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Week 5

Randy Robison & Blynda Lane

Mark Moore

“Wisdom That Works”

MALE ANNOUNCER: The following program is sponsored by friends of Life Outreach International.

MARK MOORE: I think there's an inverse ratio to wisdom and information. And the more information we have, the less wisdom we have. And with the advent of AI, it's about to get a whole lot worse.

I think this is so timely because it is about to get a whole lot worse. People are searching for this kind of wisdom.

ANNOUNCER: Mark Moore has identified 52 areas of wisdom that cultivate meaningful habits and virtues in a world filled with cultural chaos.

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RANDY ROBISON: Welcome to “Life Today.” I’m Randy Robison. Great to have you here. Blynda Lane is with me today. It’s great to have you on the set.

BLYNDA LANE: Thanks for having me. It’s a real honor to be here. I have a lot of fun with you.

RANDY ROBISON: Well, good. I hope so. You and Tammy have done a great job, and so I’m glad to be able to sit down with you.

We also have a wonderful guest with us today, and I know that you are going to learn a lot and be inspired, because our guest, Mark Moore, has a book called “Wisdom 52” that is out now, just came out.

And many of you have read “Core 52,” so if you know that one you’re gonna be interested. But Mark joins us. Mark, welcome to “Life Today.”

MARK MOORE: It’s an honor to be here with you guys, both of you. Thank you for having me.

RANDY ROBISON: So, jump into this. So people that don’t know the “Core 52” or the “Wisdom 52,” they’re like, what’s the number thing here? What do you—frame this up, what you’re talking about.

MARK MOORE: Well, I work at a church in Phoenix, Arizona, and we have a lot of people come who aren't familiar with the Bible, so that's where Core started. They just needed to know the Bible.

So I thought if I could give them one verse per week, 52 weeks a year.

RANDY ROBISON: There you go.

MARK MOORE: So it's kind of, it's been helpful for churches to even go through it with a series, and it allows people to really get a handle week by week, get into the Word of God in a way that's practical.

We need to know how to live this stuff.

BLYNDA LANE: And I love it because—it's funny because when I heard "Wisdom 52" and I'm thinking, "Well, there's only 31 books in Proverbs. What's the 52?"

And then when I realized, oh yeah, you're gonna take them week by week. And it's kind of a culmination of a lot of the Proverbs each time. You're not just focusing on one every time.

What I found fascinating though is just the idea that you took a book of wisdom and applied it to a culture that probably doesn't actually think living by a book of wisdom is that important.

We kind of come up with our own truth. We dictate our own way. So when you wanted to—after "Core 52," what made you want to write a book about the wisdom literature of the Bible?

MARK MOORE: Yeah, and originally I didn't have a plan to do 52 weeks. This book started 25 years ago when a friend of mine confronted me and said, "You're a gossip. It's not a good look."

But I couldn't deny it. I was using my words to artificially build myself up by tearing other people down.

And you can do it with like, "this is a prayer request" or however you articulate it. I thought I was fooling everybody. I was fooling no one.

And so I had to look in the mirror and say, "You know what, I am a gossip. And I don't want to be a gossip." So I went to Proverbs.

I read every verse in Proverbs on taming the tongue, and it healed me. The practical wisdom of here's what's happening.

And it took me probably two years to dig into it because I had to think, "Okay, why am I gossiping?" It wasn't because I was mean. It was because I was insecure.

And I didn't feel like I could validly lift myself up, so I would artificially tear someone else down.

For me, gossip was the same sin as bragging, because bragging, again, artificially building yourself up, gossip is artificially tearing someone else down.

It's also, for me it was the same as flattery. And this was, because encouraging someone else is a good thing, right?

You know, you look good today or man, you're smart or– But I found that I was only flattering people above me because I wanted them to think more of me and lift me up.

And so as I examined really the wisdom of Solomon around words, I found healing. I'm still not perfect, but I found a lot of healing in that.

I thought, someday I'm gonna go through every single Proverb and categorize them in ways that would be helpful for healing in life.

RANDY ROBISON: I have actually done that. I've gone through the entire book of Proverbs and categorized them all.

And here's why.

MARK MOORE: You're the only one I've ever met that did that.

RANDY ROBISON: I've got–I can show you my work, right?

MARK MOORE: Please do.

