman, that's a lot of work. I'll just move in with my girlfriend. Delayed gratification is not a thing. Um, and, and so what happens for someone who is wise, they understand the benefits of delayed gratification and they think in terms of legacy and lineage, and they think in terms of, of impact. And this is even someone who's maybe single and they're thinking, well, who do I love? Who do I serve? Who do I invest in for the kingdom of God? And how will I make a deposit spiritually in their life so that even if I don't have biological children, I still have a spiritual legacy like the Lord Jesus, who himself never had any biological children, but has a pretty amazing, uh, spiritual legacy of which we are by God's grace apart. Does that make sense? Amen. Okay, so wise people, um, what is wisdom? Hey, let's talk a little bit about wisdom. Proverbs nine, nine, given instruction to a wise man, he'll be wiser. Still a wise man's like a bucket with a bottom. You tell 'em something, they'll remember. You give 'em a book to read. They're gonna read it. You're gonna give 'em a podcast to listen to. They're gonna listen to it. You're gonna give 'em a book of the Bible. They're gonna go home and crack it and dig into it. They're a bucket with a bottom. You pour into them and they retain it. They retain it. Um, teach a righteous man and he will increase his learning. And so when it comes to this issue of wisdom, we need to always be pursuing wisdom. None of us can ever get to the point where we say, I'm wise. That's how you know somebody's a fool. Amen. Anybody who puts wisdom on their business card as their, you know, gift, that's a foolish person. All we can say is that we are pursuing wisdom by the grace of God, pursuing wisdom by the grace of God. And that means that we're always learning and we're always growing. Uh, it was having launched recently with a man who's, uh, been married 55 years, been walking with the Lord for, I think it's approaching 40 years. And he told me all the things that he's learning. That's amazing. He hasn't reached a point where he is just reading the old verses and going back to the old books. He's still learning. He's, and what he's doing, um, he's adding, he's increasing, he's still hungry, he's still teachable, he's still motivated, he's still learning. And as a result, you know, him and his wife still have a great relationship and they're serving God. And, and they're a real blessing and a benefit to those of us that have the ple pleasure of knowing them. Um, but, but this is the difference between truth and wisdom. Truth knows what to believe. Wisdom knows what to do. Some of you are very good with the truth, but you're not wise 'cause you don't know what to do. Truth is knowing what to believe. And it's incredibly important. And wisdom is knowing what to do. And that's very practical. So truth sometimes can be a bit theoretical, but it's incredibly important. And then wisdom is where we take the truth and we work it out in ways that are very, very practical, very practical. And let me say this about wisdom as well. None of us can ever say that we're wise and none of us is wise in every area. Some of you are very wise in one area and less wise in other areas. So some of you are very, very wise in the realm of business or law or finance or medicine or construction or, or whatever the case may be. But then there are other areas that you're not as wise. And I'm not calling you a fool, but not as wise. So you're like, yeah, relationally, I don't do so well. Um, when it comes to, you know, devotional time and reading my Bible, I'm less disciplined there. Um, I do a lot better keeping up with sports cores than I do Bible verses. There's areas where we're all a little more mature in an area that's a little less mature. And so it's important when we look at people, not to say you are wise, but to say you're wise in these areas and here's why. Therefore, I'm gonna seek your wise counsel in those areas, okay? But this person may not be someone that you seek wise counsel from in every area. 'cause no one's wise in every area. Uh, I'll give you an example. I've got a lot of bible teacher, theologian, scholar friends that I really, really love and I appreciate and I praise God for. Um, but many of them have worked in an academic environment and

they've never led a company or had to raise money or hire or fire anyone. So they'll have great wisdom in the Bible, but they don't have a lot of management experience. I know other people that have a lot of management experience and they've run companies and hired and fired and raised money and bought property and, and amassed assets, but they've not spent a lot of time in their Bible. So it's just figuring out in what categories are people wise and gleaned wisdom in those categories without expecting them to make a deposit in every category of our life. So where does wisdom come from? It comes from scripture, right? So, uh, you know, it says that Jesus grew in wisdom, stature in favor with men. And God as a young man, wisdom comes from God's word. That's what the Bible says. How can a young man keep his way pure? The Bible says by your word. And so it comes from the scriptures, it comes from prayer, talking to the Lord, dialoguing with the Lord, listening to the Lord, working things out in relationship with the Lord. It also comes through experience. If you read the book of Proverbs, there's this father who keeps teaching his son. Uh, hey, see that guy's house over there? Yeah, dad, it looks all crooked and janky. Yeah, that guy doesn't do home maintenance. Make sure you do home maintenance. 'cause if you don't repair your roof, the roof starts to leak. And then you've got all kinds of problems in your house, and then you're ruining all of your possessions and you better do your maintenance on your roof. So what the dad is doing, he's sharing from experience in Proverbs five. He's like, okay, you see that guy over there? So yeah, what's wrong with that guy? Well, that guy's got a venereal disease. This, this is Proverbs five, by the way. Um, not just making this up. Uh, Proverbs five, that guy over there, he is not doing so good. Dad, why is he not doing good? Well, he has, he has a venereal disease. Well, how did he get a venereal disease dad? Well, he slept with a lot of strange women. Well, dad, what happens when you sleep? Well, look at that guy son. That's what happens when you sleep with strange women. You get a venereal disease. 'cause if you look at a boy and say, do you wanna sleep with a strange woman? He'll say yes or no. What will he say? Yes. Do you want a veal venereal disease? Uh, no. Okay. But those two go together. And wisdom knows that. This is why one of my first pastors, a really great godly guy when he was a teenager, and he was very excited about girls. His dad took him to the VD ward at a hospital and showed him all the guys with ral diseases that cured it, okay? That cured it big time. All of a sudden he was getting ready to go out and sleep with a bunch of girls. And he looked at the venereal diseases and the guise at the hospital and decided the delayed gratification is probably a better course of action. So we learn wisdom through experience. And this can be one of two things. Your own experience or someone else's experience, your own experience is, I found that landmine by driving over it. Okay? Um, oh boy, I, I went into that business deal, boom, didn't work. Okay, not gonna do that again. Um, this is where we make mistakes. We sin, we don't listen, we miscalculate, something happens. We learn the hard way. The other way to learn is through someone else's experience. That's what the dad in Proverbs is often doing. Look at that guy. Look at that guy. Do you see that? Kid's son? Yeah, daddy's really skinny and looks really sad. Why? He's hungry. Oh, that's too bad, dad. Why does he, why is he hungry? 'cause he won't work. See what happens when you don't work, son, you don't eat. So the laborer's appetite drives him on. Proverbs says, so sometimes you can learn through your own experience. Sometimes you learn through the experience of others. A friend of mine calls this, letting other people pay your dumb tax, right? In life there's a dumb tax, right? And somebody's gotta pay it. Come on. So you pay the dumb pack tax or they pay the dumb tax. And, and, and wisdom is either you pay it. And the best way is if you can find somebody who's already paid it, you let them pick up the tab for you and say, okay, I I, let me tell you what I did wrong, and I love you. And please be humble. And let me tell you through my experience, this is not a good course of action. And ultimately it comes through, uh, wise counsel. These are people that know more than us in an area where we want to grow in wisdom, where we want to grow in wisdom. And it is incredible that we live in a world that has a lot of opinions, a lot of conjecture, a lot of speculation, and very little wisdom, right? And you can graduate from high school, you can graduate from college, not know how to make a budget, not know how to buy a house, not know how to date or marry, not know how to raise a kid, not know how to read the Bible. I mean, you can, you can actually graduate with a degree and be lacking a tremendous amount of wisdom while amassing a tremendous amount of knowledge. And wise counsel is where we determine, I've watched your life, your outcome, your results. I see some areas where you're wise and I want to invite you to make a deposit in my life. I'll be a bucket

with the bottom. If you'll pour it into me, I will do it. Okay? And this is where you don't need to be a genius. You just need to be humble and teachable. Uh, I think I've shared with you this story, but my first pastor, for example, he, he was a very godly man that I hold in just the highest regard. And I'll never forget I had a, a bible in one hand. I was a brand new Christian, and I had a systematic theology in the other. And I walked up to him and I said, Hey, is this a good book? And I showed him the systematic theology and he pointed at my Bible and he said, well, have you read this whole book? I said, the whole Bible. He said, yeah. I was like, the whole, the whole thing, it's, you know, it's got goats in there. I dunno if I need to read the whole thing. You know, it's got stuff in there. And he said, uh, he said, you should not read the theology book until you've read the whole Bible. He literally took the systematic theology book outta my hand. I said, what are you doing? He said, I'm taking it. I said, well, when do I get it back? He said, after you've read the whole Bible, come see me. I was like, okay. I didn't know I'm a brand new Christian. I I didn't know you could, I didn't know you could read the whole Bible. I didn't know you should read the whole Bible. So, and he didn't tell me how quickly to read the Bible. So I went home, I started reading it. I literally knocked out the whole Bible in like weeks. I mean, call, I didn't know. I'm like, okay, I guess you gotta read the whole Bible. So I, I just plow through maybe weeks or a couple months, I read the whole Bible and I come back to my pastor. I was like, I did it. He's like, you did what? I said, I read the whole Bible. Do I get my other book back? He's like, no. He said, now pick one book in the Bible and read it and study it and memorize it and meditate on it till you feel like it's in your heart and you can talk about it from your heart. He said, start with a short book 'cause you're not ready for one of the big ones. I was like, okay, what do I do after that? He said, keep doing that until you die. So that's what I've been doing. That's what I've been doing since like 1990. And you know what, that was really good advice that one bit of wise counsel benefits my whole life. So I picked First John as my first book, and then I picked other books of the Bible and, and then I started teaching books of the Bible. And then I get to preach books of the Bible. And by God's grace I've been able to preach a couple dozen books of the Bible. And right now I'm in a brand new book of the Bible and I'm having the time of my life and I love it. And that was a wise man who was very wise with the word of God. And he gave me very, very wise counsel that changed the trajectory of my whole life. I just, I'll be forever grateful for him. And so his wise counsel was just one of the great gifts of my life. So let me, uh, let me do one other thing as well. Lemme talk about something I wanna call the mentor myth. I wanna be careful. But sometimes what people will do, especially those of you who are younger, you walk into a church and you'll say, I want a mentor. No, you don't. Okay, let me, let me, because there's not one human being that can teach you everything that you need to know. What you need is wise counsel, not just a mentor. Okay? I'll, I'll give you an example. Proverbs 15:22, without counsel, plans fail, but with how many advisors? They succeed. Many. So this is not asking everybody, but this is saying, I'm not gonna have one person who fixes my life. Okay? Um, any of you, uh, any of you baseball fans? I'm a big time baseball fan. It's spring training time. I got the top off the Jeep. Uh, I'm like, I'm very happy. I feel like I'm interning for heaven. I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm really getting used to sitting out in the sun and watching baseball. I love it. In baseball, one of the things that they have is a bullpen. And a bullpen is a whole bunch of specialist. There's a long reliever, short reliever, closer, there's a lefty, there's a righty. There's someone who throws hard. There's someone that throws off speed. Um, there are different pitchers and the coach will bring them on the field for strategic moments in the game. Okay? What the coach doesn't say is, you're my pitcher. No, you're my bullpen. Your life needs a bullpen financial specialist, bible specialist, marital specialist. If you're parent parenting specialist, if you're in a business, maybe somebody in your field of business who's wise and good at what they do, and it's looking at your life saying, I don't expect one person to do all this. So I, I had a problem with a Jeep, and so I just took it into the mechanic, but I also have a doctor and I don't expect them to be the same person. I don't say, well, you're my person to fix things. And I, you know, I, I need hip surgery and my oil change. I, I, I let two different guys do that. Amen. And you should too. I just throw it out. There's a recommendation. What I want is I want people who specialize in their area, and then I want to receive from them without expecting them to meet all of the things that I need to learn. Does that make sense? When you pick one mentor, what you're saying is, you need to help me with my life. So when I need financial advice, I go to you. When I need theological advice, I go to you. When I

need health advice, I go to you. When I need relational advice, I go to you. When I need business advice, I go to you. And here's what I'm saying. Unless that person's name is Jesus, they're not able to do all of that for you. And this leads to one of two things. Either great disappointment, my mentor failed me, or you become a person who's wise in some areas and foolish in others because you've not surrounded yourself with a, a multitude of wise counselors. Does that make sense? Okay. Um, Proverbs 24, 5 and six, A wise man of full is full of strength. And a man of knowledge enhances his might for by wise guidance, you can wage your war. And in how many counselors there is victory and abundance. So I'll give you an example. Before we planted the Trinity Church, um, I I, I'd learned some things through my paying of my own dumb tax. I'll just tell you that, uh, I found landmines by driving over them, which is not the ideal way to learn something, but you do remember it. Um, and so what I did is I decided, okay, I wanna figure out how to do governance. So someone's become a friend who's one of the leading church law attorneys in the country. And Grace and I flew down and spent time with 'em and teach us, show us, help us understand how to architect a healthy church. Thank you. He's a specialist in law, got on another plane, flew out to meet with this other pastor at a large church who I think does some of the best assimilation, getting people connected to the church of any church I've ever seen. Very godly, wonderful people. I sat down with him for a couple of days, watched his staff, went to the classes, went to the board meetings, got behind the scenes. Could you teach me how you do that? And he did. It was super, I really appreciate it. Um, wanted to work on my relationship with my wife, grace, and make sure that our friendship was solid and good before this next season of our life. So we met with a Christian counselor who was certified and also a pastor in love of the scriptures. And that was our wise counsel for our emotional marital relationship. Um, had that person also get to know our kids and our family so that they could tell us how our family's doing and give us any advice or wise counsel with a big transition to another state. When we landed here in the valley, I started meeting with pastors all over the valley. Tell me about the valley. Tell me about the needs. Tell me about the culture. I've not lived here. You have, you know a lot more than me. You're an expert here. And, and I just showed up. So I got a lot to learn and spent, uh, the better part of, I don't know, a year or more, just seeking out people who were specialists and wise counselors in various areas. And, uh, went and flew out and met with another pastor. I think they do life groups really, really well. And so how do you do that? Who does that on your staff? Can I see how that works? Can I ask questions? Can you guys teach us so we could learn how to do that? And I'll tell you what, it was one of the most enriching seasons of my whole life because all of these really wonderful people that God has given tremendous wisdom to, were willing to put a little deposit in my bucket. And even though I had been doing ministry for a long time, there were some things, frankly I didn't know. There were some things that I thought I knew that I was wrong about. And they were kind enough to be very, very helpful. And, and what he's talking about here is an abundance of counselors. Again, the foolish person asks everybody, we're not talking about everybody. We're talking about sort of a bullpen saying, okay, I'm gonna talk to them and talk to them and talk to them. Or before I open a company, I'm gonna go meet with this person who's really good on finances and I'm gonna go meet with this person who's been through life transition and I'm gonna go meet with those people who, you know, they launched a company together and how did they do that with their spouse and with their kids to keep their family first. And I'm gonna put together a, a game plan. I'm gonna put together a war plan. I'm gonna put together with wise counsel, the next course of action. Does that make sense? Here's the good news. These people are in your life. These people are around you and you just need to have this category of wise counsel and just be looking, okay? And as you meet them and see them, then you observe them and you see whether or not they in fact prove to be wise. And if so, then they become a potential candidate to be one of your advisors, to be one of your counselors. Someone that you would go to or talk to or ask questions of. Um, and start thinking about the categories. Financial, do I need somebody who's wise financially? Maybe you're wise, financially, physically. Do you know how to stay in shape and be healthy? Or do you need to find somebody who's wise relationally? Do you have good relationships or are you struggling with that and need to talk to somebody who's wise parentally? How are things going with your kids? And is there anybody that you could glean from and learn from that could help you do better with your kids? How about your walk with God? Are you reading your Bible, praying, growing? Or are you kind of in a

