

# G.O.S.P.E.L.

## RULE OF LIFE



### A “Rule (Trellis) of Life”:

Biblical Discipleship habits and practices fueled by the gospel so as to abide in Christ. (Our series emphasis)

Also: (For today) As you are formed and shaped by the gospel, a rule of life consists of statements and commitments as a guide for your spiritual formation.

Today's Focus:

### The Gospel Rule of Life for this Political Season

12 Gospel Centered Commitments

(Portions drawn from Jim Mullins, Jen Michel, Matt Boehling)

Two Thoughts Before We Begin

#### 1. The Why

Philippians 1:9-11: And it is my prayer that your **love may abound** more and more, with **knowledge and all discernment**, so that you may **approve what is excellent**, and so be **pure and blameless** for the day of Christ, filled with the **fruit** of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the **glory and praise of God**.

2. It is vital that we start with (and undergird) the centrality of the gospel for all of this:

“In light of the gospel of grace that motivates and shapes all my thoughts and actions...”

John 15:5: 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**.

Dan Allender: *"In fact the church is both the celebrator of grace and the poet of holiness. It is not an error for Christians to live righteous lives or to strive to live out the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their private lives as well as in the broader culture. But we fail when certain standards of behavior, rather than grace and forgiveness, are assumed to be the core of Christianity." ...*

*"The heart of our faith is not a set of rules, but the Cross. The result of a standards-oriented religion is the rise, if not the dominance, of a self-righteousness for those who appear to be doing what is expected. For those who aren't as adept at deceiving others, the outcome of a standards-driven Christianity will be shame." - Dan Allender*

So Let's Begin:

The Gospel Rule of Life for this Political Season:

12 Gospel Centered Commitments

*"In light of the gospel of grace that motivates and shapes all my thoughts and actions..."*

**1. Worship** (Exodus 20:1-3, Philippians 2:9-11): I commit my allegiance to King Jesus over all other idols and ideologies.

**Exodus 20:1-3:** And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me.

**Philippians 2:9-11:** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Thoughts/Takeaways: Worship**

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide) I commit my allegiance to King Jesus over all other idols and ideologies.*

*"There is one political maxim which comforts me:  
"The Lord reigns."*

- John Newton

**2. Love of Neighbor** (Leviticus 19:17-18, Matthew 22:34-40): I commit to participating in civic life as a means of loving and serving my neighbor rather than just serving my own interests.

**Matthew 22:34-40:** But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

**Thoughts/Takeaways: Love of Neighbor**

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide) I commit to participating in civic life as a means of loving and serving my neighbor rather than just serving my own interests.*

Michael Lawrence: *"Do I love the world (ie neighbor) the way God loves the world, or do I love the world the way the world wants to be loved?"*

Ed Welch: *"Who are other people? They take on three different shapes: Enemies, neighbors, and family. What is our duty to them? Love. Love may take a different form with each group, but our duty is summed up as love. We love enemies by surprising them with our service toward them. We love neighbors by treating them like our family. And we love the body of Christ – our true brothers and sisters – in such a way that the world and spiritual powers are stunned by our oneness."*

**3. Image of God** (Genesis 1:26; James 3:9): I commit to honoring the image of God in all people by treating them with respect and abstaining from dehumanizing caricatures.

**Genesis 1:26:** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

**James 3:9:** (Regarding the tongue) With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

**Thoughts/Takeaways: Image of God**

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* I commit to honoring the image of God in all people by treating them with respect and abstaining from dehumanizing caricatures.

**4. Biblical Authority** (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12): I commit to submitting my political positions and conduct to the authority of God's word. I commit to having my views, feelings, and thoughts challenged and corrected by the Biblical story rather than using the Bible to proof text my predetermined positions as well as my justifiable actions.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17:** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

**Thoughts/Takeaways: Biblical Authority**

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* I commit to submitting my political positions and conduct to the authority of God's word. I commit to having **my views, feelings, and thoughts** challenged and corrected by the Biblical story rather than using the Bible to proof text my predetermined positions as well as my justifiable actions.

**5. Conviction and Care** (John 1:14, Colossians 1:3-6): As I live out my faith in this political season, I commit to asking myself the question, "How can I hold fast in my biblical convictions surrounding important issues AND seek to preserve and strengthen relationships at the same time?"

**John 1:14:** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of **grace and truth**.

**Colossians 1:3-6:** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...Of this you have heard before in the **word of the truth**, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood **the grace of God in truth**...

**Thoughts/Takeaways: Conviction and Care**

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* As I live out my faith in this political season, I commit to asking myself the question, "How can I hold fast in my biblical convictions surrounding important issues AND seek to preserve and strengthen relationships at the same time?" **(Not 'Either/Or' but 'And')**

**6. Remove the Log** (Matthew 7:1-5, James 4:12): When I find myself judging others and writing people off, I commit to having the Holy Spirit remove the log in my eye so that I can meaningfully engage others, even when I don't see eye to eye with them.

