



## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### WHAT IS A RULE OF LIFE?

Jesus told us in John 10:10 that he came not only to give us life, but to give it to us abundantly. For many people this abundant life does not automatically happen. There are some practices on our part we must engage in to allow the life of Christ to envelop every part of us.

A Rule of Life is one of those tools which allows you to take a step toward the abundant life. It is a personal mission statement which allows you to put some guardrails around your life. A way to guard your time, energy, resources, and spirit from the constant outside forces constantly attempting to distract you.

A Rule of Life is to live a holy rhythm that reflects a deep love for God and respect for how you were created in the image of God. It offers unique and regular rhythms that free and open each person to the will and presence of Christ. The spiritual practices of a rule provide a way to partner with the Holy Spirit for personal transformation.

Your personal rule of life is a holistic statement of the Spirit-empowered rhythms and relationships that create, redeem, sustain, and transform the life that God invites you to humbly fulfill for Christ Jesus.

### HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK?

This workbook is a simple way to help you create your own person rule of life. This is not a one size fits all application and should be constantly reviewed, updated, and revised for your phase of life, personality, and community.

**STEP 1:** