



PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR MINISTRY

A 30-Day Guide
For Disciple Makers

CODY PODOR

Practical Wisdom is written with humility, clarity, and passion. The real-world insights will sharpen your leadership and help you avoid the common pitfalls of ministry. Above all, it will stir your love for Jesus, for His people, and for the calling the Lord has placed on your life.

—Kel Cunard, Lead Pastor, Good Life Church

I'm thrilled for the work Cody has done in this book. There is no growth in life and ministry without growing in wisdom. *Practical Wisdom for Ministry* is a tool you will reach for often to be taught and reminded of the wisdom principles we all need to make it the long haul. I'm so thankful for this tool in my ministry toolbelt.

—Brock Graham, Lead Pastor, Redeemer Bible Church

In this refreshing and easily digestible work, Dr. Podor offers mature bites of wisdom with self-effacing humility. Putting into practice each day's expanded proverbial-like content will aid in establishing solid ministry practices.

—Brent Aucoin, Ph.D., President of Faith Bible Seminary, Lafayette, IN

For anyone engaged in disciple making and praying for wisdom, Cody has given a gift by collecting some of the most enduring practical wisdom God has provided in response to his own prayer. The simple, to-the-point organization of these gems makes this a book to keep on hand and meditate over frequently.

—Christian McNeilly, Director of Church Planting, Great Commission Collective

Practical Wisdom for Ministry by Pastor Cody Podor provides pithy proverbs for pastoral ministry. As I read this 30-day guide, I thought first of Paul with Timothy. Then another picture came to mind—Timothy with those he was called to disciple. If you are looking for real-world, hands-on, easy-to-digest-and-apply insights for discipling, then this little manual is for you.

—**Bob Kelleman, Th.M., Ph.D., Professor of Biblical Counseling Faith Bible Seminary; Author of *Gospel-Centered Counseling: How Christ Changes Lives***

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*To the men and women
that God, in his grace, has used
to help me grow in my love for the Lord.*

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INTRODUCTION

“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.”¹ So penned Isaac Newton in a letter to Robert Hooke in 1675. It’s ironic that even this quotation is not originally attributed to Isaac Newton but rather, finds its origination in the 12th century from a man named Bernard of Chartres.

That’s what this book is. It’s the view that I am experiencing and enjoying as I stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before me. I want to tell you what I see because I believe seeing it will help you serve the Lord with faithfulness, effectiveness, and joy.

Now, there’s a lot more that must be said about the intersection of this quote and my life. You see, it begins with “if”. That’s important. I’m still relatively young and inexperienced. I believe that I have “seen” quite a bit from where I stand now, but I also recognize that I have many more shoulders to climb and my hope is that my vision will only grow clearer. So, this is not a definitive work. This is a work in progress.

When I teach classes, I always begin the first session by stating something like this: We learn what we have been taught and so we teach what we have learned. I do not pretend to be the originator of much, or perhaps anything that you will encounter in this book. If I discuss a matter

that is clear, compelling, and helpful, you can be almost certain that I did not come up with it. If there is something that is confusing or curious, that is likely mine.

That's how you should read this little book. Assume that anything profitable is not from me. I will be diligent to give credit to whom it is due, if I am able to remember. However, I am confident that there is much in here that I learned from someone else and has become so ingrained into my thinking that I do not remember from whom I've learned it. Ultimately, if there is wisdom in this book, it comes from God. And so, I would ask that anytime you are helped by these words, you would turn your gaze to the Lord and utter a 'thank you' or a 'praise God'.

Before we begin together, I wanted to make a few notes. First, this work is intended to be practical; not exegetical. I believe that the content I have included is biblical and founded upon solid exegesis of Scripture. But I have not included that work here. Occasionally, I may include a quotation from Scripture or offer a reference. However, the main purpose of this work is not to offer an exegetical defense. Instead, my hope is to offer some practical wisdom that I have gleaned over the years.

Second, each segment is intended to be short. Therefore, I do not contend that I have offered a comprehensive treatment of any one subject. I have offered thirty pieces of wisdom so that you may use this resource over the course of a month. Of course, you may consume the content as quickly as you'd like. But I think taking time to meditate on each of these points may yield a better result in the end.

This may be a perfect resource to offer someone as they are preparing to step onto a ministry team or if they simply want to be better equipped to make disciples. This may be

a resource that you return to each year for a refresher course on some (God willing) helpful ideas to consider as you continue in your ministry.

Finally, please know that I am praying for you as you work your way through this resource. I'll conclude by encouraging you to develop a posture of desperate dependence upon the Lord. I want to commend this posture to you even before you begin. In Proverbs 26:7, we are warned, "Like a lame man's legs, which hang useless, is a proverb in the mouth of fools."

Quality Over Quantity

It was my senior year of high school and I had a zeal for the Lord. I was ready to buy a one-way ticket to Africa and spend my life for the sake of the gospel. No college. No more preparation. Just me, my Bible, my youthful arrogance, and my vain idealism. What more does one need when trying to singlehandedly rescue the world?

I remember Kel, the man whom the Lord used to disciple me during this season, inviting me out for lunch. As we sat in the back of his truck, he patiently listened to me wax eloquently about all my future ministry plans. After a remarkably kind period of silent listening, he asked one simple question, “Cody, have you thought about what it would look like to have a quality of years in ministry rather than a quantity of years in ministry?” No explanation. No pleading with me to reconsider. Just one simple question that changed the trajectory of my life.

Zeal is a beautiful thing. When coupled with arrogance and idealism, it can be a mighty dangerous thing. As you consider a lifetime of serving the Lord, can I ask you to consider the same question? What would it look like for you

to have a quality of years in ministry rather than a quantity? For me, it meant coupling the active work of ministry with the pursuit of further education. It meant a quieter, more hidden, seemingly less heroic kind of service. It meant many hours by myself reading and writing. It meant submitting to teachers, more mature brothers and sisters, and other ministry leaders.

If you are chomping at the bit to get to the ‘real work of the ministry’, praise God for your passion. Now, enroll in the school of slow Christian maturity and do the hard, quiet work of growing in your love and knowledge of the Lord so that you can serve faithfully and effectively by God’s grace.