**Matthew 7:1-5:** Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

**Thoughts/Takeaways: Remove the Log**

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* When I find myself judging others and writing people off, I commit to having the Holy Spirit remove the log in my eye so that I can meaningfully engage others, even when I don't see eye to eye with them.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

**7. Political Disagreement** (Proverbs 4:7; James 3:13, Galatians 5:22-23): I will recognize that political disagreement can and should be a healthy by-product of democratic government. But I will lament when the disagreement becomes an unhealthy by-product that manifests in anger, fear, manipulation, and violence. Instead, because of the gospel at work in my life, I commit my speech and conduct to be marked by the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

**Proverbs 4:7:** The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.

**James 3:13:** Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

**Thoughts/Takeaways: Political Disagreement**

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* I will recognize that political disagreement can and should be a healthy by-product of democratic government. But I will lament when the disagreement becomes an unhealthy by-product that manifests in anger, fear, manipulation, and violence. Instead, because of the gospel at work in my life, I commit my speech and conduct to be marked by the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

**8. Buzz Words** (Romans 12:2, Philippians 1:9-11): Instead of accepting buzz words at face value, I commit myself in the gospel to better understand the topics and issues at hand. Out of a desire to honor the Lord and love others, I commit to seeking clarity with people's understanding and definition of those terms.

**Romans 12:2:** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Philippians 1:9-11:** And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

### Thoughts/Takeaways: Buzz Words

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* Instead of accepting buzz words at face value, I commit myself in the gospel to better understand the topics and issues at hand. **Out of a desire to honor the Lord and love others, I commit to seeking clarity with people's understanding and definition of those terms.**

### 9. Social Media (Proverbs 15:1-2; Matthew 12:36):

I commit to being prayerful and discerning when it comes to any social media usage or engagement. With my words, I commit to being wise and well-informed. I will seek care and precision with my words because language is a gift endowed by a God who speaks with care and works his will through words.

**Proverbs 15:1-2:** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly.

**Matthew 12:36:** I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak...

### Thoughts/Takeaways: Social Media

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* I commit to being **prayerful and discerning** when it comes to any social media usage or engagement. With my words, I commit to being **wise and well-informed**. I will seek **care and precision** with my words because language is a gift endowed by a God who speaks with care and works his will through words.

**10. Biblical Peacemaking** (Psalm 34:14, Matthew 5:9, 2 Corinthians 13:11): I will reject any call to political violence and remember my calling as a follower of Jesus to make peace. Through the gospel, I commit to pursuing conflict resolution in-person rather than engaging in arguments on social media.

**Psalm 34:14:** Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

**Matthew 5:9:** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

### Thoughts/Takeaways: Biblical Peacemaking

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* I will reject any call to political violence and remember my calling as a follower of Jesus to make peace (**peace-making vs peace-keeping**). Through the gospel, I commit to pursuing conflict resolution in-person rather than engaging in arguments on social media.

**11. Loving Enemies** (Matthew 5:43-44; 1 Timothy 2:1-4): I commit to loving and praying for my so-called "political enemies", especially those I have the hardest time loving and praying for. This includes a commitment to pray for our government leaders regardless of who wins the election, that they love good and despise evil.

**Matthew 5:43-44:** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..."

**1 Timothy 2:1-4:** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

### Thoughts/Takeaways: Loving Enemies

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* I commit to loving and praying for my so-called "political enemies", especially those I have the hardest time loving and praying for. This includes a commitment to pray for our government leaders regardless of who wins the election, that they love good and despise evil.

D.A. Carson on Loving our Enemies:

*"All of us would be wiser if we would resolve never to put people down, except on our prayer lists."*

*"Our responsibility to love our enemies is grounded in the fact that God providentially loves the just and the unjust."*

**12. Gospel Differentiation** (1 Peter 5:7, Galatians 1:10, 2 Timothy 1:7): When politics bring relational tensions, in the gospel I commit to having healthy relational connections with others (loving my neighbor) while remaining secure in my identity in Christ, regardless of the pressure from an individual or larger group of people (or even outcomes) related to politics.



1 Peter 5:7: Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Galatians 1:10: For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

2 Timothy 1:7: For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

### Thoughts/Takeaways: Gospel Differentiation

*(Living out of the gospel and with Scripture as my guide)* When politics bring relational tensions, in the gospel I commit to having healthy relational connections with others (loving my neighbor) while remaining secure in my identity in Christ, regardless of the pressure from an individual or larger group of people (or even outcomes) related to politics.

Gospel Differentiation:

A Diagram to Share as a Tool for Reflection

### Closing Thoughts/Takeaways:

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1. Use this as a guide for this political season. Read over and pray. Depend on the Holy Spirit to anchor your heart and these commitments in the truth, beauty and power of the gospel.

#### Closing Thoughts/Takeaways:

2. Out of the 12 Commitments, which one (or two) most resonate with you? Go over those Biblical verses related to that commitment and pray through it.

**Closing Thoughts/Takeaways:**

3. Be careful in your heart not to over-inflate our political moment (ie make this the “end-all, be-all” of discipleship). Also remember that discipleship and mission go hand in hand.

**Closing Thoughts/Takeaways:**

4. (Speaking to Christians) You and I are disciples of Jesus. You and I are not political pundits. If you are a member at Redeemer (this is your home church), your pastors, elders and staff are not political pundits.

**Closing Thoughts/Takeaways:**

5. *“There is one political maxim which comforts me: ‘The Lord reigns.’”* - John Newton



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