BLYNDA LANE: That's why he's so wise.

RANDY ROBISON: No, you've done it, too, though.

But here's why it's beneficial to do that, I think, and tell me if you experienced this, because Proverbs is a collection of wisdom, of sayings, and it's repetitive because you'll find the same thing here and you'll find it ten chapters later.

And so it's by nature kind of disorganized, and it'll jump from one thought to another thought.

So when you go through and you go, okay, everything related to flattery or something, or in the Randy version, don't toot your own horn, like that's in Proverbs, right?

You know. What did you find when you started putting them into very practical, which is what you do in the book, very practical, here's how to live that out sort of ideas?

MARK MOORE: It was really helpful for me to do the categories.

I also then ran each category backwards through the rest of the Old Testament, forward through the rest of the New Testament.

RANDY ROBISON: Oh, wow, you did tons of work on this one.

MARK MOORE: Yeah, so in the book you're gonna—you're basically gonna get with each chapter a whole Bible theology on gossip, on flattery, on encouragement, on sexuality, on pride.

And what I saw then was how this isn't Solomon's wisdom, this is actually God's wisdom through Solomon.

Another big thing that I learned, and this is kind of a tangent, but I thought, okay, Sol—I hadn't noticed this before. Proverbs was written to "my son." Now he had multiple sons.

Three times it says "my sons," plural, but over 20 times, "my son." Who was that son? It was Rehoboam. He's the one who took over the throne.

And yet the first thing he does, taking over the throne, is to destroy the kingdom.

So my question was, how could Solomon be so wise and his son be so foolish? Because wisdom from your father, you don't get wisdom from what he says, you get wisdom from what he does.

And so immediately I had to think about, so how can we then—how can we help people apply these principles?

Not just know that pithy aphorism, "Raise up a child in the way it should go and when he's older he will not depart from it." Okay, that's great. How do you do that?

So I started thinking through the Proverbs, through the rest of the Old Testament, New Testament.

Who are the people that lived these positive attributes, and what did they actually do? Not theory, what did they do to carry this out?

BLYNDA LANE: It's so interesting, because one of my favorite Proverbs is "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and I feel like even thinking about Rehoboam, and I think even about Solomon, the end of his life, I'm like, where was the guy who—he's the guy that knew all this and then he didn't even live by it.

And it makes me wonder how much of that is when you lose the fear of the Lord, you no longer can live by wisdom.

MARK MOORE: It's interesting you say that because I've thought deeply about Solomon's political career.

His prayer to God was not wisdom for his family. It was wisdom for the nation. And everything he did in his political life was blessed by God.

His wisdom made him a great politician, but being a great politician doesn't make you a great parent.

And in fact, if you trace the trajectory back, why was Solomon not a good father? Well, because his father was a terrible father. King David failed every one of his children.

Solomon was actually the fourth child of Bathsheba, not the first.

So this is, he is a—why is David a failure as a father? Well, you go back to Jesse. When Samuel comes and wants to anoint David as king, Jesse has him out in the field, and Samuel has to ask if you have another son.

So the father wound is one of the great barriers of wisdom.

BLYNDA LANE: Wow.

RANDY ROBISON: Interesting.

BLYNDA LANE: That's really interesting.

RANDY ROBISON: All right, so you talk about some things you've mentioned, the pride, the flattery. You talk about anger. You talk about quarreling.

There's—I wanna make sure we hit both of these, because Proverbs are full of warnings, but they're also full of promises.

But tell me about some of the warnings that you see that we really should pay attention to.

MARK MOORE: Pride is the biggest one, because pride is the mother of all sins. It's the root of all sins.

And Proverbs introduces this idea that really Jesus modeled, that—it's a reversal concept, that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Quick story, my own biography. It took me probably into my forties before I had confidence in who I was as a person.

That's why I was a gossip, that's why I was a slanderer. It's because I was not sure who I was.

When I learned—and this is the fear of the Lord. When you fear God and you get your identity from him, you don't fear other people's opinions.

So to me, that was the core identity of finding out who I was, so I didn't have to artificially exalt myself.

How that manifested was not just in gossip but in my preaching. I was the hero of every story I told about myself until probably 2014.

At that point, with some great teamwork at our church, I began exploring self-deprecation in sermons.

