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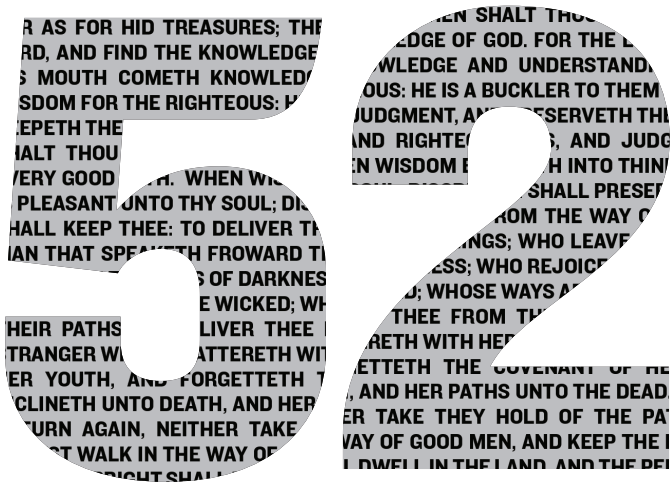
WISDOM



A FIFTEEN-MINUTE DAILY GUIDE
THROUGH PROVERBS

MARK E. MOORE

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To Barbara

.....
EIN PATHS: TO BELIEVE THEE FROM THE STRANGE WOMAN, EVEN FROM
RANGER WHICH FLATTERETH WITH HER WORDS: WHICH FORSAKETH THE GUI

An excellent wife who can find? She is far more
precious than jewels.

—PROVERBS 31:10

Introduction

Before we dig into the wisdom of Proverbs, I want to give you a thirty-thousand-foot view of the series and a peek behind the veil of my heart. *Wisdom 52* is the third in a series of yearlong studies. *Core 52* was the first, synthesizing the key passages in **the Word of God**. The second was *Quest 52*, tracing the contours of **the life of Jesus**.

Wisdom 52 will lead you through the Proverbs of Solomon in one year. It's the most practical guide in the series and will equip you to live out your faith in everyday life. Each is designed as a yearlong curriculum for small groups or entire churches, as well as a personal study. I've provided additional online material for each book at markmoore.org/books to augment the experience, most notably YouTube videos for each chapter, making the study more accessible for groups and more personal from me as the author.

Paradoxically, these three books were written in reverse order of my relationship with them. *Core 52* was the last to be inspired and the first to be completed. For the past twelve years, I've served as the teaching pastor at Christ's Church of the Valley in Arizona. It's the kind of church that reaches many people new to church. Thousands are giving their lives to Jesus but don't know where to begin with the Bible. *Core 52* was my attempt to make the Bible accessible to new believers by making a big book a bit more manageable and an old book a bit more relatable.

Quest 52 goes back to my days as a professor at Ozark Christian College. I wrote a textbook for my classes called *The Chronological Life of Christ*, which examines the life of Jesus in detail—every verse of all four Gospels in chronological order. It's a textbook designed for pastors and teachers but

may be less helpful for the average reader. *Quest 52* focuses more on application than scholarly investigation.

Wisdom 52 is the last to be written but the earliest idea of the three. Here's the backstory: As a brash young man, I used my words for self-promotion (not a good look or an easy thing to admit). The Holy Spirit convicted me of this sin. I was using his gift of words as a weapon against those around me. To manage my mouth, I took to Proverbs, reading every proverb pertaining to the tongue and categorizing them. It's what you see in the appendix of this book under the category "Words." It was powerful, even transformational, for me. The wisdom of Proverbs gave the Holy Spirit the ammunition he needed to change how I used my words. Though I'm far from perfect, by God's grace I'm even further from who I used to be.

