

GROWING

The Essential Qualities of a

KINGDOM

Mature Christian Leader

WISDOM

TOM YEAKLEY

FOREWORD BY MARK SANBORN

Decades ago, I was introduced to the daily habit of reading the chapter of Proverbs that corresponds to the day of the month (thirty-one chapters for thirty-one days). I was recently astonished to realize that because of that discipline, I've read the entire book of Proverbs almost five hundred times. Yet in *Growing Kingdom Wisdom*, Tom Yeakley points out several key insights from the endless treasures of Proverbs that I had read but not recognized. I believe that any Christian, but especially those in leadership roles, could profit from the years of study that Yeakley has condensed in this book. If you long to grow in Kingdom wisdom, along with reading the Proverbs themselves, read this book.

DONALD S. WHITNEY, professor of biblical spirituality and associate dean at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* and *Praying the Bible*

Growing Kingdom Wisdom by Tom Yeakley is comprehensive, challenging, and convicting. I count this as an essential study for any leader who seeks an intentional path to godly wisdom and spiritual growth. Yeakley generously provides tools that create the discipline required for the divine process of transformation to advance its work in you.

TAMI HEIM, president and CEO, Christian Leadership Alliance

Wisdom is one of the qualities most needed by leaders, yet is the hardest to develop. It is more of an art than a science, taking time and humility to develop. Tom Yeakley has done a superb job helping us know not only what Kingdom wisdom is but more importantly, how to grow in it, letting its benefits impact every area of our lives and leadership.

TOM HUGHES, colead pastor, Christian Assembly Church; author of *Curious* and *Down to Earth*

The list of desirable leadership qualities fills thousands of books. Tom Yeakley condenses the list to one absolutely necessary element—*wisdom*. “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding” (Proverbs 4:7, NIV). Wisdom is the glue to all the other leadership qualities. The quest for godly wisdom seems to be too indefinable to be pursued. Tom beautifully takes the mystery out of the search and gives incredibly practical help in growing this life of wisdom. It’s not a formula, but rather a process of practice, discovery, and deep commitment. The teaching of this book will give power to your life and leadership.

JERRY E. WHITE, major general, United States Air Force (retired)

Wisdom is one of those blessings from God I honestly never thought of as something to be worked on. Received, yes of course, as Solomon received wisdom from the Lord. Earned by the wrinkles and gray hair of old age? Also of course. But something to actively and intentionally work toward? To be honest, no, I hadn’t given that much thought. And yet Tom Yeakley has outlined a way to do just that in his book *Growing Kingdom Wisdom*. It made me pause, reflect, and pull out my yellow highlighter more than a few times!

ROY GOBLE, author of *Salvaged*

All leaders need wisdom. Tom’s book will help them! It is laced with helpful insights for finding and using “wisdom from God.” Tom is a leader who demonstrates such wisdom from God in his own life and ministry. He backs up what he says in his book by modeling what it means to live and lead wisely.

BOBBY CLINTON, author of *The Making of a Leader*

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CONTENTS

Foreword *ix*

Introduction *xi*

1 The Foundation of Godly Wisdom *1*

Part One:

THE COMPANIONS OF GODLY WISDOM

2 Prudence *11*

3 Knowledge *25*

4 Discretion *43*

Part Two:

THE COMPETENCIES OF GODLY WISDOM

5 Counsel *57*

6 Sound Judgment *71*

7 Understanding *85*

8 Power *101*

Conclusion: The Characteristics of Godly Wisdom *115*

Epilogue *123*

Acknowledgments *125*

Appendix: Wisdom-Development Resources *127*

Notes *161*

FOREWORD

WISDOM IS TIMELESS, not trendy. While people of different generations have sought or ignored it, it has never wavered as the driver of lasting success and effective leadership, nor will it ever be supplanted by new inventions or technology.

Investing your time in reading this book is a wonderful way to start or improve your journey to wisdom.

Much is written about wisdom from the secular viewpoint, and certainly there are wonderful concepts and ideas to be learned in that writing. But wisdom ultimately comes from God. Knowing the source of true wisdom is essential to developing it in your own life, and this book illustrates that clearly.

I constantly remind myself of the story in 2 Chronicles 1 when God appeared to Solomon and said He'd give him whatever he asked.

