# Double Date with Mark & Jill: The God-Tool of Wisdom

### jill@jillsavage.org

Jill Savage: Welcome to this month's Double Date with Mark and Jill. We've been working our way through the eight God-tools that we talk about in "No More Perfect Marriages." These eight God-tools are designed to stop the seven Slow Fades. If you haven’t read our book, "No More Perfect Marriages," we encourage you to pick it up. We encourage you to read it either alone, together, or organize a group to read it. This month's God-tool that we're going to focus on is the God-tool of wisdom. We come into marriage, and honestly, we don't know what we don't know. Right?

Mark Savage: Right. I think of how we are trained to go into our jobs. We go to college. We have all this training to do that job, and yet, in marriage, we lack. We think that we'll just know how to do this. The truth is, we don't have the wisdom. We don't have the knowledge to navigate marriage and life's challenges.

JS: Right. There are so many areas where we need wisdom. We need wisdom in relationship skills and conflict resolution skills. We need wisdom to better understand our spouse, and the lens through which they see life. One of the things we talk about is the blueprint that we carry into marriage. Once I gained wisdom and understanding of the blueprint that Mark sees the world through, it made me much more compassionate for him. It made me much more patient with him. Honestly, I even needed wisdom about myself. Once I understood the lens I see life through, and the experiences in my life that have led me to this point, having that wisdom was huge. It caused me to better understand myself. It caused me to be more compassionate with myself. It caused me to recognize the places that maybe I want to grow and change. We’ve talked about the home internship.

MS: Right. In our home internship, we've identified some things that are good, and some things that are lacking.

JS: A home internship is the home that we grew up in, where we learned about life. We learned about finances, and we learned about conflict resolution. We learned about sex. We learned about communication, all those things. Those are things that we now carry into our marriage, our parenting, all of our adult life. Sometimes, we need to go back and do new home internships.

MS: Absolutely.

JS: We need to find those places where we say, "*Oh, I don't know that that internship served me well.*" There are other areas where we might say, "*Hey, it served me great.*" Sometimes we need to seek wisdom in certain areas. You and I had to do that with conflict resolution.

MS: Right. Well, we had to do that with finances. But with conflict, we had no clue.

JS: We were at opposite ends of the spectrum. Your family raged and was very loud and angry. Your stepdad was even violent when there was conflict.

MS: Yes.

JS: In my family, we'd like to believe we didn't have conflict, so we were at opposite ends of the spectrum. Honestly, neither one of those was healthy. We had to figure out, "*Okay, what does God say about resolving conflict? What's the right way? What's a godly way to deal with conflict*?" For that, we needed our God-tool of wisdom.

MS: In James 1:5, we're told this, "*If any of you lacks wisdom*," and we should all be raising our hands, because we all lack, "*Let him ask Father. Let him ask God, who gives generously to all*." He just heaps it on. And then it says, in my version, "*Without reproach*." Others say, "*Without finding fault.*" That means without holding back. He abundantly pours it out without holding back. When you ask, it will be given to you. That's powerful.

JS: As Mark and I were talking through this God-tool of wisdom, we began to identify what we called a wisdom wheel. A couple of months ago, we talked about a love wheel. The wisdom wheel is a similar concept. This also works with the God-tool that we talked about last month, which is the God-tool of humility.

MS: Oh, absolutely.

JS: If we're not humble, we don't recognize we have somewhere to grow, that we need wisdom. The middle of the wisdom wheel, the hub, is decision. We have to decide to seek wisdom. We have to decide that there are places we want to grow. The spokes of the wheel are the different ways that we can grow in wisdom. I'm sure that our wheel is not complete, that maybe you can come up with some additional spokes. Hopefully, this just gets the wheel turning. [laughter]

MS: Oh, that was good. Yeah.

JS: Let's look at the wisdom wheel. We have decision in the middle. The very first spoke we have is reading your Bible, because wisdom comes from God's Word. We need to open God's Word. Last month, I shared a story about reading Matthew chapter seven. It talks about, "*Take the log out of your own eye, before you try to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.*" That was wisdom I needed. I desperately needed that wisdom. As parents, the Book of Proverbs is so full of wisdom. There are so many places where I have sought out wisdom for direction. Romans 12:9-21, we talk about that quite a bit, because it was where God taught me to love “*unhumanably.*” To love Mark during our crisis, when he was being anything but loving to me. It was a very powerful chapter in the Bible, that gave me incredible wisdom during a dark season.

MS: I have been deeply studying Hebrews. I had never done that. And I found that Hebrews is a letter written to people who lost their way. They had accepted Christ, but then became frustrated with Christ, with God. They began to live out their life without humility, without love…they lived for themselves. The writer of Hebrews was calling them back and giving them direction. It's been very powerful.

JS: If you haven’t really opened your Bible and read it, you've not been... You don't even know where to start. Maybe you don't even have a Bible. It's sometimes not best to start in Genesis. It's great to read through the Gospels, which are the first four books of the New Testament. The Bible is split into Old Testament, New Testament. New Testament's about halfway through. They're really like the biographies of Jesus, so those are a great place to start. A second place is in the Book of Proverbs, because the Book of Proverbs is wisdom. If you don't know where to start, there are 31 chapters in Proverbs, and most months have around 31 days. Whatever day of the month it is, just read that chapter in Proverbs. The next time you open your Bible, whatever day of the month it is, read that chapter in Proverbs. You will walk away with powerful wisdom. We need to open our Bibles for wisdom.

JS: A second spoke of that wheel is reading books in general. We can read about that issue that we're struggling with, or find strength that we need within our marriage, or within our life. We can read to pursue the wisdom of others. Many of us hide behind the statement, "*I don't like to read.*" I just want to challenge you that you need to get over that. You're actually choosing to be self-centered, and to not pursue the wisdom that others have gained and are wanting to share with you.

