



THE SPRING MIDTOWN

# BUILDING A RULE OF LIFE

Structuring our lives to better learn,  
love, and live like Jesus

*Take heed, and keep your soul diligently,  
lest you forget the things which your eyes have seen,  
and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life  
-Deuteronomy 4:9*

*"We can become like Christ by doing one thing—by following  
him in the overall style of life he chose for himself." - Dallas  
Willard*





# WHAT IS A RULE OF LIFE?

A rule of life is a holistic outline of daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly rhythms and practices that serve to shape us into the image of Christ.

The word "rule" refers to the Latin root, *regula*, which was originally used to describe a trellis in a vineyard. Just as the vine must be elevated in order to grow healthily and bear good fruit, humans need a "rule" in order to support and organize our own growth into the people God has designed us to be.

Our rule is a structure that helps produce the beauty and goodness Christ has for us when we abide in Him (John 15:1-7).



# PARTICIPATING IN AN ANCIENT TRADITION

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This spiritual practice has been around for millennia, traced all the way back to a fourth-century monk named St. Benedict. One of the fathers of the early monastic movement, Benedict developed his own rule for living communally amongst other devoted Christian believers. Since then, this tool has been used in a variety of forms and expressions to help people center their lives upon the person of Jesus in a world constantly seeking to pull them away.





# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE:

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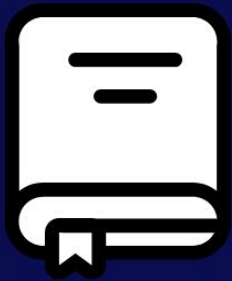
Given the breadth of history behind the idea of a Rule of Life, it is important to remember that this can be done in a variety of ways. We have developed this guide not as an end-all, be-all, but rather as a helpful framework that can be utilized in your specific context and season.

Every individual Rule of Life should look different, for every person is given unique gifts, meant to be cultivated and used in particular ways by God, and we should endeavor to know and utilize our gifts for the sake of the church and the world (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).





# THREE GOALS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: TO LEARN, LOVE, AND LIVE LIKE JESUS



LEARN



LOVE



LIVE

## Practices

- Scripture
- Prayer
- Disciplines
- Study/Reflection

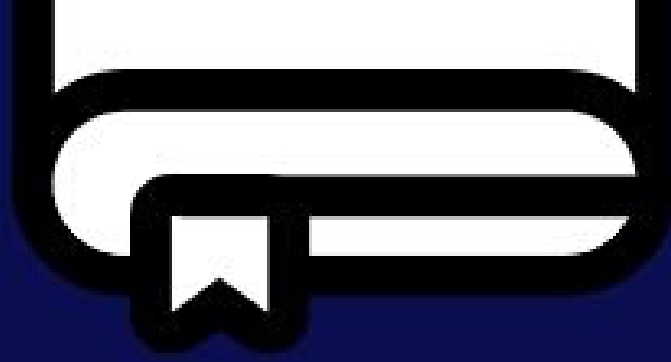
## Practices

- Neighbors
- Church
- Spouse/Sig.  
Other
- Family

## Practices

- Rest/Sabbath
- Giving/Service
- Work
- Health





# LEARN

Jesus devoted His life to knowing, interpreting, and teaching about God, Himself, and the scriptures. We want to be people devoted to knowing God in the same way, building practices in our lives that seek God deeply. We can accomplish this goal with four distinct practices:

## Scripture

**Examples:** Morning devotionals, bible reading plans, sermon listening, etc.

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Daily quiet time with scripture or devotional

## Prayer

**Examples:** Praying and customizing the Lord's Prayer, centering prayer, confession, Praise/Repent/Ask/Yield structure, etc.

**Recommended Baseline Practice:**  
Daily prayer for 10 min.

## Disciplines

**Examples:** Solitude, fasting, worship, silence, thankfulness, examen, etc.

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Weekly examen, monthly 1 hour solitude or 24 hour fast

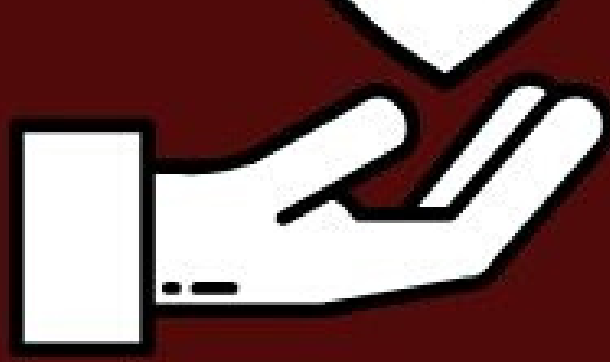
## Study/Reflection

**Examples:** Meditation on scripture, reading commentaries/theologians/pastors, podcasts, etc.

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Weekly read of article or commentary, two books annually on faith and life





# LOVE

Jesus was the ultimate picture of love in the world, healing the sick, filling needs in His communities, taking the form of a servant, and ultimately giving His life so that all people might commune with God. We want to be people who love others in the same way, building practices in our lives to transform the world around us through sacrificial servanthood.