Weirdest thing happened. And I have a new rule. If I wrote my own book of Proverbs, this would be in it.

If you praise yourself publicly, you will be criticized privately. If you criticize yourself publicly, you will be praised privately.

And the book of Proverbs is full of those kinds of practical warnings. Pride is a big one.

RANDY ROBISON: Okay, so give me some of the positives, because there's also good news in Proverbs.

What's some of the wisdom we can apply that is not just stay away from the bad, but here's how to develop the good?

MARK MOORE: Yeah, I think generosity is one of the big things. Worship of God is another one of the big things. Valuing your spouse is another one of the big things.

And I had an ah-ha moment with this in the editing process, you know, Proverbs 31.

I mean, what a woman. It's this kind of woman.

BLYNDA LANE: It seems a somewhat unattainable woman, by the way.

MARK MOORE: So I made a comment that isn't it interesting that Solomon had such a diversity of opinions about women, because the most common complaint in Proverbs, the most repetitive, is, "It is better to live on the corner of a roof than in a house with an angry woman."

Though true, Solomon had a lot of experience, because he had a lot of women and a lot of angry women.

So, I made this comment on his diversity of opinion and the editor corrected me, said Proverbs 31 was not written by Solomon.

It was written by King Lemuel's mother.

Which, I played with this. I can't prove this. I think it's true.

Solomon's wives were mostly marriages for political alliances, right?

I think King Lemuel gave one of Solomon's—gave him one of his wives.

So King Lemuel's mother would be Solomon's grandmother-in-law.

BLYNDA LANE: Interesting.

MARK MOORE: So here's what fascinated me. Solomon does have a couple of beautiful things to say about women.

One of them is the dedication to my own wife in the book. If you find a noble wife, you find a beautiful thing.

But most of what Solomon said was negative about women.

Could it be that the more women you have, the less you think of the women you have?

And so, part of the positive of valuing the woman you have is being loyal to her and finding the prize that God has given you.

BLYNDA LANE: That's really good.

RANDY ROBISON: Yeah, that'll preach.

BLYNDA LANE: That will preach.

BLYNDA LANE: Okay, so when you were talking about, you had this revelation of kind of the man that you were, and you wanted to be different.

Did you have people come alongside you and call you higher?

Is there an idea of how important mentoring and having people around you when you were writing this book?

I feel like that would be a theme also in the Proverbs, of how important it is who you surround yourself with.

MARK MOORE: Yeah, Solomon will later say in Ecclesiastes, cord of three strands.

There are a couple of chapters about mentoring, about parents, about wise counselors.

In my own life, part of, I suppose part of it was, I was a professor at a Bible college.

Nobody confronts those. Nobody confronts senior pastors. Nobody confronts doctors or policemen.

Those are roles that you're always the expert, so I had to learn to ask for it.

And Proverbs does give some really powerful advice about pulling into your inner circle those who are wise, and knowing what a wise person actually is.

So it's almost like Proverbs provides you a biography or a portfolio, a portrait, of the kind of wise people that you want to have in your life.

But to answer your question, I had to get over my own pride to even ask anyone.

After that first person confronted me, I asked him to be in an accountability relationship.

That couple became five of us, and then when I moved, I started it over again in Phoenix, because I am only as good as the average of my five closest friends.

That's true for everybody.

So raising the status of your inner circle is—and it won't happen by accident, you have to do that.

RANDY ROBISON: Was it painful?

MARK MOORE: Oh, asking? Yes. Admitting I needed it, yes.

RANDY ROBISON: Sticking to it?

BLYNDA LANE: And walking it out, yeah.

MARK MOORE: But it wasn't near as painful as living an unwise life.

BLYNDA LANE: That's really good.

BLYNDA LANE: What could somebody watching who is living for themselves, does not believe that they need to live by the Scripture, by the wisdom that's in the book, and they've just decided to live their own way, decided that they know what truth is.

Maybe even like you, has pride and doesn't really let anybody speak into their life.

How can this be detrimental to them for their future?

MARK MOORE: I don't know that that person exists. I'm sure there are people out there that live for themselves.

But at least I'll just speak for my own life.

In our church, the people who come, they know they're messed up.

Maybe they won't admit it publicly, but they are craving a better wisdom.

I think there's an inverse ratio to wisdom and information.

And the more information we have, the less wisdom we have.

