

Budget Review Outline: Baby Steps 4–7

This guide is designed for Individuals who are on Dave Ramsey's Baby Steps 4–7. Use this intentional outline each month to keep your budget on track and continue building a life of financial peace and generosity.

1. Set the Scene (10–15 minutes)

- Choose a relaxing spot — coffee shop, kitchen table, or cozy night in.
- Turn off distractions (phones, TV).
- Start with something fun — dessert, a short walk, or your favorite drink.
- Open with a positive note:
 - Reflect on a financial win from the past month — big or small.

2. Review Last Month Together (15 minutes)

- Look over your previous budget: where did you stay on track or need to adjust?
- Review progress toward Baby Step goals:
 - Retirement contributions (Step 4)
 - Kids' college funds (Step 5)
 - Mortgage payoff (Step 6)
 - Giving opportunities (Step 7)
- Celebrate milestones and reflect on lessons learned.

3. Set Income and Giving for the New Month (10 minutes)

- List all expected income sources for the month.
- Give first — tithing, charitable giving, or spontaneous generosity.
- Reflect on new giving opportunities — community needs, friends, or causes.

4. Build the Monthly Budget (20–30 minutes)

- Use a zero-based budget: $\text{income} - \text{expenses} = 0$.
- Review spending categories:
 - Essentials: housing, utilities, food, transportation
 - Lifestyle: entertainment, hobbies, date nights
 - Future: investing, mortgage payoff, sinking funds
- Adjust for upcoming events or seasonal changes.

5. Track Investments & Long-Term Progress (15 minutes)

- Review investment accounts and savings balances.
- Track your net worth — celebrate growth!
- Revisit long-term goals:
 - When do you hope to pay off your home?
 - Are you on track for retirement?
 - Any new dreams to start saving for?

6. Dream & Plan (10–15 minutes)

- Reflect on your 'why' — what financial freedom means for your family.
- Set or revisit short-term dreams (vacation, home update, giving project).
- Imagine your long-term vision — travel, ministry, business, or legacy giving.

7. Wrap Up with Gratitude & Fun (5–10 minutes)

- End on a positive note:
 - Pray or reflect on the blessings you've experienced.
 - Schedule your next mid-month check-in.
 - Finish the night with something lighthearted — movie, dessert, or a walk.