



# Rule of Life

COLOSSIANS 2:6

*Holy Trinity Tauranga*

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# Table of contents

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01	What is a rule of life? ...2
02	Abiding...4
03	Our minds...8
04	Our bodies...10
05	Our relationships...12
06	Notice...14
07	Being present...15
08	Listening...17
09	Seeing/noticing...18
10	Respond...19
11	Bless...20
12	Hospitality...21
13	Rest...22
14	Next steps...23







# 01

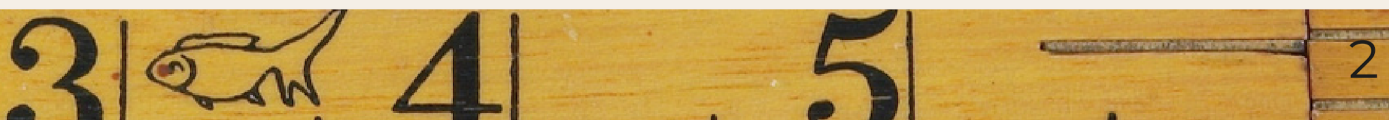
## What is a rule of life?

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.

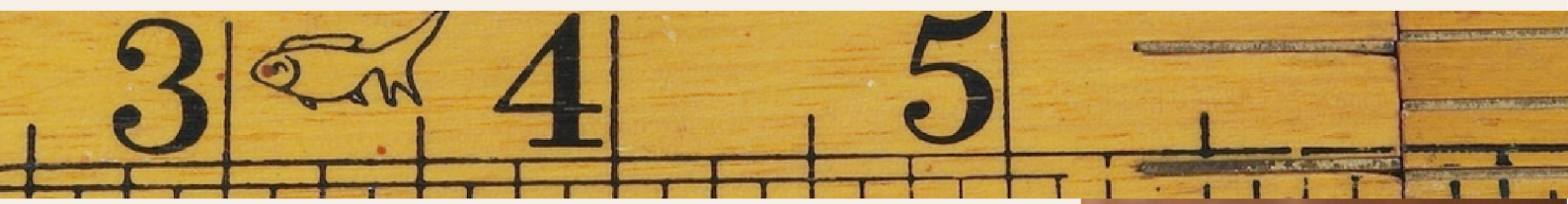
While the word “rule” may strike you as a strict or binding constraint, the Latin word we translate “rule” was originally the word for a trellis in a vineyard. In the same way a vine needs a trellis to lift it off the ground so it can bear the maximum amount of fruit, and keep free of predators and diseases, 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.

“A good rule can set us free to be our best and true 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 restrict us.”  
(Margret Guenther, wife, mother, Anglican priest)



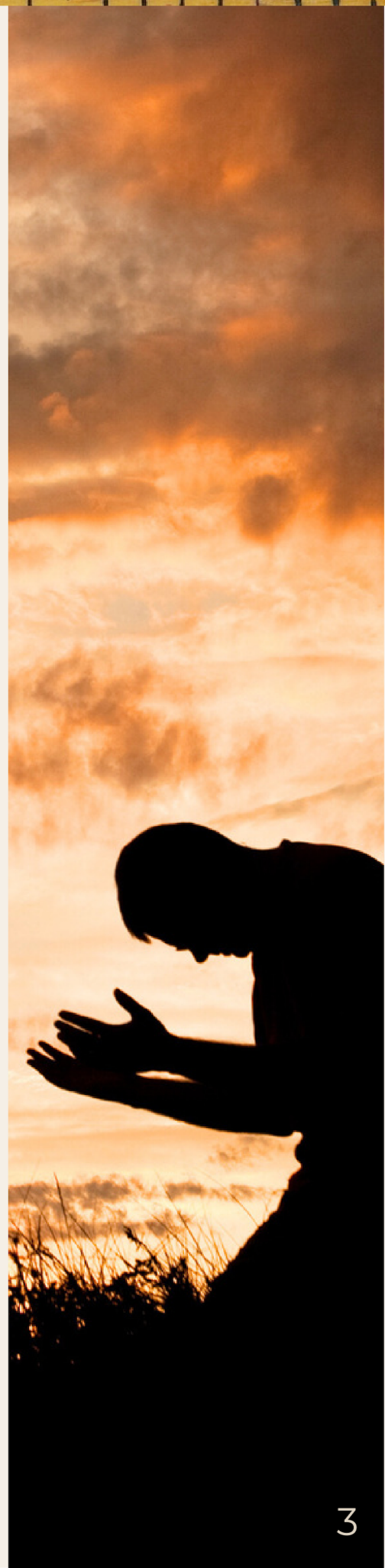




We are going to create a rule of life in four elements:

