



Crafting a Rule of Life

Overview

A Rule of Life is a schedule and a set of practices and relational rhythms that create space for us to be with Jesus, become like him, and do as he did. It's an intentional plan to slow down and simplify our life around being spiritually formed by Jesus. To turn the vision of spiritual formation into a reality.

It is an ancient idea, whose time has come again.

Practice reflection

Before we begin Session 07, break up into small groups and share your reflections on last session's exercise of confession.

- 01 Where did you experience resistance in your practice of confession?
- 02 Where did you feel delight?
- 03 How does confession impact or change your view of God or yourself?

Teaching

Scripture

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

—John 15v5-8

Session summary

- Transformation is possible, but it's not inevitable.
- We need an intentional plan for our spiritual formation — what the early Christians called a “Rule of Life.”
- A Rule of Life is a schedule and a set of practices and relational rhythms that create space for us to be with Jesus, become like him, and do as he did.
- When crafting a Rule for the first time, it's important to start small, and begin with subtraction, not addition.
- This coming week, our exercise is to design a Rule of Life.

Six tips

- 01 Start small
- 02 Think subtraction, not addition
- 03 Take a balanced approach
- 04 Take into account your personality and season of life
- 05 There is no formation without repetition
- 06 Do this in community

After the video

Closing prayer

End your time together by praying this liturgy:

Help us shape our lives, Father,
in the way of your Son —
the way of prayer and justice,
of generosity and purity,
of self-offering and compassion,
self-mastery and faith —
that the rhythms of our living
may be conduits of your grace,
welcoming your Kingdom in this world.
Amen.

OPTIONAL

If you'd like to continue your conversation, here are some additional questions for reflection:

- 01 As you contemplate crafting a Rule of Life, what are some deep desires that come up for you? What changes could bring more flourishing to your life?
- 02 Imagine some practices you might tend to do individually. What would it look like to experience these in community? What does it feel like in your body to envision that?

Practice

Crafting a Rule of Life

Now we're ready to take all the ideas we've been learning and "put it into practice" by writing our own Rule of Life.

There's no "right way" to craft a Rule of Life, and there's no one-size-fits-all approach to spiritual formation. The goal is to write a Rule that is customized for your unique personality, situation, and community.

To that end, we've created a digital tool called the [Rule of Life Builder](#).

- 01 Go to practictheway.org and log in.
- 02 Click on the Rule of Life Builder and follow its prompts. It will guide you through daily, weekly, monthly, and seasonal practices in a number of categories.
- 03 You can utilize the suggestions, write yours completely from scratch, or do a mix of both.
 - Remember: start small. Your Rule can begin with just a few small practices and rhythms.
 - In this Course, we've covered three basic rhythms:
 - A daily **prayer** rhythm that includes the reading of **Scripture** in the quiet of **solitude**.
 - A weekly **Sabbath**.
 - And next session, we'll invite you to a weekly touchpoint in **community**.
 - You can continue these practices and add, subtract, and edit as you sense the Spirit's direction.
 - A Rule of Life isn't static, but dynamic. It changes with the seasons of our lives and stages of our discipleship. This digital template is easy to return to and modify. As time goes on, revisit your Rule and take the next step in your spiritual journey.
 - You can do this exercise one time before the next session, or every day. It's also an exercise you can practice for the rest of your life, to open deeper and deeper parts of your inner world to God.

RULE OF LIFE BUILDER



Resources to go deeper

If you're interested in growing even more in creating life-giving and communal rhythms in your life, here are some more resources to consider.