In the same way God used Proverbs to transform my words years ago, I realized, it had potential to transform other areas of my life. I knew the broad contours of the book—dealing with relationships, character, habits, behaviors, and money. I dreamed of one day cataloging every single proverb to make a usable template for character formation. Today is that day. The appendix, "Proverbs Arranged by Category," is the result of a two-year deep dive into Solomon's wisdom. When I shared this idea with my literary agent, Don Gates, he asked, "How many subcategories do you have?" I had never counted them. Imagine my delighted surprise when I counted fifty-four (two have since been combined). This was the next "52" book, pretty much by accident . . . or God's design. The series as a whole represents the Word of God (*Core 52*), the life of Jesus (*Quest 52*), and the life coaching of the Spirit (*Wisdom 52*).

Structure of *Wisdom 52*

Wisdom 52 is more of a life-coaching guide than a traditional devotional. Through our weekly path to transformation, its lessons are meant to be lived more than learned:

1. **Wisdom Gateway:** Opening facts, stories, and statistics.
2. **Biblical Foundations:** Core theological insights, starting with Proverbs but then radiating out through both the Old and the New Testaments.
3. **Wisdom in Action:** Practical next steps to cultivate each characteristic of wisdom in your life.
4. **This Week:** Four days of follow-up, including a passage to memorize, a biblical biography to illustrate each attribute, some New Testament passages to meditate on, and then some discussion questions for a discipleship group as well as a question for your dinner table and another for the watercooler at work or the gym.

My goal is not information but transformation. If you desire to live the good life—the life led by the Spirit of Wisdom—this book is your easiest access to implement the ancient principles of wisdom in a modern world of commotion. May this book and this series empower you to live by the Spirit for the fame of Jesus in honor of the Father.

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Proverbs Arranged by Category

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KEEP THE
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BEHOLD
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Discernment

WISDOM
IS BETTER
THAN
GOLD
AND
SILVER
BUT
WISDOM
WILL
PRESERVE
YOUR
LIFE

Wisdom

How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding
is to be chosen rather than silver.

—PROVERBS 16:16

There is a common concept in information technology circles called the knowledge half-life. Though it has never been proven scientifically, it is often asserted that the world knowledge doubled approximately every one hundred years up to 1900. Advances in technology and science accelerated it, so by the end of World War II, human knowledge may have doubled every twenty-five years.¹ By the 1980s, that time could have been halved, doubling every twelve to thirteen years. Some experts estimated that by 2020 human knowledge would double every twelve hours! Pause to consider this staggering possibility that between dinner and breakfast, the world's database could have doubled. And with AI, our information overload could double between cups of coffee.

Despite this dizzying increase in knowledge, are we any wiser? It feels like the more we know, the less well we live. Google News leaves us shaking our heads, uttering words like “Unbelievable,” “Shameful,” or, perhaps less generously, “Idiots.” *There seems to be an inverse ratio between knowledge and wisdom.* The more information we have, the more foolish we seem to become.

Knowledge Isn't Enough

Solomon's exhortation is more relevant today than ever: "The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight" (Proverbs 4:7). The value of wisdom has always been high: "How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver" (16:16). We could upgrade Solomon's gold and silver to plutonium since wisdom is so rare these days.

Biblical wisdom is not mere knowledge but the ability to live skillfully. Biblically, a warrior's skill with the sword, a carpenter's skill with a saw, and a chef's ability to combine ingredients thoughtfully are all considered wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge practically and skillfully applied to improve life for yourself and others.

Moses captured this idea in Deuteronomy 4:6: "Keep [God's laws] and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples." Jesus suggested the same thing in Matthew 11:19: "Wisdom is justified by her deeds." The apostle Paul echoed their sentiment: "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time" (Colossians 4:5).

The purpose of this book is to provide not theoretical truth but practical coaching. I plead with you as Solomon pleaded with his son: "Get wisdom." Chase her, embrace her, and treasure her. Only wisdom employed will be wisdom enjoyed. The life you want is on the other side of obedience to God's truth.

