

A RULE OF LIFE



ARE YOU TIRED? WORN OUT? BURNED OUT
ON RELIGION? COME TO ME. GET AWAY WITH
ME AND YOU'LL RECOVER YOUR LIFE.
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO TAKE A REAL REST.
WALK WITH ME AND WORK WITH ME – WATCH
HOW I DO IT.

LEARN THE UNFORCED RHYTHMS OF GRACE.

Matthew 11v28-30
(MSG)

This booklet provides simple to understand tools to help us on our journey as followers of Jesus. The purpose of this booklet is to help us align our loves and longings with our faith, and to be more intentional about our actions, mindsets and rhythms. To help us learn what Eugene Peterson described as the **unforced rhythms of grace**.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Please keep in mind that everything included in this booklet is but a means to an end. We cannot earn favour with God. Our primary goal is to simply create additional space in our lives to abide in a deep, loving enjoyment of God's presence.

Remain centered around these purposes:

- Love God
- Learn the way of Jesus
- Live with purpose

**ABIDE IN ME, AND I IN YOU.
AS THE BRANCH CANNOT BEAR FRUIT BY
ITSELF, UNLESS IT ABIDES IN THE VINE,
NEITHER CAN YOU, UNLESS YOU ABIDE IN ME.**

**John 15v4
(ESV)**

To abide in Jesus is to find our life in him. To make him our **home**.

However, just like any relationship needs structure and intentionality to be healthy, we too need structure for our lives in Jesus so that we can live out of a place of deep, loving enjoyment of God's presence.

To do this, we must be intentional about what we give our time and attention to.

Jesus himself lived this out by making things like prayer, fasting, silence, solitude, and regular meals with others a cornerstone of his routine.

By making simple, specific and intentional adjustments to our schedules and rhythms, we can slowly but inevitably train our soul, mind and body to become more aware and attentive to the Holy Spirit working and moving in our lives.

We start by crafting a rule of life.

However, this is always an invitation, and never an obligation. Grace always invites rather than demands.

ABIDING IN JESUS

**"A RULE OF LIFE, VERY SIMPLY, IS AN
INTENTIONAL, CONSCIOUS PLAN TO KEEP
GOD AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING WE DO."**

Peter Scazzero

In his book *Crafting a Rule of Life*, Stephen A Macchia described the purpose of a rule of life this way:

A rule of life allows us to clarify our deepest values, our most important relationships, our most authentic hopes and dreams, our most meaningful work, our highest priorities. It allows us to live with intention and purpose in the present moment.

And it is exactly that.

A rule of life is not a system of laws. It's not even a system of rigid rules, despite the name. Instead, it's a way that we can regulate our lives so we stay on the path in front of us. It provides us structure to our lives in order to make space for a deep, loving enjoyment of God's presence, daily.

In his book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer describes how a rule of life helps us abide in Jesus:

What a trellis is to a vine, a rule of life is to abiding. It's a structure—in this case a schedule and a set of practices—to set up abiding as the central pursuit of your life. It's a way to organize all of your life around the practice of the presence of God, to work and rest and play and eat and drink and hang out with your friends and run errands and catch up on the news, all out of a place of deep, loving enjoyment of the Father's company.

So how do we craft one?

Crafting a Rule of Life. Stephen A. Macchia. InterVarsity Press, 2012.

The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry. John Mark Comer, Waterbrook. 2019.

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To develop a rule of life, it is important that we first examine where we are right now in our journey. Can I locate areas in my life where I need healing and greater wholeness? Can I recognize choices I make that distract me from loving God and other people? Can I pinpoint actions, mindsets and rhythms that I would like to see change?

The following questions have been taken from Mark Scandrette's book *Practicing the Way of Jesus*. They serve as a helpful starting point for examining our needs:

- (1) How do I live in my body?
- (2) What do I think about or dwell on in my mind?
- (3) How am I managing my feelings and the stresses of life?
- (4) Where am I spending my time, talents and resources?
- (5) How am I showing up to my relationships?

Once I've asked questions like these, and I've recognized areas where I need to grow, it's time to start developing a schedule and set of practices to make room for that growth.

A rule of life is both a schedule and set of practices (actions, mindsets and rhythms) that help us create space in our days for a deep, loving enjoyment of God's presence and others.

Here are a few things to consider, adapted from "PracticingtheWay.org":

(1) A rule of life should start small: I set a goal that is realistic and based on where I am. I start small and move slowly, with intention.

(2) A rule of life should be specific: I set actions, mindsets and rhythms that are practical and concrete. I avoid being vague by being as specific as I can be about my rule of life.

(3) A rule of life should consider our season and stage of life: I ask myself: What season am I in? My rule of life should be reflective of where I am in my journey.

(4) A rule of life should provide structure, and yet be open to spontaneity: I don't let my rule of life become a law. Life is full of unscheduled interruptions.

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Here are a few things to consider, adapted from "PracticingtheWay.org":

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(5) A rule of life should have both upstream and downstream practices: I work into my schedule actions, mindsets and rhythms that challenge me to grow and become a person of love, alongside actions, mindsets and rhythms that are easy, joyful and fun to practice.