Solomon could have understandably asked for wealth, strength, and long life, but instead, he asked for wisdom so he could lead the people. God's response? He gave Solomon wisdom and riches, wealth and glory. This is a classic example of putting first things first and getting the other things as a result.

Would you have asked for wisdom? Would I? Here is a paradox: Only those with some wisdom would know to ask for it. Obviously,

God gives us wisdom, but we are not exempt from applying our own thinking in the quest for it.

Tom Yeakley has a heart for next-generation leaders, and this book is not only proof of that but a contribution to those leaders' development. I share this commitment and passion, and I pray that these concepts are embraced by all who read them, but especially by our future leaders.

As someone who has the privilege to address, teach, and develop leaders, I often share this concept: If you want to lead better and be better, use the FIT tools—frequency, intensity, and technique. How does that relate to wisdom? To be wiser:

1. Increase the *frequency* with which you pursue, study, and reflect on wisdom. Replace lower-value activities with the more frequent intentional pursuit of wisdom.
2. Don't dally—use *intensity*. Be committed, devoted, and intensely focused on what you have experienced, what you have learned, and what you need to do to become wiser. Your growth in wisdom will be proportionate to the intensity with which you pursue it.
3. Use the best *techniques*. Rather than taking a haphazard approach (ironic if you are a student of wisdom), use the best systems and processes. Here's some great news: This book is full of techniques and processes for increasing wisdom.

The etymology of *philosophy* is “love of wisdom.” By that standard, you are a philosopher in the most practical (and perhaps best) sense of the word for reading this book.

Mark Sanborn
Denver, Colorado

INTRODUCTION

If you don't know where you're going, you might not get there.

YOGI BERRA

Begin with the end in mind.

STEPHEN COVEY

I WAS SITTING across my desk from one of my direct reports. He had come to me for advice on how to solve a problem he was facing. His options were several—all with some good and bad consequences. Which one should he choose?

As I listened to him, I was having a conversation with myself. *He's going to expect me to have an answer for him. What should I tell him?* He had a good handle on the issue, but which of these solutions would be his best option? I wasn't sure what to do. It was a judgment call between a good, better, and seemingly best solution.

"I need wisdom, Lord," I prayed. "Give me wisdom that comes from You, Lord, to help me see what solution we should embrace here."

We often find ourselves out of our depth when seeking to solve problems or determine a way forward from our current situation. Issues that are black and white are quickly solved, but many problems

are gray. They present with complexities we have never seen, and our options don't present as clear solutions.

The more responsibility one has, the more regularly one is dealing with these types of gray issues. The more obvious ones have been handled by others before they arrive at your desk.

Leaders in any context need wisdom, and Kingdom leaders desperately need it to lead well according to God's Kingdom values and purposes. This Kingdom we refer to is the rule and reign of Jesus Christ: Kingdom leaders are seeking to advance Christ's rule and reign among the people of this world.

Leaders in any context are reliant on wisdom, and the best leaders are conscious of that reliance and seek wisdom in every situation. In worldly contexts, Kingdom priorities are not necessarily valued, so solutions are based largely on judgment, which arises primarily from experience. For those who are observant, the repetition of experiences over time reveals patterns of actions and their resulting consequences. Thus, one can begin to predict certain outcomes based on decisions and choices made.

But without a fixed standard to know if something is truly wise, we are forced to measure our wisdom by results: If the results are what we desire, then we assume the pathway to achieving them was wise. This view of wisdom leads to "end justifies the means" thinking and ignores the higher moral values and eternal purposes of God's Kingdom.

Simply because one has a lot of experience does not necessarily mean that person is growing in wisdom. What is labeled *wisdom* could simply be repetition. Unintended consequences may be hidden from view; moral compromises may be clouded over. A leader's résumé may show significant growth, but perspective, insight, and discernment—true wisdom—may remain stagnant.

Those of us who accept the primacy of God's Kingdom have an objective standard—the Word of God—to test our decisions against.

Worldly wisdom can't claim such a standard, so the wisdom gained from experience is vulnerable to folly.

True wisdom is from God Himself. It is given to those who ask and pursue it from Him. It can come as a gift from God or be gained as one sorts experiences that align with Kingdom values and discards those that don't. We prioritize outcomes that further God's Kingdom purposes and bring honor and glory to Him. We seek to lead in ways that align with His Kingdom values as reflected in His character. *How* we arrive at our results is just as important as *what our results are*.

