



Table Group Discussion Guide

Series: Practical Wisdom | Title: “How Do I Get a Good Name?” | August 16, 2026

Looking Back (5 minutes)

Last week we talked about wealth, and the challenge was the bottom rung of the ladder: write down **five things you’re thankful for**, then keep adding to the list each day. Some of you also named a **\$10 item** you’d live without this week.

- Did you do it? No shame if you didn’t — say so honestly. And if you did, what happened? Did anything shift, or did it feel like nothing? Both are real answers.

Warming Up (5 minutes)

1. Who’s the first person that comes to mind when you hear the phrase “*they had a good name*”? Doesn’t have to be famous — could be a grandparent, a teacher, a neighbor. What made their name mean something?

Getting to Know Each Other (10 minutes)

If you walk to the back of the sanctuary and up the steps, there’s a baptistry dedicated to Pastor Don Rodriguez to honor his service, humility, and sacrifice.

2. If someone described your name to a stranger using three words, what do you think they’d actually say right now? And what three words would you want them to say?

Getting Into the Word (20 minutes)

Scripture: **Proverbs 22:1, Proverbs 3:1–4, James 3:13–18, and Proverbs 18:10**

Proverbs 22:1 says a good name is more desirable than great riches. Most of us think of legacy as something you can put in a will — a business, a house, a trust fund. But you can leave a trustworthy name

whether or not you leave a dollar. That's the whole chain Jeff walked through: **the best legacy is a good name → a good name is the result of living well → living well requires restraint.**

3. What did you inherit from the people who raised you — not financially, but in terms of name and reputation? Was it something you've had to build on, or something you've had to overcome?

James 3:13-18 draws a hard line between two kinds of wisdom — one that runs on envy and selfish ambition, and one that comes from heaven and looks like mercy and sincerity. Here in L.A. there's an entire industry built on helping us *look the part*. Right career, right friends, right neighborhood. Scripture keeps pushing past appearance and into substance.

4. Where are you most tempted to manage how you *look* rather than do the harder work of who you're *becoming*? What would it cost you to stop performing in that area?

Aristotle taught that virtue was the middle way — courage sits between cowardice and recklessness, so aim for the moderate center. It's a tidy idea, but it's not what Jesus offers. Proverbs keeps using the language of a **path**: set your heart on the right path, don't turn aside, keep to a path far from her. Not a middle ground. A direction, and a destination.

5. Be honest — have you settled into a comfortable middle? A little faith, a little church, nothing too radical? What would it look like to actually name a destination and let that reshape your choices?

Going Deeper with Each Other (20 minutes)

There's a question most of us start with: *is this a sin*? And there's a question that comes later: *is this wise*? The second one is harder, because plenty of things aren't technically wrong and still won't get you where you're trying to go.

6. Where in your life are you still asking the beginner question? What's something that isn't technically wrong but isn't helping you get where you're trying to go?

Here's a pattern Jeff observed: life closes in — a diagnosis, a caregiving burden, a bill you can't cover — and somewhere in the middle of it a voice says you *deserve* something. Another drink. Another look. A little something for you. And the restraint you were holding quietly slips.

7. When pressure builds in your life, where do you go? What's your particular "I deserve this"? You don't have to give details — but naming the pattern out loud to people who care about you is where change usually starts.

Proverbs 18:10 says "*The name of the Lord is a fortified tower; the righteous run into it and are safe.*" Notice what it doesn't say. It doesn't say the righteous never fall. It says they know where to run when they do.

8. Where do you actually run when you fall — not where you know you should run, but where you go by reflex? What would it look like to make the name of Jesus your first move instead of your last resort?

Circling Back (5 minutes)

The promise at the end of Sunday was this: call on the name of the Lord, and he turns around and calls you by his — *beloved daughter, beloved son, clean, forgiven, free.*

9. Which is harder for you to believe — that your name can mean something, or that God gives you a new one? What's one thing you're taking away from this conversation?

Pray for Each Other (10 minutes)

Before you start: some of us have been following Jesus for decades, some are newer at it, and some are still figuring out what they believe. All of that is welcome at this table. Nobody has to pray out loud, and nobody has to agree with something they haven't decided on yet.

On Sunday we called on the name of Jesus out loud together. Do something related here, but slower. Go around the table one person at a time. For each person, the rest of the group speaks their **first name** out loud, followed by: "*[Name], you are known by God, you are seen, and you are loved.*"

Let the person receive it without deflecting — just "*thank you.*" Then move to the next person. After everyone has been named, close by praying for whatever specific needs came up in the conversation.

One Thing to Carry into the Week

The “**now what**” from the sermon: **pick one restraint**. Just one. One thing you’re going to say no to for the next seven days — not because it’s forbidden, but because of where you’re trying to go. And every time you feel the pull toward it, **say the name. Jesus**.

Name your one restraint out loud to the group before you leave, and write it down. We’ll follow up on it next time.