Recommended reading

- *God in My Everything* by Ken Shigematsu
- *At Home in the World* by Margaret Guenther
- *The Life We're Looking For* by our guest, Andy Crouch

Recommended listening

- Unhurrying with a Rule of Life series from Bridgetown Church:
link.practictheway.org/course-s7a
- Unforced Rhythms of Grace teaching series from Bridgetown Church:
bridgetown.church/series/unforced-rhythms
- John Mark's in-depth interview with Andy Crouch on a Rule of Life for the modern age:
link.practictheway.org/course-s7b
- Episode 05 of the Practicing the Way podcast:
link.practictheway.org/course-7c



Guest bio

Our guest this session was Andy Crouch, author, musician, journalist, and public speaker. Andy is a teacher and leader at Praxis, a venture-building organization advancing redemptive entrepreneurship in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. To learn more about Andy and his work, visit andy-crouch.com.

Rule of Life

Resources

A Rule of Life from Practicing the Way

- 01 A community of rest in a culture of hurry and exhaustion, through the practice of **Sabbath**.
- 02 A community of peace and quiet in a culture of anxiety and noise, through the practice of **solitude**.
- 03 A community of communion with God in a culture of distraction and escapism, through the practice of **prayer**.
- 04 A community of love and depth in a culture of individualism and superficiality, through the practice of **community**.
- 05 A community of courageous fidelity to orthodoxy in a culture of ideological compromise, through the practice of **Scripture**.
- 06 A community of holiness in a culture of indulgence and immorality, through the practice of **fasting**.
- 07 A community of contentment in a culture of consumerism, through the practice of **generosity**.
- 08 A community of justice, mercy, and reconciliation in a culture of injustice and division, through the practice of **service**.
- 09 A community of hospitality in a culture of hostility, through the practice of **witness**.

Sample Rule of Life 01

FROM PRACTICING THE WAY

	SABBATH	PRAYER	FASTING	SOLITUDE	GENEROSITY	SCRIPTURE	COMMUNITY	SERVICE	WITNESS
DAILY		<i>Prayer rhythm</i>		<i>A time in silence to begin and end the day</i>		<i>Reading Scripture</i>			
WEEKLY	<i>Sabbath day to stop, rest, delight, and worship</i>		<i>Fast until sundown</i>				<i>A meal together and worship on Sunday</i>		
MONTHLY/SEASONALLY					<i>Giving 10 percent of your income, with special attention to the church and the poor</i>			<i>An act of service to the poor with the aim of kinship</i>	<i>An act of hospitality and regularly praying for one person in your life who does not know Jesus</i>

Sample Rule of Life 02

BRITTANY'S RULE — GRADUATE STUDENT IN HER 20S

	SABBATH	PRAYER	FASTING	SOLITUDE	GENEROSITY	SCRIPTURE	COMMUNITY	SERVICE	WITNESS
DAILY		<i>Spend time with God in prayer</i>				<i>Spend time with God through Bible study</i>			
WEEKLY	<i>Take a Sabbath each Sunday</i>						<i>Participate in church at the Sunday evening service and at young adults group on Monday night</i>		
MONTHLY/SEASONALLY				<i>Reflect on how I am meeting my goals/living my rule and where I need to grow</i>	<i>Tithe</i>		<i>Connect with my peer-mentor/spiritual friend</i>		

Sample Rule of Life 03

JUNE'S RULE — MARRIED WITH YOUNG SON, WORKS AS A TEACHER

	SABBATH	PRAYER	FASTING	SOLITUDE	GENEROSITY	SCRIPTURE	COMMUNITY	SERVICE	WITNESS
DAILY		<i>As I can, pray throughout the day—in the car, on a walk, before meal-times</i>				<i>Read Scripture at night before I go to bed; as I can, pray through these Scriptures the following day</i>			
WEEKLY	<i>Rest and Sunday worship, typically on a Saturday or Sunday (depending on what is going on)</i>						<i>Small group with families with young children (currently working through a Bible study book on parenting)</i>		
MONTHLY/SEASONALLY	<i>Travel once a year in the summertime</i>				<i>Tithe every month</i> <i>Support missionaries and other charitable organizations every month</i>				<i>Through friendship and invite people to church and through our Easter and Christmas outreaches</i>