The Failure of Wisdom

Imagine inheriting this great kingdom—and losing it in a single decision. As the crown settled on his brow, Rehoboam inherited the nation's most robust economy and expansive borders. His father, Solomon, had gained international acclaim and accumulated wealth that was surpassed only by the number of his wives—seven hundred in total, along with an inexplicable addition

of three hundred concubines (1 Kings 11:3). Excessive, to say the least.

When Solomon passed, Rehoboam took his mantle of leadership. One would think he would have been well equipped. His grandfather, David, was the shepherd-king who established the dynasty. Rehoboam's father, Solomon, had written an entire book of wisdom—yes, to Rehoboam. Twenty-two times, the book of Proverbs uses the words “my son.”² Rehoboam had a manual of wisdom in his hands, wind at his back, and a legacy under his feet.

Nonetheless, his first act as king was to play the fool. The story is told in 1 Kings 12. A crowd flocked to his coronation, led by a rebel named Jeroboam. Their request was simple: “Lighten our tax burden.” The magnificence of Solomon's kingdom had come at a heavy price. They begged for relief. At the outset of his rule, Rehoboam had a choice: Show the people kindness, which could be interpreted as weakness, or show them strength, which could be interpreted as cruelty. Two sets of advisers weighed in. The young bucks advised him to show strength: “You say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs’” (verse 10). Translation: Ancient Near Eastern middle finger. The elders' advice was the opposite—show humility: “If you will be a servant to this people today and serve them . . . then they will be your servants forever” (verse 7).

The elders' counsel was spurned. Rehoboam chose to flex. As a result, the ten northern tribes made Jeroboam, the opposition leader, their king, and the twelve tribes were torn apart, never to be restored. This raises the question, How could the son of the wisest man in the world be so foolish?

In the book of Proverbs, wisdom is *always* praised. In Ecclesiastes, however, Solomon portrayed wisdom mostly as a burden. In chapter 1, he lamented,

I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me, and my heart has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my heart to know wisdom and to know

madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind.

For in much wisdom is much vexation,
and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. (verses 16–18)

Why such a different view of wisdom? Solomon gave us a clue in chapter 2: “I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity” (verses 18–19).

Solomon knew the immense weight and complexity of leadership that awaited Rehoboam, and it vexed him. Additionally, when you trace the contours of Ecclesiastes, you see that Solomon applied his wisdom to his political career, not to his personal life. The wisdom Solomon sought from God was specifically to lead the nation: “Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?” (1 Kings 3:9).

Solomon led the nation well, but he failed to lead his family. “For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father” (1 Kings 11:4). That’s a problem. Solomon’s wives led him astray, and Rehoboam grew up with a front-row seat. Here’s an unalterable rule for wisdom: Your children won’t do as you say; they will do as you do.

Why did Solomon fail as a father? While this isn’t an excuse, it is an explanation—David failed Solomon as a father. Though Solomon was a legitimate son, his mother’s marriage wasn’t. Solomon’s family of origin taught him to mistreat women. He took his father’s sexual exploits to an exponential level. And it wasn’t just Solomon. His older brother Absalom attempted a military coup against David. David *loved* Absalom. Everyone knew it, except Absalom.

Why was David unable to express his love to Absalom? Well, that goes

back to Jesse, David's dad. When God sent Samuel to Jesse's home to anoint the new king, Jesse put seven sons before him (1 Samuel 16:1–13). None of them got the nod from God. Samuel had to ask, "Do you have another son?"

"Yes," Jesse demurred, "but he's out in the field watching the sheep."

What? How could he overlook one of his sons? This lineage is a warning. Wisdom is passed from father to son through actions, not words. So, for the sake of generations to come, the call of this chapter is simple: Get wisdom by living wisely, starting in your home.

Wisdom in Action

Where do we start to acquire wisdom? "5 "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5). Plead with God to give you wisdom through this yearlong journey.