1. **Abiding:** learning our way to live in God
2. **Noticing:** learning to live responding to God in the world
3. **Responding/blessing:** live the mission of God responding to what God shows us
4. **Resting:** living sustainably and non-anxiously, restoring our souls

The goal is not creating something that will make us feel guilty or pressured to perform. It is actually about simplifying our lives – deciding the things we need to flourish and doing them, ignoring the things that are anxiety creating. For many of us, we think about everything but end up doing less than we should. A rule of life offers us a framework to lean into. They are not KPI's!





# 02

## Abiding



Read John 15:1-11 twice, slowly

What does it mean to abide/remain in God?

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What is hard about this for us?

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What most stops you 'abiding' in God?

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Through Practices (also known as spiritual disciplines or sacred rhythms) from the life and teachings of Jesus, we create space in our life for the Spirit and truth of God to transform us into people of love, not by “trying really hard, but by training really hard.”

What Practices do you utilize to “abide in the vine”?

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Examples: morning prayer, Scripture reading, worship music, the daily office, the examen, sabbath, fasting, silence and solitude, retreat, etc.

Recommended baseline practice: commit to daily quiet time away from your phone (ideally upon waking), a weekly sabbath, and church on Sunday. If you're new to this practice, we recommend you start with ten minutes a day, ideally upon waking, to read a Psalm and notice God's with-ness, and gather with your church on Sunday.

Questions: What practices make up your current rule of life (official or unofficial)? What practices would you like to add in, cut out, or change?

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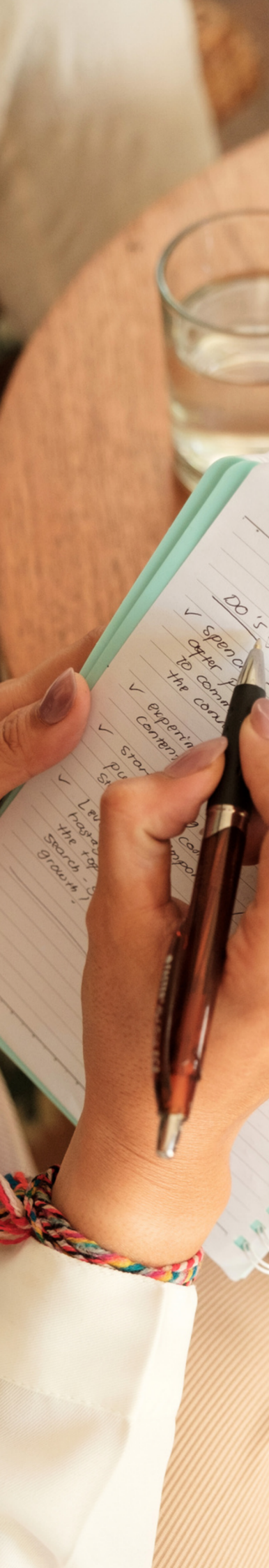




Abide in me and I  
in you

**John 15**





## 03 Our minds

What we give our attention to is the person we become. Through what scientists call neuroplasticity and Paul calls “the renewal of the mind” (Romans 12v2), we have a say in the kind of thought life we wire into our brain, and as a result, the kind of people we are being formed into — whether it’s formation through the truth of God, or deformation through social media, news feeds, and entertainment queues.

How are you curating your thought life to take on “the mind of Christ” (Philippians 2v5-8)?

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And how are you carefully guarding your mind’s time on and, input from, digital devices to keep it healthy, free of temptation and distraction, and set on God’s loving, joyful companionship through your days and weeks?

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Examples: Reading Scripture in the morning, regular podcasts or book reading, church on Sunday, gratitude, a digital rule of life, “parenting your phone,” digital sabbath, a daily limit on device use, etc.