## Neighbors

**Examples:** Meals, gifts, yard work, childcare, etc.

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Weekly conversation with one neighbor, two annual invitations to dinner, weekly hospitality practice

## Spouse/Sig. Other

**Examples:** Meals together, texts/calls, date nights, trips together, etc.

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Daily touchpoints, weekly intentional time, two annual adventures

## Church

**Examples:** Sunday morning attendance, community group involvement, consistent meetings with church community

### **Recommended Baseline Practice:**

Weekly church and community group attendance, weekly call/meet with friends, monthly relationship pursuit across lines of class/ethnicity/personality

## Family/Friends

**Examples:** Time with children, meals with extended family, maintaining friendships, etc.

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Daily time with immediate family, weekly touchpoints with extended family and close friends





# LIVE

Jesus did not remain in religious practices and circles, but went out into cultural hubs, spending His time and energy proclaiming His Kingdom to all those who needed it. In the Hebrew scriptures, the word *shema* is used to describe listening, and that listening never simply meant taking in information: it always implied going out and doing what was said. We want to be people whose listening moves us to radical action in our specific contexts.

## Rest/Sabbath

**Examples:** Time to rest, enjoying/praising creation, leisurely time with God, sleep, passions/hobbies

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Sufficient daily sleep, weekly day of rest, weekly "nothing night" (time to enjoy passions/hobbies),

## Work

**Examples:** Manual labor, profession, vocation,

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Significant daily time of "work" (profession, job, vocation, etc.), weekly labor (cooking, cleaning, yardwork)

## Giving/Service

**Examples:** Tithing to church, giving to local and national justice organizations, giving/serving strangers in need, giving/serving church community

### **Recommended Baseline Practice:**

Daily ways to help strangers, weekly/monthly tithing to church/justice organizations, monthly service to church community, monthly service to local community

## Health

**Examples:** Exercise, mental health practices, eating well

### **Recommended Baseline**

**Practice:** Daily exercise (walk, workout, sports, hike, etc.), daily food health, weekly mental health practices



# I'M ALREADY BUSY ENOUGH! HOW CAN I DO ALL OF THIS?

We know: life can seem overwhelming. You may feel like you are already filled to the brim - how could you possibly add all of this?

It is crucial to remember, at this point, that a Rule of Life is not something "extra" that we add in to our already busy lives. It is instead a structure that we can use to prioritize the things most important to us, reducing hurry and anxiety.

When we are able to create a schedule that aligns fully with our values, we can find inner peace in knowing that the whole scope of each of our lives is working towards our ultimate purpose.

This means, if you are feeling overwhelmed, confused, dissatisfied, or lost with the ways you currently spend your time, a Rule of Life is exactly the thing for you!



# NOW WHAT? FOUR EASY STEPS

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1

Set aside time: Pick a day in the next week or so and commit 2-3 hours to creating this. Turn your phone off so that you can be distraction free.

2

Go through each category intentionally: Go through your current rhythms, and spend time considering what it means to grow and expand them in your current season. Be realistic, but also challenge yourself! Remember, this is designed to help you live the kind of life God is calling you to.

3

Use the chart: Once you've established some practices you want to keep and those you want to change or update, use the chart on the next page as a template to guide you. Customize, and expand as your specific context allows and demands.

4

Commit: With your established Rule of Life now completed, it is important to commit to what you have written down. As with any change, it may take some getting used to, but jumping in head first will give you a better indication of its helpfulness in your current season.







**QUESTIONS?**

**WANT TO TALK OR PRAY  
ABOUT YOUR OWN RULE OF  
LIFE?**

**WANT SOME EXTRA  
RESOURCES FOR READING AND  
STUDY?**

**WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!**

We'd love to connect with you and chat  
more.

Contact:

Luke Parker @  
luke.b.parker@gmail.com

Clint Leavitt at  
clint.springpeople@gmail.com

Resources for Further Study:

*Spirit of the Disciplines*, by Dallas Willard

*Celebration of Discipline: The Path to  
Spiritual Growth*, by Richard J. Foster

*Crafting a Rule of Life*, by Stephen A.  
Macchia

*Let Your Life Speak*, by Parker Palmer