Several decades ago, I began to focus on the personal pursuit of wisdom, particularly as it applied to leadership. I was challenged by reading James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." I had studied the life of Solomon and knew that his request for wisdom to lead was pleasing to the Lord. I knew, therefore, that I could ask for something similar and enter that same pursuit of wisdom with confidence that I, too, could find favor from the Lord and become a godly, wise Kingdom leader. But what is godly wisdom? How is it different from the wisdom of the world? How do we intentionally pursue it? Where do we begin? How do we know that we've obtained it? And how can we pass it along to someone else?

This book is my attempt to take the mystery out of pursuing wisdom. We'll look at what Kingdom wisdom is according to the Scriptures, breaking wisdom into its component parts and seeing how they interrelate. We'll contrast godly wisdom in its various attributes with the wisdom of the world to help us distinguish between the two. We will also address how wisdom applies to leadership as we seek to accomplish God's mission and the tasks He has called us to do.

Although this book is written with positional leaders in mind, *everyone* needs wisdom for living a life pleasing to God. All of us are striving for that end-of-life affirmation from the Lord: "Well done,

good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23). If that is the goal, what road should we take now that will lead to that destination of becoming a wise leader in God’s eyes? Whether you are just beginning a journey of pursuing God’s wisdom or you desire a boost in your current wisdom-seeking journey, this book is for you.

When I talk to other people about their growth and development, we quickly move to two essentials of great leadership: character (a leader’s personal example that backs up their words) and wisdom (a leader’s quality of decision-making). This is true for all leaders regardless of context, but it is particularly true—and these qualities are particularly in view—for Kingdom leaders. They know that both their spiritual health and their Kingdom influence depend on their intentional pursuit of Christlike character and godly wisdom. But while a quick perusal of the leadership section of the local library or bookstore quickly validates “worldly wisdom,” few leadership books ask how to know that God is pleased with our leadership. Asking that question is, in fact, counterintuitive to worldly wisdom. Leadership is too complex, the facts on the ground are shifting too quickly, and too many cultures are colliding in front of us to pause and reflect.

Yet a world that is so turbulent and chaotic demands a wisdom that is otherworldly. Kingdom leaders—those seeking to honor God with their leadership and accomplish His purposes—know that they must give an account of their leadership to the Lord (see Hebrews 13:17).

By God’s help and grace, we can see character change and growth toward spiritual maturity over time. Yes, sometimes it seems like it’s two steps forward and one backward, but overall, we can see net gains in our character development when we seek after it. We live and lead more out of who we are than what we know—especially when we are under pressure.

But good character alone does not ensure good leadership. There are many people with godly character who cannot lead! Competencies,

strategies, and tactics must also be developed if one is to lead well. And underlying all of this must be the pursuit of the otherworldly wisdom of God's Kingdom. God-given wisdom brings God-honoring results that will stand the test of time.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK

This book is designed as a tool to help you become more intentional about pursuing godly wisdom—both for yourself and for those you are leading. The book addresses seven key aspects of godly wisdom and how to grow in these vital areas. A chapter is devoted to each of these seven components, describing how each can be identified and implemented.

It is not enough to simply *know* you must grow, however; you must also *become intentional* about growing. Therefore, the end of each chapter contains a short section to assist your reflection on the component of wisdom just discussed. Each devotional reflection consists of a few key Bible passages to study, items to incorporate into your prayer time, and suggested personal applications.

The appendix is an extension of these chapter resources. The wisdom-development resources in the appendix consist of four parts:

1. a topical Bible study;
2. Scripture-memory verses related to the topic;
3. personal prayer focus items; and
4. practical exercises for application in life and leadership.

Bible Study

The topical Bible studies in the chapters and the appendix are not meant to be exhaustive, only to get you started. Personal convictions are rooted in our lives by doing personal Bible study on a given issue. If you have placed your life under the authority of the Scriptures and

desire to obey Him whom you serve, knowing what the Bible says on any subject is foundational. You must know the commands of God before you can obey them (see John 14:21).

Begin your pursuit of wisdom by doing the topical Bible study, developing and deepening your personal beliefs and convictions. Knowing what God says about wisdom and understanding its application to life and leadership will provide a great foundation for useful contribution. For more in-depth study on a topic, consider using a topical Bible to discover more related passages or cross-reference individual verses using a study Bible.