JS: Figure out how you could read. Mark was one of the first to say, "*I don't read*." But over time, you've come to understand what reading has brought to your life.

MS: Yeah.

JS: Maybe read together. Maybe your spouse reads aloud, and you listen. Maybe you find that you enjoy audiobooks, more than...

MS: Right. Many people do that.

JS: Exactly. Instead of using your average excuse of, "*I don't read,*" find out how you can still use books to gain wisdom, but to do it in the way that works best for you.

MS: Yeah. We all are different that way.

JS: Another element of wisdom is counseling or coaching. We bring a third party into our life, in some way that will allow us to bounce ideas off. They'll hear our struggles and help us to get to the heart of things. That's really the beauty of counseling. We have done many stints of counseling over the years. We've probably seen five or six different marriage counselors in different seasons of our life, for different reasons. Each time, we have grown. That's what wisdom is all about. It's about growing. You may not have huge "*a-ha*" moments, but just sitting and talking through things helps you to sort out your own thoughts and feelings. Some of the questions that are often asked really help us to dig a little deeper.

MS: Absolutely. It helps to connect things together, and it helps bridge to the opportunity of growth and development.

JS: Yeah. We continue to learn about wisdom in attending seminars, as it pertains specifically to marriage. There are marriage seminars out there. FamilyLife does what they call the Weekend to Remember, and we've attended that several times. There are also "No More Perfect Marriage" events. If you go to seminars.jillsavage.org, that's where you can find all the different marriage seminars that Mark and I do all over the United States. Seminars are a great place where we are intentional about growing our wisdom. A lot of times, people are hesitant on seminars, because they worry, "*Are you going to make me talk to other people?*" We've found that in most marriage seminars, you only need to talk to your spouse. We know at the Weekend to Remember, it's designed that you learn together, but then you get to talk and process together. That's really important, because you're growing together at the same time.

MS: Right. Jill and I have learned from our own marriage, and from mentoring countless other couples, that we keep growing throughout our life together. We don't ever reach a point where we have it all figured out. Those differences and perspectives change as we age together. We need to keep learning and keep growing together.

JS: It's funny. Even when we teach seminars, we can learn something. At a seminar a few weeks ago, when the couples took a talk break, and they headed out, Mark came over to me, and said, "*During that last session, I had a huge realization about myself.*"

MS: Yeah, it was powerful.

JS: It was so wild. Here we are teaching, but we're still learning. We need to be lifelong learners. The next spoke is one that you might find surprising. You might think, "*Really? Does that fit on here?*" We think it does. And that spoke is: doctor visits.

MS: Right.

JS: How does this affect marriage growth? Sometimes, when we have things going on physically, it affects our marriage and we need to figure it out. Some of us are afraid to pursue medical wisdom, honestly, because we're afraid of what we'll find out. We're afraid to have a test run, because of what we fear the results are.

MS: Exactly. I think of a young couple that we know. He had erectile dysfunction and was totally embarrassed by it. He didn't want anybody to know, and their marriage was frustrated, and he needed to go to the doctor. We often think that's an elderly issue. It's not. We've had friends who have not felt good, and put it off, saying, "*I don't want to go to the doctor*." Then, suddenly, they drop dead. They're young. We have to go to the doctor. Jill happened to, during her annual visits to the... What do you call that?

JS: [chuckle] I had my annual mammogram, and that's when my breast cancer was found. Even preventative medicine can make such a difference. For our marriage, you have had to be very intentional about managing your depression.

MS: Absolutely.

JS: In partnership with our doctor.

MS: Right.

JS: And some of that is medication. Some of that is lifestyle changes.

JS: Some of that has been food. Seeking out wisdom, what a difference that makes. It is an important part of the wisdom wheel.

MS: Going back to the doctor a bit…in the home that I grew up in, part of that blueprint was you don't go to the doctor. You can't trust a doctor. You need to navigate those challenges on your own. That was terribly frustrating. Once we found out about depression, and I understood it, and accepted it, it's been a game changer for us.

JS: Absolutely. Another way that we can grow is by listening to podcasts. Mark and I often listen to podcasts together when we drive. We love to listen to the Focus on the Family podcast. They have an app, so we'll just pull it up on the phone, pop it in, and listen to it as we drive. There are tons of marriage podcasts out there. You can listen to this as a podcast, through The No More Perfect Date Night site. Podcasts are wisdom waiting to be discovered, really.

MS: Oh, yeah.

JS: Through podcasts, we can learn about different resources out there. We can learn about different concepts. We can see ourselves in some of the stories that are shared, and so we continue to grow.

MS: Yup. Another element of wisdom is attending church. You need to be growing together in an environment that goes back to worship of the one who gives us wisdom.

JS: While we're there, we can also be attending Bible studies, because we're opening up God's Word together. It's important for us to just keep digging and sometimes we can do that on our own. But sometimes it's easier when we do that in a setting where we can also benefit from the wisdom of other people.

MS: Yup. A last element is our No More Perfect Date Night site, that you're participating in now. This is a way to gain wisdom, wisdom from Jill and me, wisdom from the other speakers and authors that we bring in, to help pull back the curtains in their life.

JS: Exactly. And so bottom line, there are no perfect marriages, but there are growing marriages.

MS: Yes.

JS: Is yours a growing marriage? Are you being intentional about using your God-tool of wisdom? That's the heart of what we want to challenge you in today. This is Mark and Jill Savage, signing off, with a reminder to use your God-tool of wisdom, to seek it out every day.