stalemate season of stuck? Who could you talk to that could help you figure out how to do this? And, and let me say this, there's the want to, and there's the how to the want to precedes the how to. If you don't want to do things, it doesn't matter if somebody tells you how to do them, because you're not going to do them because you don't want to do them. One of the ways that wise people work, they don't go around telling people what to do or how to do things. They wait for people to ask them. Because what the asking indicates is, you want to, you want to, I'd say I'm not, I'm not claiming to be wise. I would never claim that. But somebody came up to me recently, they said, I, they had their Bible and they said, I'm a brand new Christian. I I want to read the Bible. Where do I start? Because they have the want to. I know it's gonna be a good investment to tell them the how to. You know what I'm saying? I said, well start at Luke and just read to the right. Start there when you do that, grab me on a Sunday and we'll check in and go from there. Okay? They, they came back, bought a brand new Bible. I started Pastor Markum. Great. The want to precedes the how to, here's the difference. A wise person wants to, a foolish person does not want to, how many of you, there's somebody you know, somebody you love, somebody you care for and they keep making foolish decisions and you keep telling 'em the how to do this. Don't do that, do this, don't do that. And they don't, you know why? They don't, they don't want to. They don't want to. So the want to has to proceed the how to. And a wise person looks and they, they, they, they determine, before I tell you how to do it, I wanna know that you want to do it. 'cause I'm not gonna waste my time. I'm not gonna waste my energy pouring my experience into a bucket with no bottom or telling it and then having a fool just argue with me. So lemme close with this. How to benefit from wise counsel. Proverbs 12:15, the way of a fool is right in his own eyes. Seems good to me. Looks good to me. Makes sense to me. They don't ask anybody, they don't consult anybody, right? But a wise man listens to what advice. It doesn't say that they obey it, right? They listen, they consider it, they determine, you know, that's a good idea. Not so sure about that. Lemme give you some very, very, very, very, very, very practical things. How do you pick wise counsel? And lemme say this too. First of all, in a humble way, I would ask you to evaluate your own life and to, and to ask the Lord is there any area in my life that maybe I could be wise counsel to somebody else? And then be open to being that? And some of you would say, I have messed up a lot of things in my life and I've made a lot of mistakes. And you could be wise counsel. Amen. You could say, you know what, lemme tell you I did some things wrong and it didn't go well. And I wanna share that with you. 'cause I wanna spare the pain. And I've learned through my foolishness and God has brought me to more wisdom. You don't have to be the person who got it all right? You don't need to be the person who did it all right? To be the person who gives wise counsel, you just need to be humble. You just need to be humble. Um, I, I asked a guy, um, recently, he's, uh, gone through a very, very painful divorce. And uh, he said, uh, he said, you know what? I stopped praying for my wife and I stopped praying with my wife and I could look back and realize that's when everything started to fall apart. He said, so Pastor Mark, if you're dealing with any couples that are struggling, he said, I, I'd like you to tell them that our marriage fell apart. 'cause I stopped praying with my wife and praying for my wife and, and I wish, I wish that I would've been praying with my wife. I wish that I would've been praying for my wife. And now that I'm talking to people who are married, I'm just asking them to pray for their spouse. And with their spouse. He's wise counsel, not 'cause he got it all right? But he got it wrong and he was humble and he learned from it and he wants to help. So I'd ask you, who could you be wise counsel for? And again, sometimes the wise person is the person who did it all right? And sometimes the person who's wise is the person who did it wrong, but learn from it and wants to help you learn. Um, so who could you be wise counsel to? The other thing is, who could be wise counsel to you? Who do you think? And you go, boy, yeah, they, they know some stuff. I don't know. They've done some stuff I've not done. I really would like to learn from them. Okay, so here's what I want you to do. I wanna make it real practical. Um, and, and let me say that here at the church, what has just been a joy to my heart is this language is starting to get needed into the DNA of the church. So I'm hearing this from people all the time. I'm looking for some wise counsel. What that is is not just asking your friends or whoever happens to be in front of you or you know, just seeking the opinions of others, but people are asking, I am looking for some wise counsel. And if, if you're ready to receive wise counsel, then here are some things I would tell you to do. Number one, prayerfully and carefully choose who you're gonna invite into that position of wise counsel, prayerfully