When you study the Bible, always be mindful that the desired outcome is to understand and apply the Word of God to your life. Follow the example of Ezra, who not only studied the Scriptures but also obeyed them and then taught them to others (see Ezra 7:10). D. L. Moody said, “The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives.”¹

Memory Verses

Having developed and deepened your personal convictions, you can now begin to integrate them into your life. Memorizing selected passages (I’ve recommended some in the appendix) will provide you the opportunity to meditate on God’s Word and give the Holy Spirit a tool He can use to shape and guide your decisions. He can bring these passages to your mind as you interact with people, make daily decisions, and solve problems.

You must train yourself to be sensitive to the prompting of His voice as you go through your daily responsibilities. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that we can count on the Lord’s guidance: “Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it’” (Isaiah 30:21).

Begin to memorize the suggested memory verses or select passages from the Bible study. Be sure to memorize the references along with

the verses to enable you to recall them quickly and accurately. Many people find it helpful to repeat the reference before and after the verse as they memorize it.

To further develop the habit of Scripture memory, a helpful tool is the *Topical Memory System*.² Its sixty verses arranged in thirty discipleship topics will help lay a solid foundation in your heart and mind.

Prayer Items

The process of character transformation is a divine work that requires divine power for lasting change. Begin to pray regularly about these topics, asking God to help build them into your life. Ask God for sensitivity and a growing self-awareness of areas that require change. Pray for grace to grow and develop in these key aspects of wisdom.

Many people find it helpful to write out their prayer requests in a small notebook and pray through these prayer requests daily. A written guide can help bring focus and concentration as you pray. Consider taking an extended time away with the Lord—a half day, for example—to focus your prayer time on specific topics of concern or need. Ask the Lord to help you apply what you are learning.

Set aside regular time each day to pray over these areas of wisdom. The length of prayer time is not as important as the attitude of your heart. Earnestly asking God for help in character change, allowing the Spirit to speak to your heart, and then responding to His leading will create fertile ground for transformation. Seek to pray faithfully over these areas, remembering to thank God for positive changes you notice and confess your sins as He reveals them.

Practical Applications

Every component of wisdom has a suggested list of application exercises. Some exercises are short-term, with the objective of sensitizing you to areas for growth. Others are more long-term projects that

require persistence and perseverance to see permanent change. It is not within your power to change—that is, to make yourself wise. These exercises simply present opportunities for the Lord to do a deeper, longer-lasting work within you. It is the Lord who changes you, not you yourself.

Paul reminds us to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which [we] have been called” (Ephesians 4:1), and we can do so by making sure that our practice matches our profession. Jesus had hard words for the religious leaders of His day whose knowledge and leadership practices were not congruent. God does not use hypocritical leaders for great Kingdom tasks! As James exhorts us, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22).

The applications center on the tools most often used by God to shape us: the Word, prayer, and life experiences. Hopefully, as you apply what you learn, you will form new beliefs and behavior patterns that affect your life and leadership.

WISDOM IS A BLESSING

The pursuit of wisdom must be intentional for us to truly see it established in our lives. We are called to pursue wisdom as a priority. This endeavor will require effort, discipline, and a learner’s heart, and it will be met with a blessing.

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom,
 and the one who gets understanding,
 for the gain from her is better than gain from silver
 and her profit better than gold.
 She is more precious than jewels,
 and nothing you desire can compare with her.
 Long life is in her right hand;
 in her left hand are riches and honor.

INTRODUCTION

Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her;
those who hold her fast are called blessed.

PROVERBS 3:13-18

You are about to begin a great journey of intentional personal growth and change. Set your face “like a flint” (Isaiah 50:7) to see it through. Don’t be discouraged if it seems hard to measure change and growth; trust God to do what He has promised. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God . . . and it will be given him” (James 1:5). Trust Him who promises, “He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

THE FOUNDATION OF GODLY WISDOM

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

JESUS, IN MATTHEW 7:24-27

BUILDING A HOUSE in the foothills of Colorado Springs, where I live, can be difficult. The soil near the mountains is a mixture of sand and clay. The clay component expands and contracts with the amount of moisture present, creating very unstable building sites. All builders must do soil tests before building begins and then design foundations that can adjust to the changing dynamics of the soil underneath. The soil type determines the foundation that is laid. And as with all buildings, it is the foundation that is the key to a solid, lasting structure.

