

Developing a Rule/Rhythm of Life

Cultivating Rhythms for Spiritual Transformation

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We are all living by a rule of life whether intentionally or unintentionally...how do we choose our “best yeses” in order to create space for God to do His transforming work within us?

Romans 12:1-2: *“Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking –around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don’t become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You’ll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”* (The Message)

“Your personal rule of life is a holistic description of the Spirit-empowered rhythms and relationships that create, redeem, sustain, and transform the life God invites you to humbly fulfill for Christ’s glory. It 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.” (pg. 14, *Crafting a Rule of Life* by Stephen Macchia)

Why have a rule of life?

1. We are all living by an unwritten personal rule of life that we are following, some with great clarity, others unknowingly. It is our hope that through prayerful consideration, we can determine a rule that more closely matches the heartbeat of God.
2. Without a defined rule of life, Macchia compares us to a wild, untamed grape vine that will produce some fruit, but probably won’t be as abundant as it could be. Instead, we may become more vulnerable to things that threaten our spiritual vitality. However, those who are intentionally reflective, prayerful and attentively responsive are like cultivated vines. “Growing on a trellis (a rule of life) and cultivated toward maturity, they become spiritually formed. The trellis curbs our tendency to wander and supports our rather frail attempts to be nurtured spiritually. Our lives will produce an abundance of fruit for the glory of God. Mature vines are cultivated to produce the best fruit.”

3. Through developing a R.O.L. or maintaining consistent patterns of sacred rhythms, we are choosing to be intentional in creating space for God to do His work of spiritual formation and transformation to align ourselves more fully with His will, His word, and His design of who He created us to be.

Getting Started

1. **IDENTITY:** Building a framework from which to create our R.O.L

After considering A. through E., prayerfully formulate a personal mission statement.

A. Roles: What are my primary relationships? (Psalm 51:10)

B. Gifts: What are my God-given gifts, talents and temperament? (Romans 12:3-8)

C. Desires: What are my God-honoring deepest longings of the heart and core values? (Psalm 37:

3-4)

D. Vision: What is the intentional passion God has planted in me, what is God calling me to that is fueled by this passion? (1 Samuel 3:10)

E. Service: Where and with whom am I currently investing myself in service to others? (Philippians 3:10-14)

2. **PRIORITIES:** Forming our R.O.L. through daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly /seasonally, yearly practices/rhythms represent the following priorities:

- Spiritual Priorities: scripture, lectio divina, prayer, silence, solitude, Sabbath rest, examen, soul care...
- Relational Priorities: prayerfully ask the Lord to lead you to the relationships we are called to deepen, support, encourage, and come along side...
- Physical Priorities: caring for our bodies: exercise, nutrition, sleep, rest, recreation, health...
- Financial Priorities: prayerfully release our earthly possessions into God's hands, and prayerfully seek to conform to the image of Christ and become generous like Him, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also... (Recommended read: *Revolution in Generosity* by Wesley K. Willmer, Editor)
- Missional (Service) Priorities: where and with whom are you currently investing yourself in service to others? Where and with whom do you desire in the future to invest yourself? Is your current investment of service in alignment with your personal mission statement?

3. **COMMUNITY:** keeping accountable with our R.O.L. within a trusted community of believers, i.e.: church, ministry, study group, etc.

- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: “Two are better than one...For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help.” Macchia advises: “Sharing our stories helps us clarify the intentions of our hearts toward the fulfillment of his divine will. A small circle of friends also reminds us of the presence, power and protection of the Holy Spirit. Confiding in one another instills a sense of hope for the future as children who are dearly loved by their Father.”
- Cease the continual striving of a life of nonstop technology, noise and activity. Stop looking exclusively to others’ ideas of how you are to live as a Christian. Instead, begin to listen to God with an attentive, reflective and discerning heart. In the context of your spiritual community, take the necessary time to discover afresh his invitation to the abundant life. This journey of personal discovery is sure to be life transforming for you and all whose path you gracefully cross.” (*Crafting a Rule of Life*, Stephen Macchia, pg. 19)

After prayerful consideration of #1,2 and 3 above, you are ready to craft your own mission statement and rule of life. Keep it simple, be creative, be sure to share with our Lifesprings Community. For examples go to: <https://ruleoflife.com/myrule/> .