Perhaps your parents, regardless of your age, are an important source of wisdom in your life, or maybe God has given you other parental figures to fill that role. Pull out your phone, start a text to a parent or parental figure, and insert this into the text box: "I'm reading a book about wisdom this year. Can I ask your advice over the next twelve months about important life questions?" Press Send.

...LINETH UNTO DEATH, AND HER PATHS UNTO THE DEAD. NONE THAT GO UNTO
 ...TURN AGAIN, NEITHER TAKE THEY HOLD OF THE PATHS OF LIFE. THAT
 ...BEST WALK IN THE WAY OF GOOD MEN, AND KEEP THE PATHS OF THE RIGHT

This Week

- Day 1:** Read this essay.
- Day 2:** Memorize Proverbs 16:16.
- Day 3:** Read the biography of Solomon (1 Kings 3) and find one thing to apply or avoid.
- Day 4:** Meditate on Luke 21:15; Colossians 4:5; James 1:5.
- Day 5:** Discuss.

Group Discussion

1. Who is the wisest person you know? What makes them wise?
2. What consequences, professionally and personally, have you seen when people lack wisdom?
3. How does the biblical view of wisdom challenge the modern understanding of success?
4. In light of Solomon's failure with Rehoboam, share the wisdom you gained from your family of origin and any additions or changes you would like to make in your own home now.

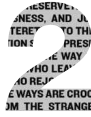
Table Talk (in your home)

What are some ways we could pursue wisdom in our home?

Watercooler (at work or the gym)

Who is the wisest person you know?

...MOUTH COMETH KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING. HE LAYETH UP WIS-
 ...DOM FOR THE RIGHTEOUS: HE IS A BUCKLER TO THEM THAT WALK UPRIGHT.
 ...PETH THE PATHS OF JUDGMENT, AND PRESERVETH THE WAY OF HIS SAINTS



Fear of the Lord

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

—PROVERBS 1:7

Proverbs are short, pithy truths, similar in length to posts on social media. Social influencers know the ideal post is between forty and one hundred and twenty words (depending on the platform). Platforms like Instagram and Snapchat recognize that people prefer pictures, so they are primarily image-based. That’s why social media has trended shorter and more visual. As a result, our contemporary source of “wisdom” manipulates our emotions to change our thinking rather than changing our minds to manage our emotions. But it gets worse.

“Friends” or “followers” are more like anonymous voyeurs, and their “likes” may give you a dopamine hit, but they offer no real relationships. Even more nefarious, online algorithms prioritize content that is more likely to generate engagement—sensational and salacious over true and good. These algorithms exclude opposing opinions, creating an echo chamber of ideas. As a result, social media does for you what Rehoboam’s advisers did for him—nurture your vices and obfuscate God’s wisdom.

This isn’t a rant against social media. It is, however, a warning that our modern source of wisdom is systemically flawed, making the ancient wis-

dom of the Bible more needed than ever. Isn't it time to chase hard after real wisdom?

The Beginning of Wisdom

The first part of Proverbs 1:7 is repeated nearly verbatim four times (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10; 15:33). This idea sounds contradictory. Why should we fear the God who loves us? After all, “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18). We need not fear for our eternity, because the God who loves us sent his Son to die for us. This does *not* mean, however, that we have no fear of God. He is, after all, awesome in the extreme.

Perhaps it would help if we used a synonym for *fear*, such as *respect*, *revere*, or *honor*. It's the kind of fear a child has for a father, a soldier has for a general, or an athlete has for a coach. Fear and love are often used in tandem in Scripture: “Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love” (Psalm 33:18; see also Deuteronomy 10:12; Psalms 103:11, 17; 118:4; 147:11; Proverbs 16:6). The difference between terror and reverence is our *relationship*. God isn't some distant, capricious, and terrifying force. Rather, he's our Father, protecting, providing for, and often doting on us.