To build a solid foundation for pursuing wisdom, we first must know the soil we are building on. The soil of our heart is where the foundation of wisdom is built.

Note what is said about Solomon in 1 Kings 10:24: “The whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.” And in Psalm 90:12 we read: “Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” It is within our hearts that wisdom resides, and it is the condition of our heart that determines whether godly wisdom is established.

So, we must examine our heart to know if we are ready for the construction of wisdom to begin.

Let’s not assume that anyone can begin pursuing godly wisdom without first having the Holy Spirit residing within them. It is He who lays the foundation of the Word of God within us—giving us insight, leading us to truth and its application. Good heart soil for building is a heart that is submitted to the Lord Jesus in all areas of life and leadership. It is a heart that desires to please Him above all others and has decided to obey Him regardless of apparent cost. It is in this soil that a solid foundation for the building of wisdom can take place.

We follow the example of David, who said, “Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind. For your steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in your faithfulness” (Psalm 26:2-3).

LEADERS WHO LACK GODLY WISDOM

Leaders who have not sought God’s wisdom often rely on experience and intuition for guidance. Their decision-making is predicated on “Go with your gut.” While there may be some benefit to this approach, it is limited to what a leader has learned, at a gut level, from prior relevant experiences, combined with the extent to which a leader has submitted themselves to the lordship of Christ. As much experience as we may amass, we are still always finite: We can see only so far, and we can make only so much sense of what we can see. Contrast that with God, who says of Himself: “As the heavens are

higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). God gives revelation to leaders who rely on His Spirit.

Leaders who lack godly wisdom may confuse accumulated knowledge and experience with true wisdom. God’s leaders, however, understand the limitations of their knowledge and understanding. They confess their shortcomings and their need for godly insight and discernment. They acknowledge that His ways and thoughts are higher, and they ask the Lord for guidance and help. This attitude of humility and teachability moves them to dependent prayer. Better to go with God than to go with your gut!

Leaders who have not acknowledged the gap between what they can know and what God can reveal to them may assume that the patterns of the world are also the patterns of the Kingdom. Seeking to understand the complexities of leadership, they rush to seek quick guidance from worldly leaders, neglecting to test worldly leaders’ insights against Kingdom values. They apply worldly solutions to spiritual problems. In contrast to Paul’s encouragement to imitate leaders as they imitate Christ (see 1 Corinthians 11:1), they imitate leaders *instead of* Christ, and they propagate folly instead of wisdom.

Now, we must admit that there are things to gain from wisdom based on experience. But we must always filter these insights, conclusions, or principles through a Kingdom perspective. If one’s leadership thinking aligns with the Scriptures (Kingdom thinking and values), then we accept it. But if it is contrary to God’s truth as revealed to us in His Word, then we must reject it. Wise Kingdom leaders accept the Bible, God’s inspired Word to us, as our final authority and our primary leadership textbook.

The law of the harvest applies to all: You will reap what you sow. We cannot lead in the way of the world and then expect a lasting spiritual harvest. We cannot expect God’s blessing on the leadership of one who fails to solicit the otherworldly wisdom of God. As Paul

wrote, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).

WHAT IS GODLY WISDOM?

Godly wisdom is applying knowledge and understanding to life situations by considering what is pleasing to God. Our goals are measured against the ultimate goal: a life that ends with Jesus telling us “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

We never “arrive” when it comes to wisdom. We can always grow in wisdom, for we encounter it in God Himself, who is infinite, and therefore the wisdom He offers us is inexhaustible.

Kingdom wisdom doesn’t just happen; it must be pursued. We can ask God for it (see James 1:5) and He will give it to us because He has promised to do so. Therefore, even young people with limited personal experience can be considered wise if God has given them wisdom from above. This is what happened with Solomon. He acknowledged that he was young and inexperienced (1 Kings 3:7) yet boldly asked God for “an understanding mind to govern [God’s] people” so he could “discern between good and evil” (1 Kings 3:9).

We can and should, regardless of our age and experience, learn godly wisdom from others. Wise spiritual mentors are invaluable to our development. They help us continue growing throughout our lives. As we age, our mentoring needs change, moving from a whole-life perspective to a more focused, targeted mentoring later in life. Asking others for help in your growth and development is wise. If you are beginning your spiritual journey, look for someone to disciple you, helping you to become a follower of Christ. If you are well established in your walk with Jesus, then look for someone who demonstrates spiritual wisdom in an area that you can learn from, someone who is strong and wise in a specific aspect of life that you feel you lack.

