

review it *(Revisit the weekly rituals and follow-up on the last gathering)*

- Look over the last session's Action Step Journal and ask how it went. Share as honestly as you can. It's not meant to cause shame or guilt, rather, a community of care.
- Try to recite last week's memory verse.
- Try to recite the series memory verse, James 1:22.

hear it *(Slow down and hear the Word)*

Read James 4:11-17 aloud (twice if possible, using two different translations).

- ASK: What word, phrase, or image stands out to you and why?
- ASK: What does this passage teach about God?
- ASK: What does this passage teach about humanity?

check the mirror *(Help the group examine themselves honestly by asking questions)*

- **starting easy:**
 - If your life had a "timer sound," what would it be right now: loud and frantic, slow and steady, or randomly beeping at 2 am?
 - When you think about the next 12 months, are you more of a "whiteboard planner" or a "we'll figure it out" person?
- **a look at the book:**
 - What words or phrases jump out to you most?
Things like "slander," "judge," "one Lawgiver," "a mist," "if it is the Lord's will," "arrogant schemes," "knows the good... and doesn't do it"?
 - In verses 11 & 12, what does James connect our speech about people to?
 - In verses 13-17, what's James actually confronting: planning itself, or the posture behind planning?
 - The sermon used the illustration of an hourglass vs. a kitchen timer. Which picture feels truer to your life lately, and why?

▪ **wading further in:**

- Where are you most tempted to “slander” or quietly judge?
Answers like... family, workplace, church, online, or in your own head
- James says there is only one Lawgiver and Judge. What tends to make you climb into that seat anyway?
- Is there a person in your life right now who regularly becomes “the topic?”
 - What would it look like, this week, to practice the royal law by simply stopping the bad-mouthing and praying for them?
- When you plan, what’s your default assumption: “I’m in control,” or “I’m dependent”?
 - What exposes the truth (stress, money, time, conflict, uncertainty)?
- Verse 17 is blunt: knowing the good and not doing it is sin. What “good” have you been delaying because it feels inconvenient or costly?
 - **Take time here!**

wisdom in action *(Apply wisdom principles to life situations.)*

- UP: What’s one way you can build prayer back into your planning this week, not as a ritual, but as trust?
- IN: Where do you need Jesus to re-form your heart so your words become more like His words?
- OUT: Who is one person you can tangibly bless this week (encouragement, service, generosity), remembering that people and God’s Word are what lasts?

put it to work *(Move from talk to action)*

This week’s practice: **ditch the drama.**

- This week, what is one concrete “no” you need to say so you stop participating in the drama?
- Choose one difficult person (don’t name them!). What is one specific prayer you can pray daily for them that is actually shaped like love, not just frustration?
Prayers could be like... blessing, healing, repentance, help, mercy
- Take one plan you’re currently making. How can you intentionally put God “in the middle” of it instead of adding Him onto the end?
 - What would it look like to make one decision this week based more on eternity than finances, or time cost, or comfort?
- What is one simple “Lord willing” practice that isn’t cheesy, but is real surrender?

weekly rituals

(Do these in whatever order—be sure to move through them)

- Weekly Memory Verse:
"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." James 4:17
- Action Step Journal: *Be sure to take some notes here.*

- Series memory verse:
"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." James 1:22

pray

Confess where you've judged incorrectly, slandered, or "played God" with our words.

Ask God to give us love for difficult people. Offer your plans to the Lord with open hands.

Ask God for courage to do the good we already know to do.