And with the advent of AI, it's about to get a whole lot worse.

I think this is so timely, because it is about to get a whole lot worse.

And my experience is people are feeling the pain of, "I don't even know how to be married."

"I don't know how to raise this kid that I just produced."

"I don't know how to get fired and not go off the handle."

"I need help with anger, with controlling sexuality, and somehow figuring out what to do with this money that I have, or how to get a job that doesn't drive me crazy and I don't shoot someone."

People are searching for this kind of wisdom.

But what you said is so critical.

If you're trying to find it on your own, you probably won't find it.

Proverbs is a group project, not an individual wisdom project.

RANDY ROBISON: That's good.

And you know what's interesting, because Proverbs addresses this, we live in the information age, like you say, and so knowledge is kind of everywhere.

Like, you know, pick it up and then I can look up anything. I can get knowledge.

And Proverbs says knowledge is good. Understanding is better.

And I think I see a lot of people struggling, "how do I use this information," right?

But the wisdom. That goal of figuring out, not just understanding the information, but how to apply it, how to live it.

And there's no amount of artificialness or fake intelligence that can do that.

It's what you're talking about, it's those things in Proverbs and in Scripture.

MARK MOORE: You just said something that just changed my perspective, because I've written this book thinking, okay, this is a book, it is a book of wisdom.

Actually the wisdom isn't in the book, it's in the people of the book.

This can take you to Proverbs, but Proverbs will always take you to people, people who model the fear of the Lord.

Wisdom is not from a book, not my book, not the book of Proverbs.

It's from the people of God who live this out.

RANDY ROBISON: Well, and it's not just the information, it's putting it, it's the application. It's putting it in, it's living it out.

I remember the first time that I changed the way I treated my wife based on something I saw in Scripture that called me out.

And I wasn't even really aware that I was demeaning her in a way, not major, but just like, I'm like, "Oh."

And then once I realized that and saw it in Scripture, I gained the wisdom.

I said yes to God and gained the wisdom and thought, I never wanna do that again.

MARK MOORE: Yeah.

RANDY ROBISON: And it changes the whole dynamic.

And that's what God's wisdom does.

When we put it into practice, it changes things.

There's one more. We're out of time, but we have to hit this.

You mentioned it a minute ago, generosity.

How does that change things?

MARK MOORE: So, when we are not generous, we are inward-focused people.

The gift of generosity is the gift of seeing, God has not blessed me because he loves me.

He's blessed me because he wants to love someone else through me.

If we get the idea that we are funnels and not buckets, then the joy—it is more blessed to give than receive.

We say that.

But until you experience generosity, then you don't really know why God gave you that money in the first place.

And he's given us, of all people on the whole planet for all human history, no one has had the opportunity for generosity—

One quick thing.

I think God gives different spiritual gifts to different people.

He also gives different spiritual gifts to different churches.

And I think he gives different spiritual gifts to different nations.

And we have been chosen by God as a nation for the most dangerous spiritual gift, and that is affluence.

But the only purpose for affluence is for generosity.

RANDY ROBISON: So true, and I know you know it because you've put it into practice.

I want you to know that, so I'm gonna give you the opportunity to put generosity into practice, not just say it's great, but do it, because it does change things.

Watch this and you'll see how.

[speaking foreign language]

ANNOUNCER: Severina and Teresa unfortunately find themselves among the one out of four people globally that do not have access to safe drinking water.

The reality of this statistic can be seen throughout an overwhelming number of rural villages in Angola, as mothers and children collect water from unsafe sources.

The need is both urgent and widespread.

Millions of families depend on unsafe water sources every day, not by choice, but by necessity.

A reliable water well changes everything immediately and for generations.

JOHN YEATTS: You know, this cup of water represents life.

And as I'm standing here in this village where we put this water well almost 20 years ago and it's still producing life, I am reminded that just yesterday we were standing in a village where there is absolutely no clean water sources.

And that more than 18 mothers since January have lost children because of hunger and poor water conditions, waterborne illnesses.

Together, those two things are a death sentence.

These villages are in desperate need of hearing that a well is coming to their village.

We need your help right now to make sure that we can put a water well in each of these villages that are so desperately in need, so that mothers can quit weeping over the death of a child and that they can shed tears of joy over the life of a child.