Love Wisdom

The first step toward wisdom is a healthy relationship with God. God made that pursuit easier by personifying wisdom in Proverbs, portraying her as a winsome woman who invites us to learn from her by following in her footsteps. We meet her first in Proverbs 1:20–33. She calls out in the street and implores us in the marketplace (verse 20). In Proverbs 8, she promises power to those who heed her (verses 15–16) as well as wealth and righteousness (verses 18–21). Her call culminates in Proverbs 9:1–6:

Wisdom has built her house;
 she has hewn her seven pillars.
She has slaughtered her beasts; she has mixed her wine;
 she has also set her table.
She has sent out her young women to call
 from the highest places in the town,
“Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!”
 To him who lacks sense she says,
“Come, eat of my bread
 and drink of the wine I have mixed.
Leave your simple ways, and live,
 and walk in the way of insight.”

The pursuit of wisdom began in force for me in my early-twenties. I had gone to Bible college to train for ministry. If you had asked me then if I was wise, I would have surely said yes (with proper Christian humility, of course). I was, after all, studying the Bible. My frontal lobes, however, weren't yet fully formed. I was at a biological disadvantage, and I had no real-life experience. That was all about to change. I got my first full-time ministry job, got married, discovered we were expecting our first baby, and got my first mortgage . . . all within three years. Inexperience quickly outpaced my false confidence.

I'm not saying knowing the Bible didn't help; it did. But it didn't directly address my real-life challenges in ministry, marriage, parenting, or home management. My greatest wisdom came not from books but from watching these men live out their faith—Dick Gibson, Chris DeWalt, and Ken Idleman showed me what wisdom looks like in action. Their wisdom seeped into my soul when I saw how they lived.

In my mid-forties, after discipling young men for twenty years, I woke up one day and realized I had something to say because of those two decades of lived experience. Wisdom takes her time, grinding slowly over decades,

smoothing out the rough edges of our souls. She's not in a classroom; she calls in the street and the marketplace.

The Spirit of Wisdom

Wisdom personified in Proverbs revealed herself later in the person of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, Jesus poured out his Spirit on his disciples. God's people had unprecedented access to wisdom as the Spirit indwelt believers.

Paul unpacked this privilege in 1 Corinthians 2:6–16. The basic idea is this: No one knows what another person is thinking. You can't unless you get inside their head. Quoting from the prophet Isaiah, Paul asked, "Who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" The answer is obvious: No one can instruct God. That's true. However, in a breathtaking claim, Paul concluded, "But we have the mind of Christ" (verse 16). Astonishing!

When we give our lives to Jesus, he embeds the Spirit of Wisdom in us. That was also Jesus's experience. As a child, people noted that he "grew and became strong, filled with wisdom" (Luke 2:40). He "increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (verse 52). And that was just when he was a teenager.

As a man, Jesus wasn't merely wiser than Solomon; he embodied the Spirit's wisdom. He himself said as much: "The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42). Paul was even more explicit: "In [Jesus] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

If Jesus is the embodiment of wisdom, his Spirit in us grants us access to eternal wisdom: "We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory" (1 Corinthians 2:7). We may access it far too infrequently, but it is there for the taking.

Wisdom in Action

In the previous chapter, we saw that getting wisdom begins with a prayer; it did with Solomon and will with you as well (James 1:5). The answer to that prayer will likely have skin and live in your zip code, meaning God has likely answered your prayer already by putting people in your orbit who have the wisdom you need. For me, it was Dick, Chris, and Ken. What about you? Who are the people from whom you could gain wisdom through observation and osmosis? Simply being in their presence would allow you to absorb the wisdom you need for the next season of life.

You likely need at least three wisdom mentors for various areas of your life. One for character growth, one for professional growth, and one for spiritual growth. For most, their parents or a parental figure is their first character mentor. For the professional and spiritual mentors, here's what to look for: "Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom" (James 3:13). Begin now by writing a name in each space below. Lay the list before the Lord and ask him how you could get more face time with these people.