and carefully choose who you're gonna invite into that position of wise counsel. Um, number two, uh, formally schedule a time with them at their convenience. Approach them and say, I, I am looking for some wise counsel and you know, some things that I don't. Can you repeat that? Uh, you know, some things that I don't. And if you would be willing to teach me, I would like to learn some things from you. I'm not looking to meet every week, right? I just wanna meet once and I won't talk a lot and I'll take notes and I want you to help me in this area if you would be willing to do that. Can I schedule a time that is convenient for you? Very respectful. If they say yes, congratulations. Alright, then before you meet with them, you pray and journal out. Here are the things that I wanna learn from them. These are the questions I'd want to ask. These are the areas that don't even know what the question to ask is. I'm just stuck here and I don't even know why I'm stuck or how to get unstuck. And so I I I'm, I'm gonna put these down and I'm gonna pray about what I talk to them about. Then before you meet with them, you prioritize those things. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 'cause you're probably not gonna get through your whole list in your meeting with them. So you prioritize what's most important. And then make sure you show up early for the meeting. Be respectful. Don't show up late. Maybe it's their office, maybe it's a coffee shop, whatever the case may be. And then thank them briefly, briefly, briefly share your story. Here's the context, okay? Here are the things I'd like to learn from you. I'm just gonna shut up now and take notes and bring a pen and take notes and turn your phone off and don't be checking your email. Pay attention. You wanna be respectful. I'll never forget it, I was with a group of young pastors many years ago back when I was young and we got to go get a few hours with a guy named JI Packer, right? Like if you know, if if you, if you read anything, it's been endorsed by JI Packer. He, he's endorsed every Christian book who's ever been written. And he is like one of the godfathers of evangelicalism, one of the towering theological biblical giants of a generation. And I was like, I can't believe we get the, I mean I'm, I am geeking out. I'm a theological nerd and, and we're gonna go have, you know, hours to ask GI Packer any questions we want. This one dude shows up and talked for an hour. He was like a youth pastor. He's like, yeah, we're doing skits and games and Chubby Bunny and I got a guy who plays guitar and we got a smoke machine and my wife's, you know, funny and I'm just like, can we stab this guy in the liver and shut him up? Like this guy, we have two hours with Ji Packer and we're gonna spend an hour and a half hearing about your youth ministry to 17 children who we all love, but we can do that another time. Amen. I was so, we were all so frustrated. It got to the point where at first we're like, ha, yeah, moving right along. He's like, no. One other thing he kept telling us and I preached this and I did this and I did that. And we went on this retreat like he's just recreating his whole life for J Packer. And then finally it kind of got to the point where we're literally running out of time and we haven't asked one question of J Packer. And this one guy, he made me look thin. He was a thick guy with no neck, built like a snowman. And he pounded the table. He said, if you don't shut up, I'm gonna make you shut up. And we're all like, yay, let's collect an offering now. 'cause that's a point we can also agree to. My point was, this guy did not acknowledge what a tremendous opportunity this was and he was gonna fill it with his own words rather than listening. Okay, that's a foolish person. A wise person shows up to listen. And I know I've done that many times and it just happened to be the youth pastor's turn. Listen a lot. Take notes and then ask them, is there anything else you would give me to read, to listen to, to learn a class to take? Where do you learn? What do you, where do you get your information? And they may tell you, I read these articles, I subscribe to these blogs, I go to these websites, I read these sections of scripture. This is what, okay, great, thank you so much. I'm gonna write that down and I'm gonna go get those and I'm gonna consider those. And if you're sort of getting wisdom from a well, I want to get my bucket in that. Well, I wanna draw that same wisdom. You ask 'em clarifying questions about how you can learn more at the end of the meeting. Thank them. Honor their time if it's appropriate. And they'll allow you, pray for them, thanking them. And then after you've dismissed, send them some sort of thank you email card letter, text and act. Do some things that they have instructed you to do and then send them a follow up. Maybe it's weeks or months later. Thank you. I bought that book and read it. It was very helpful. Thank you. I met with that financial planner and they were really helpful. Thank you. I needed to get my estate in order and that attorney you recommended to me was absolutely helpful. I feel like I've got my estate in order. Um, you told me about that Bible reading plan. I've been doing it. I really love it. Thank you. I had all those theological questions and you

