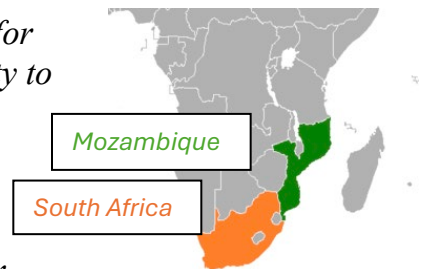


Dear «F5»,

I'm excited to introduce you to Tshego, a valued member of our Courage Youth team in South Africa and gifted writer. She has beautifully captured a story that I believe will touch your heart and show you the profound impact of your generosity.

Today, she shares the powerful journey of Wiseman. I had shared some of his story at our February "Thank You Brunch," but Tshego has brought his story to life in a way only she could. I invite you to read her account below.

"Wiseman grew up in Mozambique and had to fend for himself from his earliest years. He never had the opportunity to attend school, as his family had little and relied on selling produce from their farm to make ends meet.



Wiseman's life took a tragic turn at the age of 7 when his grandmother, the only motherly figure he had ever known, passed away. His mom had abandoned him as a baby. His father, the last of his family, passed away when Wiseman was 14, leaving him truly alone in the world.

Around this time, he heard of an opportunity to become a miner in South Africa."

(If I can step in for a moment... Many young refugees and migrants come to South Africa seeking a better life, often drawn to the mines. Instead, they face trafficking, forced labor, starvation, and deadly cave-ins. Now, back to Wiseman's story...)

"Desperate for change, Wiseman journeyed to South Africa. He successfully crossed the border by convincing officials that he would be attending school—something he never imagined would be possible.



The body of an illegal miner is being pulled out of an illegal gold mine near Johannesburg.



Wiseman lives alone in a single room in this abandoned school building. Gogo Sophie and her husband also live in the building.

Upon seeing the mining site, he felt an overwhelming sense of danger. With great courage, Wiseman requested to be taken to the nearest township, where he lived alone without consistent food or money. And that's how he arrived in Soweto.

One afternoon, Wiseman saw a group of schoolchildren walking through the township. Following them, he ended up at *Thabisang Primary School*. He worked up the courage to speak to the principal. Despite having no money, documents, or family, the principal and staff, moved by his story, rallied together to help him enroll.

This moment was a ray of light after years of darkness. For the first time in his life, Wiseman attended school at the age of 16!

“However, his time there was far from easy. Wiseman carried insecurities that weighed heavily on his shoulders—things like body odor, an accent that marked him as different, and limited fluency in both English and isiZulu. These differences made him a target for bullying. In response, he developed a quick temper, became a bully himself, and acted out in arrogance.

In many South African schools, a child like Wiseman might have been cast aside and left to wander the streets. But not at *Thabisang Primary School*. There, he found love.

For example, one teacher taught him isiZulu and provided hygiene products that helped restore his dignity. Another teacher took Wiseman on his first trip to the mall. She treated him to his first pizza and soda, purchased him his first school uniform, and met many of his school needs.



His life outside the school gates? It brought its own set of trials. He was constantly in search of stable and affordable housing. But after many failed attempts to stay with relatives, he found a home with Gogo Sophie. (*Me again – Gogo is a common term for Grandma in South Africa and is often used to refer to any respected older woman.*)

A pastor and a mother of three, Gogo Sophie saw beyond Wiseman’s struggles and welcomed him into her home. Though many children have come to live with her, Wiseman stood out as a boy with vision, discipline, and focus. She was determined that



Pastor Gogo Sophie’s unwavering support has provided Wiseman with shelter, food, and support

he would not be exploited like many others who are forced into labor in exchange for basic needs.

Having taken only 6th and 7th grades, and then promoted to 9th grade/high school, Wiseman’s hard work paid off: he became fluent in speaking and writing isiZulu. He stood out in the classroom for his eagerness to learn. His efforts soon earned him the respect of both peers and teachers, and he was appointed class captain.

The incredible news? Wiseman’s growth extended beyond school to spiritual transformation. **He was invited to join the Courage Youth program, a community that would become the cornerstone of his personal and spiritual development.** Under the mentorship of his life coaches—one of whom shared a similar story to his own—he received emotional and spiritual support unlike anything he’d ever experienced before.

Through their support and the nurturing environment of Courage Youth, Wiseman experienced a profound transformation. His faith deepened, his confidence soared, and he began to recognize the power of God’s hand in his life. He came to understand that his past did not define him; rather, it was the foundation upon which he could build a future filled with purpose, potential, and hope.

Today, at 18 years old, Wiseman serves as the vice president of his school and actively helps recruit other students to join Courage Youth. Dreaming of becoming an electrical engineer, he showcases strong mechanical skills and determination. Gogo Sophie, who continues to house him, believes his faith and dedication will lead him to success with God by his side.

Wiseman's life is nothing short of a divine orchestration by God—a beautiful, intricate plan woven together by His grace and perfect timing. May Glory be to God! Wiseman has shown us that God is a caring, loving father, a God that sees and hears our prayers.



Wiseman was honored with the "Courage Youth King" award at the CY Camp this year!

May this story strengthen your faith in the Living God we serve."

«F5», Wiseman's story is truly powerful, isn't it? It's such a blessing to be a part of his journey. I must tell you, his story resonates with many of the children we encounter. I want you to know how grateful I am for your continued support of our work over the years.

God is challenging **encompassKids** with growing opportunities in South Africa. Although the need seems insatiable, we sense God's leading to reach more kids and families with reasonable growth in 2025.

Our financial needs are on-going every day reaching 1000's of vulnerable kids and families. Your best gift today will give us the resources and courage to continue to make a difference!

\$100 - Reaches 2 more kids with prevention and early intervention services

\$1,000 - Provides for 1 more child with a loving forever adoptive home

\$7,000 - Provides for 1 more Life Coach for kids like Wiseman

Please make use of the **enclosed self-addressed envelope** and include a check made payable to encompassKids. On the envelope you can add information if you would like to further designate your support.

If you would like to give online, please scan this QR code,

or go to <http://www.encourageKids.org/donate>



«F5», God has provided the opportunity to help change the destinies of 1000s of kids and families across South Africa. Thanks for partnering with us!

Blessings. Paul & Cathy

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