The difference is all in how we help provide in Jesus's name.

And so I'm asking you, would you help us?

Would you help us give a cup of clean water in Jesus's name?

RANDY ROBISON: Our goal this year is to drill 350 wells in 20 different countries.

I would love to exceed that.

It's early in the year, I'm optimistic.

But look, the average price, because we know we've been doing this for so many years, is \$4800 for one well.

And that will change the lives of hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, because it becomes a place for not just a particular village but a whole region.

Now, some of you can drill a well and I would ask you to do that, just do it.

Pick up the phone, go online, do it.

Now many of you, I understand that's too far of a reach, but you could provide clean drinking water for 30 people with a gift of \$144.

A gift of \$48 will provide that same clean drinking water for an average of 70 years, that's why we call it water for life, for 10 people.

Whatever, you can be generous right now, not just in word or in thought, but in deed.

And when you do, you will be stepping into what we're talking about, because when you put God's Word into action, he's already blessed it.

He's already done it.

So this is an opportunity for you to do that.

And Mark, I know you've experienced this, you've done it, you've seen it.

MARK MOORE: I will tell you there is no investment that you will make that will give you more bang for your buck or more joy for your heart.

If you will give for one well, we promise you we will bring the preaching of the Word of God behind it, so they don't just receive water, they'll receive the water of life.

Jesus said that anyone who drinks of him will become a spring of living water.

He didn't say that you would get water of life.

He said you would become the spring.

Will you become a spring of life for hundreds of people that you will only see on the other side of eternity?

RANDY ROBISON: You're exactly right, and I appreciate you saying that because, and Blynda, I know you know this as well, every time we go in and we, whether it's drilling a well or giving food, emergency food to people, rescuing young girls from sex trafficking, the gospel is always a part of it.

And that's what I think really separates us, all of us here, and all of the people that join with us, in these things, because it's a good work when you give somebody, you know, clean drinking water or something to eat.

It's a God work when you do it in Jesus's name.

And that's what we're here to do, God work.

So I do-by the way, Mark, I know the book hasn't been out very long, but I think we can get our hands on a few of these.

For anybody that will make a gift today, can we send them "Wisdom 52?"

MARK MOORE: We'll make sure it happens.

RANDY ROBISON: We'll make sure it happens, okay.

We are all set here.

We are ready to drill water wells.

We're ready to send you the book if you want.

Request it.

But most of all, let's put God's wisdom into action.

Let's be generous, let's do it in Jesus's name.

Let's give them water for life.

ANNOUNCER: Every day thousands of lives are lost to waterborne disease, and nearly half of those are children under the age of five.

Through Mission Water for Life, you can give mothers hope and children a future as we provide clean, fresh drinking water, free from the fear of death.

With your gift today, you can help drill and establish 350 water wells this year.

Your gift of \$24 will help provide clean water for 5 children.

A gift of \$48 will help provide for 10, and \$144 will help provide life-giving water for 30 people for a lifetime.

With a gift of any amount, we'll send you "Discovering the Joy of Reading God's word."

Whether you've read the Bible for years or are just beginning, this book invites you to experience Scripture in a fresh, more intimate way.

With your gift of \$100 or more, you may request "A Life of Compassion" coffee table book, capturing Life Outreach's heart for the world.

Each page pairs timeless Bible verses with vivid mission field photography, making God's Word visible in action.

Finally, please consider a gift of \$1200 to help provide water for 250 people, or a gift of \$4800 to help sponsor a complete well and request Life's beautiful 2026 bronze sculpture, "The Good Shepherd."

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

RANDY ROBISON: Please do go online, go to the phone, make the best gift you can.

If you wanna request Mark's book, we'd love to send it to you.

What a blessing today, Blynda.

BLYNDA LANE: It's been so good.

Mark, thank you so much for joining us.

MARK MOORE: Well, it's my honor, and seriously, don't just be wise, act wise with what God has given you.

Be generous, and his blessings will flow.

RANDY ROBISON: It's already there.

BLYNDA LANE: It is.

Well, thank you again, and thank you for joining us today.

It's been lovely having you with us, and we can't wait to see you next time.

[music]

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ANNOUNCER: Tomorrow, Mel Chancey became Hell's Angels' youngest chapter president ever.

MEL CHANCEY: Losing my freedom was my rock bottom.

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