



THE REVOLUTIONARY DISCIPLE

Crafting Your Family Rule of Life

A Worksheet to Help You Put Your Family Vision on Paper



CRAFTING YOUR FAMILY RULE OF LIFE

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Complete this worksheet with your spouse.

What’s your family vision? How can you all thrive together in Christ? Christian husbands and wives want what’s best for their families, but they struggle to chart a clear path toward a clear and godly vision for themselves. God says in the Scriptures to disciple our families, but it’s difficult to do that with all our unique family dynamics.

The family rule of life helps family leaders decide who they want to be as a family and put that vision on paper. This has been a useful practice for me and my family ever since we crafted it. It’s our compass rose. We use it to remind each other of who we want to be as a family when we’ve lost focus. Crafting the family rule of life can be that for you too. This worksheet is an opportunity to invest in your family’s discipleship culture so you can all walk humbly with Jesus—together.

WHAT IS A “FAMILY RULE OF LIFE”?

At the end of Sphere 4 in *The Revolutionary Disciple*, “The Home Sphere,” we mentioned how this worksheet can help you craft your family rule of life. Before completing this, though, make sure to start with the exercise also mentioned in the book called “Crafting Your Rule of Life,” which is available for you to download at TheRevolutionaryDisciple.com/tools. Complete that worksheet first (or at least read through it) because it helps you craft your *personal* rule of life. You will also be able to familiarize yourself with the process of crafting a rule of life in general, which will help you effectively craft one for your family. Plus, that worksheet goes into more detail about the history, nature, and purpose of crafting a rule of life.

A rule of life, whether for your personal or family life, is a one-page bullet-point list that identifies how you believe God wants you to live your life in Christ. A *family* rule of life uses the same process as the personal rule of life process, but it’s only about your family’s life together. The goal is to help you identify how you envision what God wants your life in Christ to look like. This vision takes into account your unique family dynamics, mix of personalities, and even your family’s unique sense of calling.

This worksheet can be a great exercise for young and old families alike. Couples at any stage of life, with or without kids, can take this opportunity to work together and intentionally shape their family’s culture. You will ask questions like: *What sort of family does God want us to be in this time and place? Who do we want to be? What practices and habits do we want to cultivate in our family?*

HOW TO CRAFT YOUR FAMILY RULE OF LIFE

The process typically does not take long, but it does require focus. So block out an hour or two with your spouse, just the two of you, so you can dream about, brainstorm, and record what you believe God wants your family to look like given your unique situations. If we're walking with God, our good desires often align with God's desires for our family. So think of this like processing your vision together with the Lord. While we all have a *general* idea of how God wants us to live as a family, each family has unique preferences and ways they walk through life. That's what we're after. Most of what you write should have a connection with scriptural principles, truths, or precedents, but make your items specific to your family.

For example, your family might be drawn to a particular ministry, such as delivering meals to the poor, homeless, or needy. Or, perhaps, you might include in your family's rule of life lines about your weaknesses or generational patterns that you want to focus on overcoming. In that case, you might include, "We will not sacrifice our family on the altar of ministry" (see more examples on the last page of this download). These are ways of living together as a family anchored in the heart of God and tailored to your family's unique dynamics.

The "rule of life" is not a list of *rules* to follow, but it's a ruler by which to measure what you believe success looks like for your family. While it's good to settle on your list, it's not written in stone, and you can change it at any time. As with your personal rule of life, make multiple drafts of your rule of life until you as a couple are satisfied with it.

The instructions below give you step-by-step instructions for how to do this, but it need not be formulaic. You can adapt the process below to something more suitable for how you and your partner process decisions together. When making your initial draft, have one person jot down the ideas while you both brainstorm together. While I recommend making your first draft in one sitting, you might block out a total of two or three sittings to complete the first draft of your list.

