

A Sample Rule of Life

Preamble

I practice a Rule of Life in order to love God and learn to love like God.

Precepts

Training Tools

Rule 1: Spiritual Reading

I will daily savor and prayerfully digest the minds of great souls of the past.

Rule 2: Fasting

I will incorporate fasting into my weekly schedule because it teaches me self-denial and I don't believe I can find true life without a continuous expression of the cross. Currently, Mondays work well.

Rule 3: Serving the Poor

Serving the poor cultivates mercy, compassion, and empathy within me. I will serve the poor at my local soup kitchen multiple times per year.

The Holy Ordinary

Rule 4: Pursue Gardening

I will cultivate a hobby of gardening, working with seeds and soil and plants nourishes my life.

Rule 5: Wear Simple Clothes

I will seek to maintain a simple, unbranded wardrobe of similar colors. I wear the same things on a regular basis to simplify my days and hopefully, over time, simplify my life.

Rule 6: Lighting a Candle

I light a candle when I pray to remind me that the Holy Spirit is always with me.

Foundational Teaching

Rule 7: Seek Moderation

I will seek moderation in all things by cultivating the virtue temperance. Temperance is more valuable than pure abstinence.

Rule 8: Accept Irritations

Irritation reveals what is hidden below the surface of my life, all of my self-centered debris, and temporarily tosses it into a shallow space. In this space, I am free to see, probe, and pursue – or I am free to turn, neglect, and ignore, letting the debris sink once more into the ocean floor of my life.

I will pursue it – for irritation is the school of humility.

I will seek to accept irritations cheerfully, and if not cheerfully, at least courageously. For I'm learning to recognize that while God does not produce them, he does permit them.

Rule 9: Listen to My Life

It's important to listen to what I'm reading in a book or what I'm hearing in a lecture or a sermon, but I must also listen to my life, to my experiences and encounters. What is that burning sensation in my eyes telling me? What is that disagreement with my brother saying to me? What is that request from my eleven year old speaking to me? For God not only speaks through words on a page or through the voice coming through my earbuds, but through my very experiences and encounters. I must always remember this.

Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace.

Frederick Buechner, *Now and Then*

Relational Wisdom

Rule 10: Relationships

Loving people, especially those closest to me is of utmost priority. Ascetic practices are integral, but relationships come first. As Maria Skobtsova forcefully put it, "The way to God lies through love of people, and there is no other way." Deepening love, relentless reconciliation, and the giving and receiving of forgiveness is my life's work.

Rule 11: Spousal Counsel

Every six months I will discuss my Rule of Life with my spouse and gather feedback.

Honoring the Seasons

Rule 12: Participate in Lent

During the season of Lent, I will enter into the wisdom of the Christian tradition and practice a long term fast (Mondays-Saturdays).

Rule 13: Wake Up Later in the Summer

Because my kids are home from school in the summer, I usually stay up later and have many extra activities. My typical rhythm is thrown off. So, instead of trying to power through my fatigue, I will wake up one hour later in the summer.

Horariums

Day

6 AM	Meditative Prayer, Scripture Reading, Spiritual Reading
7 AM	
8 AM	
9 AM	
10 AM	
11 AM	
12 PM	
1 PM	
2 PM	
3 PM	
4 PM	
5 PM	
6 PM	
7 PM	
8 PM	
9 PM	
10 PM	

Week

Monday	Fast Lunch
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	Eucharist, Worship, Sabbath

Year

January	Discuss Rule of Life with Spouse
February	Lenten Practice
March	
April	
May	
June	Discuss Rule of Life with Spouse
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	