



Developing a

RULE OF LIFE



What is a Rule of Life?

A rule of life is a schedule and set of spiritual practices and relational rhythms that help us create space in our busy world to live well, connect with others and grow more like Jesus by helping us experience God in everything we do.



What should I consider as I build my rule of life?

Start small: As with creating any new set of goals or hopes, it's tempting to get excited to the point of over-reach and we attempt to live out everything from day one. That is a strategy bound to fail! Start where you are, not where you feel you should be. Creating unrealistic goals leave us discouraged and disillusioned. Doable, enjoyable goals move us forward in our spiritual formation. Simply start where you're at and move forward at a deliberate, but relaxed pace.

Be specific: Look for practices that are practical, concrete, and embodied, not vague and ideological I.e., "Sabbath on Sunday" not "be more relaxed." Or "Pray for 10 min morning and evening" not "Pray more"

Consider your personality: If you're introverted, carve out plenty of time to be alone in the quiet. If you're more extroverted, make sure you get a lot of time with friends. But also do your best to architect a balance that works for you. Introverts still need time with others and extroverts can benefit from silence and solitude.

Consider your season of life and stage of apprenticeship: If you have little kids, start very small, and go really easy on yourself. If you're new to following Jesus and just beginning to learn about practices like prayer, silence and solitude, fasting or sabbath, don't copy someone who is twenty years down the road. Just take the next step in your journey.



What should I consider as I build my rule of life?

Keep a healthy balance of upstream and downstream practices: Choose practices you already do and ones you need to grow in. By upstream, we mean practices that may feel hard for you but really move your soul toward growth. And by downstream, we mean those practices that you find fun, living giving, easy and joyful. As a general rule, we need just a few upstream practices, and lots of downstream practices.

Keep a healthy balance of structure and spontaneity: Don't let your rule become rigid, boring, or a legalistic, dull obligation. And never let it override the Spirit's frequently unscheduled interruptions in our days. A good rule should feel like freedom, not restriction.

Remember that a good rule is a working document: Like us, it's dynamic, not static. Life is a bit of a moving target, so we have to regularly review our rule and make sure it's still bringing us life with God and others. If you are sacrificing healthy relationship (with God or others) in order to accomplish your "rule," this version of your rule has ceased to aid you in the goal of drawing closer to God and becoming a person of love. So continuously, revisit how things are going in order to adjust as need for continued growth.



Rule of Life Exercise



What do you currently do that nurtures your spirit and fills you with delight?

Consider people and places as well as activities. Write down everything you can think of. Your list may include gardening, walking the dog, being in nature, talking with close friends, cooking, painting, jumping out of airplanes, or any number of other possibilities. List them all. If you don't currently do much that nurtures your spirit, spend some time identifying some things you'd like to try.

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What people, places, and activities do you need to avoid because they deplete you or make it difficult for you to remain anchored in Christ?

This includes anything that negatively impacts your spirit—violent movies, hurrying, going beyond your limits, etc. Again, write down everything that comes to mind.

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What “have to’s” impact your rhythms in this season of life?

For example, this might include caring for aging parents, raising a young child or a child with special needs, dealing with health concerns, or navigating a demanding season at work, etc.

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My Rule of Life



YEARLY

Prayer

i.e. a daily rhythm of prayer or a life deeply rooted in scripture

Rest

i.e. a regular rhythm of Sabbath rest or a life marked by simplicity & generosity

MONTHLY

Relationships

i.e. active participation in the family of Jesus or a lifestyle of Christ-like hospitality

Work

i.e. A pursuit of justice and peace or spiritual, emotional & physical maturity

WEEKLY

DAILY



“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30