



As we begin this new series:

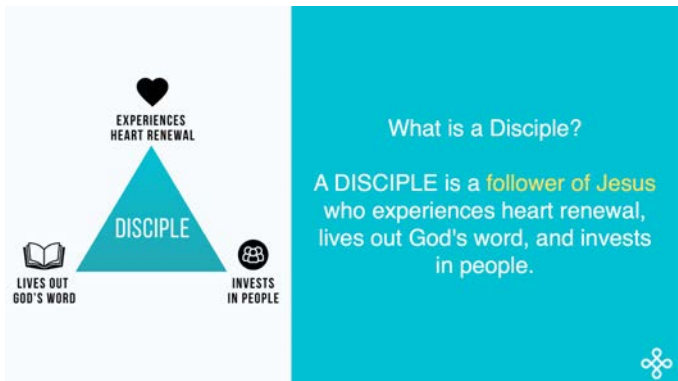
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- a. Take one booklet and bring with you.
- b. This is different than our Hebrews series.
- c. This is one of our core discipleship curriculum.
- d. This is our ask: Engage in discipleship with us this fall with the GROL.

Introduction: The G.O.S.P.E.L. Rule of Life:

1. What is a Rule of Life?
2. How to approach/think about a Rule of Life
3. Why Rule of Life?
4. The G.O.S.P.E.L. Rule of Life

Introduction: The G.O.S.P.E.L. Rule of Life:

1. What is a Rule of Life?

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1. What is a Rule of Life?
 - a. Biblical Discipleship habits and practices fueled by the gospel so as to abide in Christ.

John Mark Comer: "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 10:10) in his kingdom, and in alignment with our deepest passions and priorities."

John 10:10: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Instead of the "full" life that Jesus offers, often our lives as Christians feel stagnant and stuck.

G.O.S.P.E.L. Rule of Life:

1. What is a Rule of Life?

- a. Biblical Discipleship habits and practices fueled by the gospel so as to abide in Christ.
- b. A trellis for abiding in the vine (Christ).

Key Biblical Text for our Series - John 15:1-5:

(Jesus said) "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear **fruit** he takes away, and every branch that does bear **fruit** he prunes, that it may bear more **fruit**. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ..."

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.**

- John 15:1-5

Two Takeaways:

- 1. TRELLIS for bearing fruit

Justin Earley: "The word rule is used because it comes from the Latin word *regula*, a word associated with a bar or trellis, the woodwork on which a plant grows. The idea is that we (like plants) are always growing and changing. But when there is no order, growth can take something that was supposed to produce fruit and turn it into a twisted vine of decay."

Without a "trellis", we often feel like we are "all over the place", distracted and disconnected from God and overwhelmed by the busyness of our lives and our thoughts.

Justin Earley: "The (Rule of Life) practices are meant (for the Holy Spirit) to turn the volume of life down to an appropriate level and focus you on loving God and neighbor."

Two Takeaways:

1. TRELLIS for bearing fruit
2. ABIDING in Christ

The Central Purpose of a Rule of Life is to live out a life of **abiding in Christ!**

Abide: "to dwell, remain, be present; be held and kept. It addresses our posture and place."

Think about it this way: *Practically speaking, what does abiding in Christ look like in the everyday and weekly flow of my life?*

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1. What is a Rule of Life?
- 2. How to approach/think about a Rule of Life**

How to approach/think about a Rule of Life:

1. The Rule of Life are not "life hacks" for spiritual improvement.

This approach is ME-centered and becomes a misguided effort to improve ourselves as Christians rather than being transformed by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 12:2).

Jen Michel: "A rule of life practice, if it is conceived as a means toward the careful curation of 'my best life now,' has corrupted the purpose of a rule..."

"...it certainly can become yet another way we seek more control of our lives, yet another way we try avoiding the burdens of love."

A caution when it comes to the Rule of Life:

“When the goal becomes a god...”

How to approach/think about a Rule of Life:

1. The Rule of Life are not “life hacks” for spiritual improvement.
2. The Rule of Life are spiritual practices that must be rooted in the gospel!

The GOSPEL is Good NEWS, not Good Rules!

God’s love for us in Jesus can and should change the way we live, but the way we live can never change God’s love for us in Jesus.

3 Images to consider regarding a Rule of Life:

1) A trellis where fruit grows



1) A trellis where fruit grows

- Trellis: “a frame of latticework that supports plants as they grow”

- The trellis itself must be established and rooted in the gospel. “Apart from me, you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

3 Images to consider regarding a Rule of Life:

2) Spiritual rhythms that flow out of the music and melody of the gospel



Rhythm (Oxford Dictionary):

- a. A strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound (i.e. "Ruth listened to the rhythm of his breathing")
- b. The systematic arrangement of musical sounds.