referred me to, to that resource. Thank you. That was really, really helpful. And let them know that you acted. 'cause here's what a wise person won't do. They won't meet with you again until you've done something. Okay? A wise person will say, I will meet with you and I'll tell you the next step and if you'll take it, I'll meet with you again. And if you take that step, I'll meet with you again. A wise person knows I'm not going to waste my time and energy on a fool. I'll only invest my energy and someone is wise. And so what a wise person will do, they'll give you some information and then they'll wait to see if you're thankful and act on it. And if you do, they might meet with you again. And what could actually happen? This doesn't happen all the time. You don't go in with these expectations. Sometimes it actually leads to a relationship and sometimes these people are a source of great life for the rest of your life and you don't go into it without expectation or anticipation. But sometimes that's just like a bonus gift that God gives. Okay? So here's what I would have you to think about. What are the areas in your life right now that you really could benefit from some wise counsel? And then be thinking and praying about who might those those people be and how might I engage them to receive wise counsel from them? The second thing is look at your own life and ask, is there any way that I could be a source of wise counsel to others? And I wanna be humble about this, not haie, but as opportunities come, maybe I could be of benefit and blessing to them as well. I'll close with one story today. It was up in my office. It was on this, uh, young woman came in, sat down with her husband, they're new to the church, very kind, sweet couple. And she's pregnant with her third kid and she's busy and she's tired. And I said, well, you know, what can I do for you? She's like, we're brand new to the church. She said, I just wish I could meet a couple of older moms who went through these years and could help me figure out how to just live when I'm so exhausted. I said, okay, well let's pray for that. And we prayed. So then a couple hours later, another couple comes in, older husband and wife, empty nester's, grandparent age at this point. And the woman is sitting in the exact same chair as the younger woman. And I said, what can I pray for you about? She said, I just love young women. I love young mothers. They're exhausted all the time. They don't know how to put their life together. And I just love helping them and encouraging them and and, and helping them get through that difficult season. I was like, you gotta be kidding me. She was sitting in this chair in the previous session and I'm gonna connect the two of them. And I think in God's grace, she'll be a great gift to that young woman. And who knows, maybe even a relationship will develop. But I'm saying that God is providentially, sovereignly, always working these things out. And sometimes if we don't have this category wise, counsel wise, people are passing us by and we're not even paying attention. We're not looking for them and then praying about them and then pursuing them. Does that make sense? Amen. And the goal is for all of us to grow in wisdom, stature in favor with men in God. That's what Jesus did. Let me pray for you. Father, thank you for the fact that you are a wise God. You made the world. You made us. You know how we're supposed to live. You know how the world is supposed to work, Lord God, you've set everything up to operate according to your instructions and your design and your decrees. And Lord, when we work against that, we're being very foolish and we hurt ourselves. When we're working in your flow of wisdom, then we really benefit ourselves and we benefit others. I pray for us, Lord, we all have areas of our life where we're a bit foolish and help us to seek wise counsel and to heeded wise counsel and to obey wise counsel. And Lord God, we all have areas of our life, some through our own wisdom, some through our own pain and folly and failure, and I certainly have of that lot of that, Lord, a lot of what I've learned, I've learned the hard way through making mistakes and being bullheaded and doing it my way, which was the wrong way. And Lord, for those of us that have got those sort of painful experiences, I pray that we could share 'em with others in a loving and humble way to help them and be a source of wise counsel by even pointing out our own falling. And so, God, I just pray for each of us that, uh, you would allow us to grow in wisdom as the Lord Jesus did, and to make the pursuit of wisdom, a lifelong goal and Ambition to where practically our lives are in sync and in rhythm, and in union with what you intend for us. Because you are a good God, and the life you intend for us is one of joy and is one of fruitfulness, and wisdom is the path to those things. So we ask for it through the Holy Spirit, and we ask for it in the strong name of Jesus. Amen.