



**LIFE**  
INNER

BEGINNING A  
“RULE”  
OF LIFE

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## Shallow Christianity is Hurting Churches and Leaders All Over

How do you see shallow Christianity in the church?

How do you see Shallow Christianity in your own Life?

## What is a “Rule” of Life?

A Rule of Life is a schedule and set of practices and relational rhythms that help us create space in our busy world for us to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did—to live “to the full” (John 10v10) in his kingdom, and in alignment with our deepest passions and priorities. While the word “rule” may strike you as a strict or binding constraint, the Latin word we translate “rule” was originally the word for a trellis in a vineyard. In the same way a vine needs a trellis to lift it off the ground so it can bear the maximum amount of fruit, and keep free of predators and diseases, we need a rule as a kind of support structure to organize our life around “abiding in the vine,” (John 15v1–8) as Jesus imagined. It’s been said that we achieve inner peace when our schedule is aligned with our values. A rule of life is simply a tool to that end. Rather than a rigid, legalistic to-do list, it’s a life-giving structure for freedom, growth, and joy.

**-John Mark Comer, Developing a Rule of Life**

“A good rule can set us free to be our true and best selves. It is a working document, a kind of spiritual budget, not carved in stone but subject to regular review and revision. It should support us, but never constrict us.”

**-Margaret Guenther**

## Crafting a Personal Rule of Life

Be kind to yourself and be patient. Do not try to complete this rule quickly in one session or even in one week. This should be a living document that grows and changes with the seasons and your soul’s need. The goal is not to complete the Rule but to establish a pattern that deepens the transformational love relationship with Jesus.

**-Pete Sczerro, Craft A Rule of Life to Stay Grounded**

**Step 1 - Write down everything you currently do, or hope to do, that nurtures your spirit and fills you with delight (e.g. people, places, activities).**

Think more broadly beyond such activities as prayer, going to church, worship, and Bible reading. Your list may include gardening, walking the dog, being in nature, talking with close friends, cooking, painting, hobbies, or any number of other possibilities. List them all!

**Step 2 - Write down the activities you need to avoid, limit, or eliminate that pull you away from remaining anchored in Christ.**

This refers to avoiding certain things that impact your spirit negatively such as violent movies, excessive social media involvement, commitments that take you beyond your limits.

**Step 3 - What are the challenging “have to’s” in the next 3-6 months of your life that will impact your rhythms?**

(e.g. caring for aging parents, a special needs child, a demanding season at work, moving, health issues)

**Step 4 - Start to make a plan as you consider your next 3-6 months. What is God inviting you to focus on during this season?**

**Step 5 - Take a step back and consider the following questions:**

- What do you think will be your biggest challenge?
- What is the one thing you sense the Holy Spirit directing you to start doing now?
- What might be one thing you want to stop doing?
- Is there someone you can invite to encourage you in making these changes?

**Remember**

- Listen to your heart’s desires when discerning your Rule. God often speaks to us through them.
- Make sure your Rule includes some joy, play, and fun.
- Take baby steps. Don’t make your Rule impossible to follow.
- Give yourself a lot of grace to experiment, engage in trial and error, and discover the yoke that fits you and your season of life. This “trellis” is meant to free you, not enslave you. Reject perfectionism and a heavy yoke that crushes.
- Figure out how much structure you need – a lot or a little.
- Remember, having a trellis is important but the point is that which grows on the trellis. Our goal is a love relationship with The Father and Jesus through the Holy Spirit. Ground your Rule in an abiding love relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. John 15:1-7

“Over the years I’ve also struggled with the amount of structure to build into a rule. People I respect deeply have detailed rules with set times for prayer, and so on. They tell me that if they don’t get up at 6:30 each morning and take a half hour of prayer time that they will never get to it during the day. But that doesn’t work for me. It makes my spiritual life into something to add to my to-do list, and it becomes a chore and not a blessing. Over the years I have found that my rule for prayer needs to be more open-ended.

I am committed to praying daily, but how and when I do that varies from day-to-day.”

**-Debra Farrington in her book, Living Faith Day by Day**

“All cannot use the same kind of spiritual exercises, but one suits this person, and another that. Different devotions are suited also to the seasons [of life]....”

**-Thomas à Kempis**

### **Source Material:**

- Craft A Rule of Life to Stay Grounded by Pete Scazzero: <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RULE-OF-LIFE-WORKBOOK.pdf>
- Developing a Personal Rule of Life by John Mark Comer: [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852ec829f7456cfcc0e1c5a/t/5e17be5d7cba366ace1df6e1/1578614383140/ptw\\_ruleoflife\\_workbook\\_.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5852ec829f7456cfcc0e1c5a/t/5e17be5d7cba366ace1df6e1/1578614383140/ptw_ruleoflife_workbook_.pdf)
- Instructions for Developing a Rule of Life by the C.S. Lewis Institute website: [https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm\\_send/338](https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/338)

### **Additional Resources:**

- Listen to An Invitation to a Well-Ordered Way with Stephen A. Macchia and Nathan Forster on the Renovare podcast: <https://renovare.org/podcast/episode-56-steve-macchia-rule-of-life>
- Listen to Unhurrying with A Rule of Life sermon series by John Mark Comer: <https://bridgetown.church/series/unhurrying-with-a-rule-of-life/>
- Look at myRule Examples by Stephen A. Macchia at Crafting a Rule of Life: <https://ruleoflife.com/myrule/>
- Read over Praxis’ Short Rule of Life Designed for Entrepreneurs: <https://rule.praxislabs.org/the-rule-in-one-page/>

### **Books:**

- Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way by Stephen A. Macchia
- Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation by Ruth Haley Barton
- At Home in the World: A Rule of Life for the Rest of Us by Margaret Guenther