Character: _____

Professional: _____

Spiritual: _____

This Week

- Day 1:** Read this essay.
- Day 2:** Memorize Proverbs 1:7.
- Day 3:** Read the biography of Joseph (Genesis 41, with Psalm 105:16–22) and find one thing to apply.
- Day 4:** Meditate on Romans 11:33; 1 Corinthians 3:19; Colossians 1:28.
- Day 5:** Discuss.

Group Discussion

1. How does social media influence who we listen to?
2. How would you explain to a fourth grader that fear and love aren't antithetical?
3. How have you developed wisdom in various seasons of your life?
4. What practical wisdom is the Spirit trying to grow in you?

Table Talk (in your home)

What habits, decisions, or house rules show our respect, or fear, for God?

Watercooler (at work or the gym)

Who is the person you are most afraid to disappoint?



Mentors

Listen to advice and accept instruction, that you may gain
wisdom in the future.

—PROVERBS 19:20

Science nerd question: Who invented the lightbulb? Thomas Edison, right? He did indeed develop the first high-resistance carbon filament that could burn for hours, making the lightbulb commercially viable. However, it was Joseph Swan, before Edison, who invented an electric light using a carbonized filament in an evacuated glass bulb. Edison stood on his shoulders. Before either of them, Michael Faraday discerned the key principles of electromagnetism, paving the way for Swan and Edison.¹ The history of this simple invention turns out to involve more than one man's legacy.

Nothing that matters depends on a single person. What we have today is the result of a long line of people who have incrementally invested in others. This is true in every arena—science, education, sports, politics, religion, and more. If you want your life to matter, it matters who is in it.

The word *mentor* comes from *The Odyssey*, one of the most famous of all Greek stories. When King Odysseus sailed off to fight in the Trojan War, he left his son, Telemachus, in the care of his friend named Mentor. At key points in the story, Athena, the goddess of war, disguises herself as Mentor, advising the prince. The metaphoric meaning of Mentor, therefore, is the

voice of God, preparing a young person for the battles they will face. That's very close to the biblical perspective in Proverbs. It's through mentors that we meet Lady Wisdom, who guides us through the hazards of life.

Bowling Alone

Robert Putnam's seminal work, *Bowling Alone*, traces the startling decline of civic organizations in America. Membership in local clubs on average plummeted by 58 percent between the 1970s and 1997.² We had already been trending precipitously toward individualism when the first iPhone arrived in 2007. Smartphones put the world in our pockets but blinded us to the important people right in front of us.

This rise of individualism has resulted in crippling isolation in families. In 1970, 12 percent of children were raised in single-parent homes. By 2023, that number had doubled to 25 percent.³ In 2014, for the first time in U.S. history, the majority of adults were single.⁴ These statistics have tragic consequences for health, mental and physical. It has been widely reported by medical experts (including the surgeon general) that prolonged isolation has an equivalent impact on one's health as smoking up to fifteen cigarettes a day.⁵

The harmful effects of this trend toward individualism are compounded by another striking social trend: narcissism. Jean Twenge and Keith Campbell's research traces a startling rise in narcissism. Here is but one data point: In the 1950s only 12 percent of teens agreed with the statement "I am an important person." By the 1980s that rose to nearly 80 percent.⁶ Twelve percent may not seem like much. However, narcissists tend to rise to prominence in business, sports, and entertainment. Therefore, their influence on society multiplies. It's most apparent in (social) media and entertainment. Such influencers are perilous when their allure entices us away from wisdom. The polarization of politics and cancel culture are some of the more obvious manifestations of burgeoning individualism and narcissism. We

desperately need the wisdom of mentors to guide us through the malaise of culture.

Mentors Make the World Go Round

Do you know anyone who foolishly did what was right in their own eyes and suffered the consequences? Many of us could put a name next to Proverbs 12:15 (perhaps the name belongs to the person in the mirror): “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.” Whether you’re trying to decide who to date, which party to go to, what job to take, or which purchase to make, advice is a guardrail and guide. Sadly, most of the world ignores it.