Every time I've asked a leader to mentor me in a specific area, they initially hesitate or refuse me outright. "I've never done that before," they say. "I'm not sure that's a strength of mine." "I'm not sure where to even begin." "I'm really busy." Don't be put off if you experience something similar. Simply suggest a regular time just to eat together (everyone must eat sometime). Buy the person's meal (you need to demonstrate that you are serious about this mentoring endeavor). All your mentor must do is come willing to answer questions; no preparation needed. Kingdom leaders have been preparing for this through their life and leadership. It's your responsibility to get from them what they already know.

When I meet with a mentor, I assume that it is my responsibility to glean from them the particular wisdom I need. I come with several prepared questions related to the subject that I need their help with. I take notes for further reflection later. I ask them to share with me any Bible passages that they think relate to this specific area, or what resources they recommend—books, articles, other people to talk with, and the like.

Spiritual, godly wisdom springs from the knowledge of God, His character, and His Word. This spiritual knowledge leads to spiritual understanding of how God works—the ways of God. And spiritual understanding translates into spiritual wisdom, the final application of our knowledge of God and His ways into our daily decisions. It is this spiritual wisdom that God gives to Kingdom leaders to help us accomplish His purposes in us and through our leadership. It arises from spending time with Jesus and His Word, being taught by His Spirit, and learning from others who have done the same.

The catalyst for turning spiritual knowledge and understanding into spiritual wisdom is the Holy Spirit Himself, who lives within those who know Christ. He guides us to truth, helps us discern root issues, provides creative solutions to problems, and seeks to glorify Christ in and through us. He will bring the help that Kingdom

leaders need. In Luke 2:46-47, the Jewish religious leaders were amazed at Jesus' answers, given His age of twelve. It was no doubt a similar observation made about Peter and John when they were brought before the Jewish leaders, who "recognized that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Godly wisdom allows Kingdom leaders to accomplish God-given tasks in such a way that people thrive and God is glorified. They don't seek credit for any success because they acknowledge that success comes from Him. They thus share the spotlight with those who serve with them. Such leaders are attractive; people move toward them not because of their charisma but rather because they sense that God is with them. They willingly submit to that leader's influence.

THE PILLARS OF WISDOM

In Proverbs 9:1 we read, "Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn out its seven pillars" (NIV). What are the seven pillars found in the house of wisdom? We find them listed for us in the previous chapter in Proverbs 8:12-14 (NIV):

I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;
I possess knowledge and discretion.
To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.
Counsel and sound judgment are mine;
I have understanding and power.

Prudence, knowledge, discretion, counsel, sound judgment, understanding, and power: These are the pillars of wisdom. The first three are the close *companions* of godly wisdom; they are interlinked and are overlapping. The final four are the *competencies* that flow

out of godly wisdom—manifestations of wisdom in the life of an individual.

Following these verses, we read, “By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; by me princes govern, and all nobles who rule on earth” (Proverbs 8:15-16, NIV). Here we see that wisdom is given to leaders for the outworking of their leadership responsibilities. Kingdom leaders must lead with godly wisdom for their leadership to be God-blessed and lasting.

The remainder of this book will explore these seven pillars (and includes a final chapter on godly wisdom in action). As you make your way through the book, be sure to test what you read against your experience and what God has revealed to you of His character and truth. The devotional reflection at the end of each chapter and the wisdom-development resources in the appendix will aid you in that process. You will grow in wisdom by pursuing it.

DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION

BIBLE REFLECTION

Read and reflect on the following passages about God's wisdom. Note any observations and practical applications that you can make in your own life and leadership.

- James 1:5
- Proverbs 8:10-15
- Matthew 7:24-27

PRAYER ITEMS

- Ask God to give you wisdom that comes from Him based on the promise of James 1:5.
- Are you intentionally developing yourself into a wise leader? Ask the Lord to show you how to be more intentional in pursuing godly wisdom.

PERSONAL APPLICATIONS

- Read and meditate on the book of Proverbs, especially chapters 1–9, asking God to show you specific applications of His wisdom to your daily life and leadership.
- Are you intentionally passing on to others the wisdom God has given you? Whom could you meet with in the next week to begin doing so?