Recommended baseline practice: commit to disengage from screens on a daily, weekly, and annual basis, set a time limit on your use of entertainment, and an established expectation of moral quality in what you take in. Commit also to the regular intake of truth and teaching through your medium of choice — reading, podcasting, Bible study, etc. and the daily habit of gratitude and hope.

If you’re new to this practice, we recommend you begin your day by reading the New Testament, before turning on your phone, even if only for a few minutes a day.

Questions: What practices make up your current rule of life (official or unofficial)? What practices would you like to add in, cut out, or change?

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# 04

## Our bodies

We are whole people. A holistic, embodied spirituality is key to the way of Jesus. Yet, in a day and age of body-image obsession and sexual idolatry, many of us react into the opposite extreme: a kind of neo-gnostic spirituality that sees the body as no more than a container to carry “us” around until we die. In this view, sexuality becomes just an animal release impulse for pleasure, not the fusion of two souls in the self-giving love of a covenant relationship. But Paul calls followers of Jesus to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.”

What habits of body do you utilize to keep your whole person healthy and “holy” (whole) before God?

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Examples: sleep, regular exercise, a healthy diet, water, limiting alcohol intake, walking, rising at a certain time daily, activity in sports, annual doctor's visit, vitamins, and honoring God with your sexuality by living by Jesus' teachings.

Recommended baseline practice: commit to sleep a minimum of seven hours a night, get some form of exercise on a regular basis (as you are able), and eat well.

If you're new to this practice, we recommend you start with going to bed earlier than you usually do, and taking a short walk each day.

Questions: What practices make up your current rule of life (official or unofficial)? What practices would you like to add in, cut out, or change?

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## 05 Our relationships

We are relational beings, created by a relational God for relationship. You may find it helpful to think through the categories of friendship, church, marriage, and family. What relationships form our community before God? Who do we walk the way of Jesus alongside?

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And what are we doing to create, nurture, and deepen relationships of vulnerability and accountability?

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Examples for friendship: weekly phone call or coffee with best friend, regular times to connect over a meal, etc.

Examples for church: weekly meal with community, church on Sunday, regular parties, serving together, pursuing relationships across lines of class and ethnicity, etc.

Examples for marriage: a fifteen-minute touchpoint per day, weekly date night, cultivating healthy sexual connection, regular getaways, etc.

Examples for family: sitting down to dinner three nights a week, sabbath, a weekly daddy-daughter date, annual vacation, family movie night or Saturday soccer match, etc.

Recommended baseline practice: commit to a weekly meal with your community and some daily and weekly touchpoints with your spouse and children or other family members, and/or closest friends.

If you're new to this practice, we recommend you start with a weekly get together with a close friend to connect at a soul level.

Questions: What practices make up your current rule of life (official or unofficial)? What practices would you like to add in, cut out, or change?

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## Notice

The second rule is 'notice'. This might not seem 'spiritual' but it involves us being in the world, and engaged with God's world, rather than missing what the Father might be trying to show us. While abiding enables us to be connected with God, noticing enables us see God in the living of our lives.

Reflect on Boaz's noticing: Ruth 2:1-7

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Reflect on Jesus words: John 5:19-20

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What do you notice? Do you prefer not to notice sometimes?

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## 07 Being Present

Being present in the spiritual life always has a double meaning. There's present, as in here, in attendance. And there's present, as in now, a moment of time. What is the spiritual practice of being present? Being here now. Also under the rubric of being present is the traditional spiritual exercise called practicing the presence of God. This means recognizing that God is here now moving through our everyday activities, no matter how trivial they might seem.

Luke 14:1-11: how is Jesus in 'the now' compared to everyone else?

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Do you tend to spend time thinking about the past or the future, rather than living in 'the now'?

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Are you sometimes 'absent' at home, at work, in life? Why?

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What disciplines do you practice to 'be present'?