Regardless of how many times you sit down to work on it, finishing your first draft completely within one week is important. *Make that your aim!* One major difference between the personal and family rule of life is the family rule of life does not require categories like the personal rule. Don't worry about the categories outlined in that exercise—"spirit, mind, body, and social." Simply make one bullet-point list grouped together. Think of it as your family's manifesto written just for yourselves and put in bullet-point format.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions will help you draft a bullet-point list of complete sentences that describe your family's way of life. You can use the next page to draft your list, or use looseleaf paper or a journal.

Step 1. Draft Your List

1. Between you and your spouse, pick someone to write. You will both be brainstorming together, but have just one person write down ideas for both of you.
2. You will be brainstorming together before you solidify your list, so get a marker and white board or a pen and paper for writing. You'll also want to find a quiet place to pray, think, and talk together.
3. Once you're ready to begin, start by praying together for God's input into this exercise. Invite him into the process by saying, "God, please guide us as we craft our family rule of life and seek to grow together as a family."
4. Begin by asking God open-ended questions about what he wants for your family (e.g., *What do you want our family's life together to look like? What aspects of discipleship do we need to emphasize for our family in particular? How can we take into account our family's history and current weaknesses and strengths?*). As you pray together, write what comes to mind. You're just brainstorming, so don't fret about getting it just right yet. It's good to jot ideas down even if you're not sure whether or not God is directly speaking to you. You can analyze and assess the final list later.
5. In a similar way, ask yourself who you want to be as a family given your unique mix of personalities, skills, backgrounds, godly desires, and even senses of calling. Write these down in bullet points. Again, no matter whom ideas might come from, write them down—whether it's from God, you, or your spouse, it's just brainstorming, so write all the ideas down that could make the final cut.
6. Once your list feels somewhat full, finish your draft by asking both yourself and God: *Am I missing anything important in any area?* At this point, look over your list again, cross off anything that doesn't make sense on second thought, and make any last-minute additions for this first draft.

Ideally, your list will fill up most of one page. Of course, you can go as long as you like, but I've found it helpful to have just one page of the most important items to keep it simple.

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

Step 2. Finalize Your List—for Now

Within a week after you finish your first draft, make sure to come back to the list a time or two to finalize it. As with your personal rule of life, you will want to redraft your family rule of life in the coming weeks and months, tweaking phrases and listed items as you do. Perhaps you want to remove one from the list or add one you hadn't thought of at first draft.

Process and pray through the list for a few weeks until it's complete and each line is phrased just how you like it. You can always change it later, but go ahead and settle on what you like for now.

Step 3. Frame It

After it's wrapped up, print it off and frame it! It's not meant to be a file on your computer, but something to refer to, look at, and come back to time and time again.

Use the next page to write the final copy of your family rule of life.

See the last page of this PDF download for an example of a family rule of life.

MY FAMILY RULE OF LIFE

EXAMPLE OF A FAMILY RULE OF LIFE

- To remember God by celebrating the Sabbath each week.
- To not sacrifice our family on the altar of work or of ministry.
- To not put our family above the kingdom of God.
- To go on vacation as a family every year.
- To go on vacation with extended family every year.
- To walk together.
- To help each other pursue health based on individual need.
- To talk about God as we go about life.
- To be the first to admit mistakes and ask for forgiveness.
- To be the first to express our hurt feelings and offer forgiveness.
- To take ourselves lightly but what we do seriously.
- To invite people into our home, even when it's inconvenient.
- To care for the environment, even if it requires sacrifice.
- To help one another find and fulfill our unique vocations.
- To put our marriage before our kids.
- To eat dinner together.
- To practice first-time obedience with each other.
- To have fun and laugh together.
- To intentionally make memories together.
- To stop and celebrate each other's milestones.
- To live in faith, not in fear.
- To be frugal yet free to give.
- To contribute to the household, each in our own way.
- To regularly pray together beyond at mealtime.
- To say what we mean and mean what we say.
- Mistakes are welcome.