

### How should I approach writing the first draft of my rule?

1. Consider important elements of **vision**.
  - a. Vision articulates the important *why* of your rule.
  - b. Elements of vision can help course-correct when you face challenges in keeping your rule.
  - c. The most important source of vision is Scripture itself, but you can certainly include lean on other sources.
    - i. Meaningful quotes
    - ii. Poetry
    - iii. Historic or contemporary prayers
    - iv. Liturgical elements
    - v. Written articulations of how you sense God is leading: prayers, sentences/short paragraphs.

**Example:** At the beginning of my rule, I include this paraphrase of a section of Psalm 119:

*When faced with slow progress and seemingly endless delays,*

*You enfold me in your patient heart.*

*Let me recognize your perfect timing in all things,*

*The fullness of your providence.*

*May I be so strong in Your Spirit*

*That all I do is inspired by You.*

*For You are loving, kind, and gentle,*

*In You are all the blessings.*

*Let me not be deaf to your voice,*

*Nor suffer the pain of a rebellious soul.*

*Gentle me, O Loving Guide,*

*That I may learn the wisdom of purity, patience, and peace.<sup>1</sup>*

2. Consider a structure for your habit commitments.
  - a. Structure can provide meaningful arrangement to your habit commitments.
  - b. Structure should simplify, not complicate.
  - c. Structure can vary widely and should serve your vision. There is no one right way.
  - d. Possible structures for your rule:

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<sup>1</sup> Nan Merrill, *Psalms for Praying* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 253.

- i. The 2 great commandments
  1. Love God
  2. Love Others
  3. Properly Love Yourself
- ii. Time, Treasure (money), Trust (relationships), Temple (body), Talent (gifts and opportunities): Stephen Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*
- iii. Relationships, Roles, Places, Tasks, Moments: North star Statement
- iv. Be With Jesus, Become Like Jesus, Do What Jesus Did: John Mark Comer, *Practicing the Way*
- v. Roles/Relationships/Responsibilities
- vi. Visual imagery, especially from Scripture: a tree, a branch, a house. Add your habit statements within a physical illustration or picture.

**Example:** My rule is divided between roles I inhabit: mother, wife, daughter, self, writer, community member, household manager.

Each section of my rule, divided according to these individual roles, also includes:

1. Scripture
2. A prayer I've written
3. A list of ways I've been hearing from God
4. Habit commitments

I've added these elements over time and did not begin here!

Rule of Life Template, Jen Pollock Michel

Help me to love you, as you first loved me; and in my loving you, help me also to love my neighbor; and in loving you and my neighbor, help me to be saved from all false love of myself.

*A Diary of Private Prayer, John Baillie*

## **LOVE GOD**

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore,” Psalm 16:11

**With God’s help, I will practice an unhurried life of grateful communion with God.**

- I will not check my phone the first hour of the day, which I will instead devote to God in prayer, Bible reading, journaling, and joyful worship.
- I will practice Sabbath weekly, making it a day of rest from paid work and a day of worship and fellowship with other believers in my local church.
- I will ask these discernment questions before spending money, remembering to “take hold of that which is truly life,” (1 Tim. 6:19).
  - Do I need this?
  - Is this a thing too precious to share without anxiety?
  - Have I discussed this with Ryan?
  - Am I buying what I truly value?

## **LOVE OTHERS**

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,” Phil. 2:3-6.

**With God's help, I will prayerfully discern the relationships that matter in this given season and live from an overflow of God's love. I practice serving and being served, knowing and being known as I live in community with others.**

- I will pray for my husband daily.
- I will prioritize my marriage with daily check-ins, weekly dates and budget discussions, and yearly getaways together.
- I will pray for my children daily.
- I will invite my mother for lunch every Sunday.
- I will embrace the hidden habits of hospitality (preparation and presence) as we open our home each month to others.
- I will nurture the daily hidden disciplines of a writing life—journalling, reading, note-taking, outlining—in order to serve God and others in my vocation.

## **LOVE SELF**

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matt. 11:28-30

**With God's help, I will remember to care for my own person, mind, body, soul and spirit, and will live wisely within the limits of a human life.**

- I will exercise 5 times/week.
- I will try to observe a regular sleep schedule of 7 hours/night.
- I will read fiction and memoir before bed, as a practice of leisure.
- I will work to break my habit of overscheduling by observing important margins of free space each day, week, and month.
- I will regularly invite God to release me from the guilt and shame that hinder my connection to him and to others. I will stay attentive to commitments that represent fear rather than love.