



THE REVOLUTIONARY DISCIPLE

Crafting Your Rule of Life

A Worksheet to Help You Hone Your Life's Vision



CRAFTING YOUR RULE OF LIFE

Chad Harrington

At the end of the “Abiding in Christ” section in *The Revolutionary Disciple* (Sphere 1), we invite those who want a simple tool for growing in Christ to craft their “rule of life.” Your rule of life is a high-level overview of who you want to be in Christ within your personality. Creating a rule of life is an ancient practice that spans the centuries, going back to the sixth century with Saint Benedict, an early Christian monk.

Originally, Benedict wanted to clarify and even codify his vision for the community he led, as they pursued God together. He wrote that vision on paper, and it became the first “Rule of Life,” known as *The Rule of Saint Benedict*. Since that time, many people from various Christian traditions have adopted this practice for not only their community but also for their personal lives.

The goal of this exercise is to help you create a personalized, one-page overview of how you believe God wants you to live your life in Christ. I (Chad) have adapted this worksheet from my book *Your Spiritual Formation Plan* to help you craft your own rule of life. I believe it should be the centerpiece of a spiritual formation plan like this.

WHAT IS A ‘RULE OF LIFE’?

The “rule” part of the name doesn’t refer to a set of rules; instead, it’s more like the ruler by which you can assess your individual walk with Christ. We all need a clear vision of who we are and who we are becoming, and this tool helps us put that vision on paper.

Crafting your rule of life is different than goal-setting or forming New Year’s resolutions. Those contain time-bound goals, which serve a different function than the rule. Neither is the rule of life a new “law” for you to earn status with God. It’s simply identifying the standard you’ve chosen by your own will and desire before God to live your life as a set of descriptions for the person you want to be in Christ.

This is an opportunity for you to plan out who you want to be and how you want to live as your general way of life. It should encompass the major aspects of who you are as a person. Thoughtfully crafted, your plan will be something you can go back to time and time again throughout your life.

While I advise you to solidify your rule soon after your initial draft, it’s important to get started! In my experience, drafting your rule multiple times is a necessary part of the process. So plan on making multiple drafts as you pray through it, craft it, and hone it. So while you’ll want to settle on a solid form of your rule eventually, don’t worry too much about “getting it perfect” the first time.

On the next page, I describe how to craft your rule in more practical terms, but remember to have fun with it. This is an exciting first step! You get to dream with the Lord here. And in Christ, we can find real hope for becoming the kind of people God has called us to be.

This long-standing tradition of crafting a rule of life ultimately helps us love God with all our heart, soul, and strength. If you find your rule of life does not help you better love God, then it should be abandoned, and something else should take its place.

In all this, your rule is your personal way of living that leads toward loving God. Your rule goes beyond who you should be and uniquely captures who you want to be in light of who God has called you to be as a disciple of Christ Jesus.

Read more about the rule of life and forming a more holistic formation plan in [Your Spiritual Formation Plan](#).

HOW TO CRAFT YOUR RULE OF LIFE

What follows are step-by-step instructions on how to craft your rule of life prayerfully. As a reminder, this helps you create *a draft*, and you can change it afterward. Don't get bogged down by trying to get everything perfect the first time. The most important task here is simply to get started. The pages that follow offer you space to draft your Rule.

Ideally, you will set aside an hour or two to complete your first draft. Write without analyzing what you're writing. If you're not sure about something, go ahead and jot it down anyway. You can edit or delete later. Allow yourself to go with the flow. This is especially important for the more analytical people among us. If you're more of a go-with-the-flow, spontaneous person, your challenge might be to complete this first draft at all! That's why I recommend setting aside a few hours in which you can start and finish this initial draft.

Aim at filling up an entire page or two. You can use the outline I provide below—which comprises spirit, mind, body, and social aspects of life—or you might want to organize your rule of life in a different way and use another piece of paper or a journal. That's perfectly fine! You might, for example, organize your Rule of Life in terms of daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual rhythms. Or you might organize it based on your mission, vision, roles, gifts, and relationships. There's not one set way to do this.

I offer a four-part outline here because the specific divisions have helped me think in holistic terms about who I want to be. Plus, they're based on the four core parts of who we are as people: spirit, mind, body, and social. I've adapted their meanings from Dallas Willard's *Renovation of the Heart* (with one example for each in italics):

Spirit: The heart and will that form the character of our lives.

Example: "I will seek a heart of compassion."

Mind: The thoughts and feelings of our lives.

Example: "I will reject thoughts of guilt, shame, and regret."

Body: Our bodies, God’s temple.

Example: “I will work out three times a week for at least fifteen minutes.”

Social: The people in our lives.

Example: “I will be honest and transparent in my relationships.”

For more examples, see instructions on the next page.

One final tip before you get started: While I recommend drafting this in one sitting, you might not be able to do this. If so, you might block out two or three sittings. Regardless of how many times you sit down to work on it, it’s important to finish your first draft completely *within one week*. Make that your aim!

Using the pages at the end of this PDF download, follow these steps to guide you as you write your first draft.

1. Go to a quiet place where you can write and be alone with God. Bring with you pen and paper (or use the space in this workbook).
2. Start by asking God what he wants your life to look like in general.
3. Then ask God specific, open-ended questions for each area on the list: *What do you want of me in this area? And in that area?* Write what comes to mind. It’s okay to write something, even if the idea might be yours and not directly from God speaking to you on a certain point.
4. In a similar way, ask yourself who you uniquely want to be within your personality for each area: *How do I want to live? What’s important to me in this area?* Write those things down as bullet-point phrases or sentences. If you prefer bullets, start each bullet with “To . . .” or if you decide to use complete sentences, start each one with “I will . . .”
5. After you go through each aspect, ask both yourself and God: *Am I missing anything important in any area?*

That’s it! By taking those steps, you’ve completed your first draft.

This is intended to be the beginning step of a more holistic spiritual formation plan. You can craft that fuller plan using the *Your Spiritual Formation Plan* workbook, which is available through [HIM Publications here](#). Once you’ve formed a more holistic plan with the various spiritual formation disciplines, you will have a fuller sense of what you want your life to look like as a whole. At that point, you will be able to redraft your rule and begin solidifying it into the document that can serve you for a lifetime.

Rule of life Examples

If you want to see examples of what a rule of life looks like, [read my blog post “Rule of Life Examples: Gaining Insight as You Create Your Rule of Life” here](#) if you’re reading this digitally, or visit himpublications.com and search for the blog titled “Rule of Life Examples.”

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Mind: The thoughts and feelings of my life.

Body: My body, God's temple.

Social: The people in my life.