Wise advice is as necessary for groups as it is for individuals: “Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety” (11:14). Wisdom rarely travels alone; God’s design includes guides for our journey.

Divine Appointments: God-Given Guides

Mentors are so critical that God gives them to us at birth. Parents are admonished to mentor their offspring: “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). God even gave explicit instructions to parents on how to do just that (Deuteronomy 6:4–9). As we grow, God puts in our path grandparents, teachers, pastors, and coaches. It’s our choice to seek and heed their advice or not.

Chosen Champions: Strategic Mentoring Relationships

Other mentors we find along the way. Some seek us out (though this is rare), and others we seek out for a specific season or role. In school, we seek out a teacher; in sports, a trainer or coach; in business, a person with experience and success. The Bible is full of examples. Jethro mentored Moses (Exodus 18:13–27), who in turn mentored Joshua (Numbers 27:18–23). Eli men-

tored Samuel (1 Samuel 3), who in turn mentored both Saul and David (1 Samuel 9:15–27; 16:1–13). David then mentored Solomon (1 Kings 2:1–4). Elijah mentored Elisha (1 Kings 19:19–21). Naomi mentored her daughter-in-law Ruth (Ruth 1:16–18). Mordecai mentored his cousin Esther (Esther 2:7–20).

In the New Testament, mentoring is even more overt, starting with Jesus and his twelve apostles (Matthew 4:18–22). Barnabas mentored Saul/Paul (Acts 9:26–30; 11:25–26) and John Mark (Acts 12:25; 13:5, 13). Paul then mentored Timothy (Acts 16:1–5), Titus (Titus 1:4–5), Onesimus (Philemon 10–16), and Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1–4). This couple in turn mentored Apollos (Acts 18:24–28).

While mentoring can seem intimidating, it's quite simple. Paul explained mentoring this way: “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1). Or again: “What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:9).

Wisdom in Action

In the first two chapters, you were encouraged to identify potential mentors God might use to grow wisdom in you. Here's some sage advice on how to engage them:

- Before you ask for a mentor's time, google them. Research their story, their education, occupation, and accomplishments. Then design a question that taps into their accomplishments. It might sound like this: “On page 57 of your book, you said _____. I was wondering how to apply that to _____.” This will indicate to them you are worth investing in because you know what they have to offer and are prepared to put it into practice. Now you're ready to request fifteen minutes of their time.

- Before your meeting, craft three targeted questions. Your preparation honors their wisdom. You might want to run these questions by a parent or other mentor.
- As they answer the questions, take notes (with pen and paper), particularly on how to implement their advice.
- Thank them three times for their time: when you greet them, when you leave them, and with a handwritten note after the meeting.

All of us should also be mentoring three to five individuals in areas where we have some life experience. How do we go about that? Here's some sage advice on being a mentor:

- Pray about who God wants you to pour into and invite them. It might take up to six months, but create a group of three to five, and determine a meeting rhythm (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) with a life span for the group (a year minimum). Each meeting should include discussion and prayer, but some meetings should be designated for eating, play, and work.
- Wise mentors guide the ship but let mentees chart the course with their questions.
- Give assignments, not just advice. Mentoring is *not* counseling. They aren't figuring out life; they are training for life. This requires assignments to put into practice the wisdom you provide.

Three decades of mentoring has proved that this has been one of my most important professional investments and personal joys. We all want to feel needed and valued. Mentoring is one of the most lasting ways to experience that fulfillment.

LINETH UNTO DEATH, AND HER PATHS UNTO THE DEAD. NONE THAT GO UNTURN AGAIN, NEITHER TAKE THEY HOLD OF THE PATHS OF LIFE. THAT FIRST WALK IN THE WAY OF GOOD MEN, AND KEEP THE PATHS OF THE RIGHT

This Week

- Day 1:** Read this essay.
- Day 2:** Memorize Proverbs 19:20.
- Day 3:** Read the biography of Jethro (Exodus 18:13–27) and find one thing to apply.
- Day 4:** Meditate on Philippians 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 2:3–5.
- Day 5:** Discuss.

