

RULE OF LIFE

(Taken from Peter Scazzero's book, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Nashville: Integrity Publishers, 2006)

The Ancient Treasure of a Rule of Life "Rule" comes from the Greek for "trellis." A trellis is a frame that enables a grapevine to grow upward, becoming more fruitful and productive. In the same way, a Rule of Life is a trellis that helps us abide in Christ and become more fruitful spiritually.

A Rule of Life, very simply, is an intentional, conscious plan to keep God at the center of everything we do. It provides guidelines to help us continually remember God as the Source. Without intentionality, we eventually become unfocused, distracted, and adrift spiritually.

When you look at the life of Daniel, it is clear he oriented his life around a relationship with God. He renounced certain activities, such as eating the king's contaminated food (chapter 1) and engaged in regular times of prayer (chapter 6). Daniel somehow fed himself spiritually and blossomed into an extraordinary man of God in a hostile environment.

The Elements for a Rule of Life

A) PRAYER

Scripture

How am I regularly reflecting upon the Word of God?

How am I hiding God's Word in my heart?

Silence & Solitude

Are there times in the day when I am "still before the Lord and wait patiently for him?" (Psalm 37:7).

Daily Office

Are there times in each day when I consciously remind myself of God's presence and His reality?

Study

Growing, maturing Christians are always exploring, reading and learning. Do I take time to read or study for the purpose of formation in Christ?

B) REST

Sabbath

Have I developed a rhythm of setting apart one twenty-four hour period each week to stop, rest, delight, and generally slow down?

Simplicity

"Live as free of complications as possible [so] you're free to concentrate on simply pleasing the Master" (1 Corinthians 7:32 MSG).

What does simplicity look like for me?

Play & Recreation

"Life can be difficult, so have fun whenever you can to the glory of God." - Geri Scazzero

How do I regularly include an element of fun into my life?

C) WORK/ACTIVITY

Service & Mission

In what way(s) is God inviting me to serve him at this stage of my journey?

In what ways can I use my time, talents, resources, and gifts for others?

What passions and desires has God placed within me?

Care for the Physical Body

Caring for our bodies is as spiritual as prayer or worship. How many times a week will I exercise? What will I do? What about my work habits? Am I eating

a balanced, healthy, nutritious diet? Do I get adequate rest and sleep? When was the last time I went to the doctor for an annual checkup?

D) RELATIONSHIPS

Emotional Health

Do I have a constructive way of identifying and expressing my feelings? (i.e. journaling, peer support group, network of friends, spiritual director, etc.)

Family

What am I doing to invest in my marriage regularly?

How do my children know I really love them?

How do I want to relate to my family of origin (i.e. Dad, Mom, siblings)?

Community

Do I have a Christian support network or “band of brothers / sisters” to provide companionship on the journey?

Summary:

Reread or rethink your Rule of Life regularly (once a year). Begin slowly, working on only one or two elements at a time. Be willing to make mistakes, try again, and learn new things.

“Your way of acting should be different from the world’s way. The love of Christ must come before all else.” (Benedict)