(6) A rule of life is dynamic, not static: I regularly review my rule of life to make sure it is still creating space for me to live well alongside God and others. If my rule of life is drawing me away from God and others, and I'm failing to grow as a person of love through it, I need to reevaluate my rule of life.

(7) A rule of life is written down: I keep my rule of life written down and in a place where I can regularly evaluate my progress.

MIND & SOUL
BODY & REST
WORK & FINANCES
HOSPITALITY & MINISTRY
RELATIONSHIPS & MARRIAGE

A rule of life encompasses the whole of your life: mind, body and soul.

Here are some areas of life I can consider being more intentional around:

MIND & SOUL

I create a schedule and set of practices designed to turn my attention to God throughout my day. I make my home in Jesus by learning to live out of a place of deep, loving enjoyment of God's presence in the ordinary. I also guard my soul and mind from giving too much time to the things that are harmful to my mental health.

Here are some examples to consider:

I commit to daily moments of silence and solitude to focus my attention on God.

I commit to morning prayer and/or the prayer of Examen at night.

I commit to fasting once a week.

I commit to a daily walk, without my phone.

I commit to a weekly Sabbath where I give my attention to family and God.

I commit to attending a yearly retreat, free of work and digital distractions.

I commit to reading my Bible once a day before I go to bed.

I commit to attending church online or in person once a week.

I commit to a daily limit on my device usage.

I commit to specific periods of time without social media throughout the year.

I commit to an intake of teaching through reading a book, listening to a podcast, or attending a Bible study, weekly.

Etc.

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Here are some areas of life I can consider being more intentional about.

BODY & REST

I create a schedule and set of practices designed to keep my body healthy, rested and whole before God. Our bodies and the amount of rest we give them is key to our spiritual formation.

Here are some examples to consider:

- I commit to eating a more balanced diet.
- I commit to regular exercise by running each morning before work.
- I commit to an annual visit to my doctor.
- I commit to limiting my alcohol intake.
- I commit to going to bed before 10:00pm on weekdays.
- I commit to going to the gym twice a week with a friend.
- I commit to regular activity by joining a sports teams.
- I commit to sleeping eight hours a night.
- I commit to a weekly Sabbath, with zero digital distractions.
- I commit to turning off my phone each night at a specific time.
- I commit to leaving my phone in another room when I sleep.
- I commit to a quiet time each morning before I work or turn on my phone.
- Etc.

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Here are some areas of life I can consider being more intentional about.

WORK & FINANCES

I create a schedule and set of practices designed to assist me in living simply, generously, and with healthy work habits.

Examples to consider:

- I commit to working hard for a specific set of hours each day.
- I commit to answering work emails only during work hours and never on weekends.
- I commit to creating a budget and reviewing it every month on the first day.
- I commit to a dedicated amount of time to a project I'm passionate about.
- I commit to setting aside a portion of my income to give away to the poor.
- I commit to giving away money or gifts to others without telling them it was me.
- I commit to regular tithing with my local church.
- I commit to downsizing my closet once a quarter.
- I commit to talking with my spouse before I make any significant purchase.
- I commit to buying clothing only when the clothes I own have been worn out.
- I commit to limiting the amount of shopping I do online to 2 hours a week.
- Etc.

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Here are some areas of life I can consider being more intentional about.

HOSPITALITY & MINISTRY

I create a schedule and set of practices designed to see my home or living space as an opportunity for the people around me to experience God's love in action. I intentionally view all of life as an opportunity for ministry.

Examples to consider:

- I commit to inviting a friend who does not know Jesus over for dinner once a month.
- I commit to inviting a friend who does not know Jesus to an Alpha once a year.
- I commit to inviting a friend who does not know Jesus to my Celebration Community.
- I commit to inviting my neighbors over for lunch every other Saturday.
- I commit to throwing a backyard party for my neighborhood once a summer.
- I commit to volunteering with a local non-profit organization each week.
- I commit to volunteering with my local church.
- I commit to praying for and giving my attention to the poor in my city.
- I commit to developing a comfortable and safe place I can invite people over to.
- Etc.

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Here are some areas of life I can consider being more intentional about.

RELATIONSHIPS & MARRIAGE

I create a schedule and set of practices and rhythms designed to help me create, develop and nurture deep, loving relationships with family, friends, my spouse and my community.

Examples to consider:

- I commit to a weekly date night with my spouse.
- I commit to sitting down to dinner with my family 4 times a week.
- I commit to coffee and breakfast with a best friend once a week.
- I commit to weekly meals with my Celebration Community.
- I commit to going out to dinner with family and friends without my phone.
- I commit to nurturing a healthy sexual connection with my spouse.
- I commit to daily times of prayer with my spouse or significant other.
- I commit to regular trips throughout the year to unwind with family.
- I commit to play time with my children where I am attentive to them.
- Etc.

My Rule of Life						
Soul & Mind						
Body & Rest						
Work & Finances						
Hospitality & Ministry						
Relationships & Marriage						
	Daily					
	Weekly					
	Monthly					
	Quarterly					
	Yearly					