Group Discussion

1. What life lessons have you learned from your parents that have served you well?
2. Who is or has been an important mentor in your career, spiritual growth, physical health, and relationships?
3. What qualities and qualifications do you look for in a mentor? In what area of your life right now could you use a mentor?
4. Who are three to five people you could or should invest in as a mentor?

Table Talk (in your home)

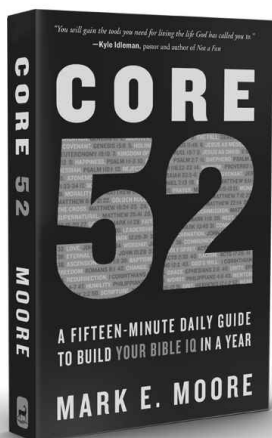
Who is one leader in your life you would like to spend more time with because they make you better?

Watercooler (at work or the gym)

Who has been your most influential mentor at work?

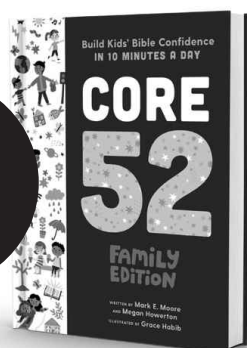
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YOU CAN MASTER THE CORE OF SCRIPTURE IN ONE YEAR

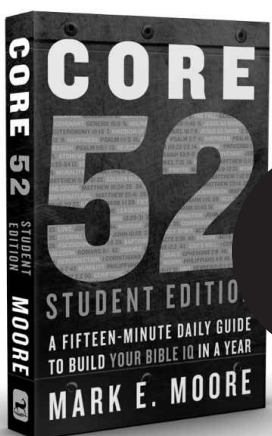


**Just 15 Minutes a Day
Can Change Your Life**

**For Ages
6–12**



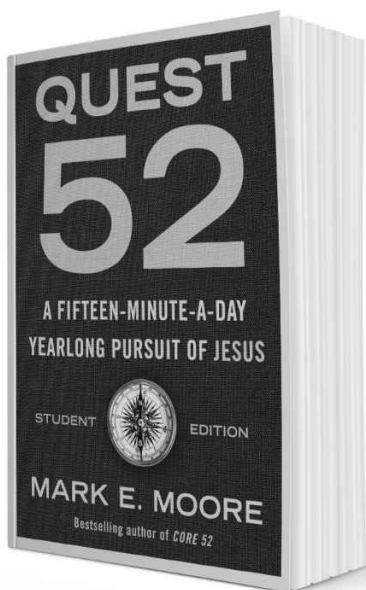
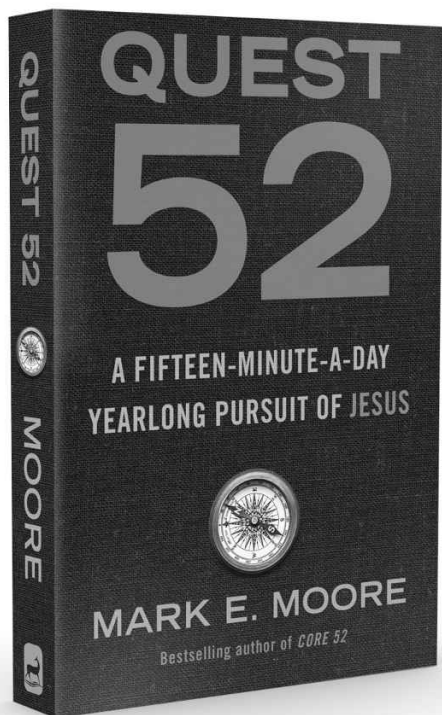
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