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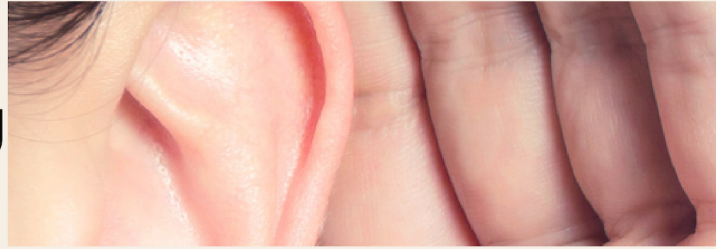
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# Listening



Read Luke 18:31-43: Who is listening? Who isn't?

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Why is listening hard?

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“The art of listening is not to hear what someone says but to hear how they feel.”(Bob Chapman)

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand, they listen with the intent to reply.” (Stephen Covey)

Discuss:

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Just listening can be a precious gift, talk about when someone really listened to you...

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# 09

## Seeing/noticing

Luke 14:7-11: reflect on how Jesus 'notices'...

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Do you take seriously what you see, or do you sometimes prefer not to notice?

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Acts 3:1-10: reflect on how Peter and John interact with the beggar at the gate Beautiful...

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What disciplines do you practice to listen and see?

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# 10

## Respond



If we are present, and notice, then we have a choice to make. We can respond/bless/engage. Our response might be prayerful or it might be to meet a need. The danger zone is noticing – we can't unnoticed!

We are going to reflect on a difficult passage. Read it a couple of times and engage with the theology that is being presented...

Matthew 25:31-46

How are we to respond to others?

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How are we to see others?

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"I see Jesus in every human being. I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus, I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him. I serve because I love Jesus." (Mother Teresa)

Mother Teresa said each morning she would share in the bread/body of Christ then she would go into her world and see the bodies of the poor and broken as the body of Christ.

What spiritual disciplines do you practice to help you practice your faith in the world?

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# 11

## Bless



A simple framework is considering how we can bless others.  
How can we be an avenue of blessing?

Reflect on Genesis 12:1-3

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Romans 12:14-21 makes this even more practical

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Reflect on an experience where someone 'blessed' you.

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Could you develop a 'discipline' to be a blessing?

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# 12 Hospitality



Jesus left us with a mandate to “go into all the world and preach the gospel” a gospel that he himself brought in both word and deed. While he was among us, he regularly welcomed people from all walks of life to the table for a meal. There’s a long-standing tradition from the way of Jesus that sees hospitality not only as an expression of love, but as the best way to invite people to both hear and experience the gospel of God’s love in action. What rhythms of hospitality and gospel have you worked into your life?

Reflect on Luke 14:12-24

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Examples: inviting a friend to Alpha three times a year, a regular night to host neighbours for dinner, spending time listening to co-workers, serving the poor through volunteering, etc.

Recommended baseline practice: commit to invite a friend who doesn’t follow Jesus over for dinner once a month, and to Alpha or church 1–2 times a year. If you’re new to this practice, we recommend you start with one meal with a friend or neighbour who isn’t yet a follower of Jesus.

Questions: What practices make up your current rule of life (official or unofficial)? What practices would you like to add in, cut out, or change?

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# 13

## Rest



Rest is essential to our spiritual formation. It's very hard to tempt well-rested, healthy, happy people. Even more, when we're well rested, love comes easily out of our inner being. From page two of the Bible (the sabbath story) onward, rest is an essential component to living well in God's world.

Reflect on Psalm 23: what restores your soul?

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Do you feel guilty when you are not busy?

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what are the things you do that give joy, that cause your 'cup to overflow'?

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Examples: morning quiet time, sleeping eight hours most nights, a weekly sabbath, a "nothing night" once a week, etc.

Recommended baseline practice: commit to a daily quiet time and a weekly sabbath. If you're new to this practice, we recommend you start with a few hours on your day off to just relax and connect with God.

Questions: What practices make up your current rule of life (official or unofficial)? What practices would you like to add in, cut out, or change?

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# 14

## Next steps....?

We invite you to carry what you've learned and apply it to your daily life. Self-awareness and a focus on your outlined goals will guide you on your path.


Thank you again for being part of this journey. Be the director of your life and keep growing, learning, and thriving. Your potential is limitless.








*Goals.....Application.....*



Ideas.....Notes.....





Ideas.....Notes.....

Holy Trinity Tauranga acknowledges the valuable resource material available through the ministry of John Mark Comer, as available on **<https://www.practicingtheway.org/>**