With the Rule of Life, the purpose is not to fixate on the rhythms (practices) but to enjoy and delight in the music and melody of the song (Gospel). And, it is the music and melody of the gospel song that fuels and empowers us to put the spiritual rhythms into practice!

3 Images to consider regarding a Rule of Life:

3) An anchor that holds you fast



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- 3. Why Rule of Life?**

The Importance of Spiritual Formation via Habits and Practices

Justin Earley: "As Christians, we need to become attentive to who we are becoming (are we becoming like Jesus?). If you want to get your hands on who you are becoming, you need to get your hands on your habits. A Rule of Life is how we get our hands on our habits. We must realize that our formation begins with a framework of habits... **Habits form much more than our schedules, they form our hearts.**"

Our Habits = "Liturgies"

(Liturgy - religious/spiritual practices that reflect what's most important to us, what we find identity in, comfort, security, joy in)

From Earley's personal testimony of burnout:

Habit: Wake up exhausted again, because I never get to bed on time.

Liturgy of Wrong Belief: I am not a creature, I am infinite. My body will be fine. I am a god.

Habit: Look at work emails on my phone before getting out of bed.

Liturgy of Wrong Belief: I can miss a quiet time, but I can't miss a quick response. Unless I'm well regarded by others, I'm not worth anything.

Habit: Grab breakfast on the go, while everyone else in my family scrambles to get somewhere late. At the office, eat lunch at my desk.

Liturgy of Wrong Belief: Being too busy is normal, and maybe even desirable. I'm important if a lot of people want my time. To stay important, I need to stay busy, and that means being late all the time.

Habit: Keep my notifications turned on, and keep my phone on and in sight while I work.

Liturgy of Wrong Belief: I need to know what's going on out there. The most recent thing is the most important thing. The best way to love my neighbors is to stay updated on dramatic headlines and new memes, not to do focused work.

Habit: If my manager asks for something late in the day on an unrealistic deadline, always say yes. If a social invite comes up, always go for it.

Liturgy of Wrong Belief: I will become the best version of myself by expanding my options, so I can't say no. I may be tired and busy, my family may be exhausted by my unpredictability, but if I don't preserve choice, I can't be who I really am.

Habit: Even if I sense all of the above is getting out of control, even when the best word to describe my life is “scattered” or “busy”, resist any rules that would restrict technology use and work schedules.

Liturgy of Wrong Belief: To limit myself is to restrict my freedom. And I'm not fully human without my freedom of choice in every moment. The good life comes from choosing what you want.

Can you relate?

What are your habits (liturgies)? Are they forming you in Christ? Or are they fighting against your spiritual formation in Christ?

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(G)ive: The Practice of Blessing and Generosity

Our Culture's Rule of Life: The Practice of Getting and Acquiring

What The Gospel Brings About: The Gospel changes our scarcity mindset to a generosity mindset, enabling us to experience the joy of receiving God's blessing and giving God's blessing to others.

(O)pen: The Practice of Hospitality and Friendship

Our Culture's Rule of Life: The Practice of Isolation and Insulation

What the Gospel brings about: The Gospel addresses our loneliness, enabling us to be seen, known, and loved by others.

(S)abbath: The Practice of Rest and Enjoyment

Our Culture's Rule of Life: The Practice of Busyness and Hurried Living

What the Gospel brings about: The Gospel frees us from our busy and frenetic lives, enabling us to rest and joyfully engage God, others, and our world in the present moment.

(P)ayer: The Practice of Prayer and Abiding

Our Culture's Rule of Life: The Practice of Self-reliance and Self-focus

What the Gospel brings about: The Gospel frees us from our preoccupation with self, enabling us to meaningfully engage God and abide in His presence.

(E)ngage: The Practice of Engaging in God's Mission

Our Culture's Rule of Life: The Practice of Living for the Here and Now

What the Gospel brings about: The Gospel fills our lives with purpose and meaning, enabling us to live not for ourselves but for God and for others in love.

(L)isten: The Practice of Being Formed and Shaped by God's Word

Our Culture's Rule of Life: The Practice of Being Formed and Shaped by Your Heart's Desires

What the Gospel brings about: The Gospel deeply forms us through God's word, enabling us to hold fast through life's challenges and sorrows and giving us wisdom through life's uncertainties.

Wrapping up our Introductory Message