

Rule of Life

Arranging Our Lives Around His Love

Grace & Prayer

Lord, give me the grace to order my life around loving You and loving others. Show me what needs to be embraced, and what needs to be released, so that my life may be aligned with Your Presence.

A Rule of Life is not merely a schedule or a means to be more productive and efficient, but rather a way of being that allows the love of Christ to abide in us more deeply.

The word “rule” comes from the Latin word *regula*, meaning a trellis. A trellis does not produce fruit. **It simply creates the structure for something to grow.**

In the same way, a Rule of Life is a structure that we create in our daily lives that allows for the life and love of Christ to grow in us.

Ruth Barton says this about a Rule of Life, “*Developing a rule of life is about **arranging our lives around the practices and experiences that keep us alive spiritually and create space for the intimacy with God that we so desperately need and want.***”

Why do we need a Rule of Life?

We don't drift toward spiritual formation.

We drift toward distraction, hurry, and our disordered attachments.

Everything we've been talking about over the past several months – false scripts, ordered attachments, active indifference, consolation and desolation, and meditation, all lead to this:

Will I intentionally order my life around God, or will my life be shaped unintentionally by everything else?

Peter Scazzero says, “*A Rule of Life enables us to **intentionally order our lives around what matters most: loving God and loving others.***”

Without a Rule of Life, we will end up distracted and overwhelmed by life, and our spiritual and emotional growth will plateau. We wind up:

- *Scattered*: Our schedule is full but doesn't reflect our purpose and priorities.
- *Hurried*: We're busier than we want to be, but don't know what to change.
- *Reactive*: It seems we're never in charge, always responding to demands.
- *Exhausted*: We end each day weary and discouraged, unsure if we've spent it well.
- *Lazy*: We choose complacency and don't live out God's full potential in us.

A Rule of Life helps us move from:

- reactive → intentional
- scattered → rooted
- driven → yielded
- lazy → faithful

As we think about creating our own Rule of Life, here are a few things to keep in mind.

A Rule of Life is not:

- A performance checklist.
- A legalistic burden.
- A way to prove your spirituality.

It is:

- A response to love.
- A structure for abiding.
- A way of cooperating with what God is already doing.

Creating a Rule of Life

As we begin to create a Rule of Life. A helpful way to do this is to consider the key areas of our lives where God is already at work, and where He is inviting us to be more intentional.

The goal of life is to dwell in deep communion with Christ and to be firmly anchored in our union with Him.

But how and when and where we practice this will look different for each of us. Our Rule of Life must reflect:

- Our current season of life
- Our responsibilities
- Our relationships
- Our limitations

A Rule of Life is not created in an ideal world. It is created in the reality of your actual life. Your Rule of Life should fit your life and not someone else's.

As you begin to build your Rule of Life, think of these three questions:

1. Who do I want to be?
2. How do I want to live?
3. What has God called me to do (or steward)?

It is also helpful to think through a few key areas:

- Your relationship with God
- Your personal life and health
- Your relationships
- Your church/community
- Your work and calling

These are not separate compartments, but interconnected areas where God is forming you.

Below on the next page are some examples to help guide your thinking. As you read through them, don't try to adopt everything – simply notice what resonates with you and where God may be inviting you.

Relationship with God

- Scripture reading
- Prayer
- Silence and solitude
- Study and reflection

Personal Life & Health

- Sleep
- Rest and Sabbath
- Physical health and fitness
- Recreation and hobbies
- Money and possessions

Relationships

- Friendships
- Neighbors and coworkers
- Marriage
- Children and parenting
- Extended family

Church

- Participation and worship
- Community and friendships
- Service and mission
- Generosity

Work & Calling

- Vocation and responsibilities
- Workplace relationships
- Leadership and influence
- Growth, development, and coaching

As you start putting together your Rule of Life, remember, you are not trying to build the perfect life. You are responding to the invitation of Jesus to abide with Him in your actual life.

Exercise Filling Out the Four Quadrants

Before we jump into filling anything out, slow down for a moment. A Rule of Life is not something we build quickly. It's something we discern prayerfully.

What you're about to fill out in these four quadrants is not just a schedule.

It's a reflection of:

- What you value
- What you prioritize
- And ultimately, what is forming your life

The Four Quadrants

The four quadrants you see in front of you represent the core areas of your life:

- Prayer & Scripture
- Relationships
- Rest, Play & Health
- Work & Ministry

These are not separate compartments. They are the primary ways your life is being formed; either intentionally or unintentionally.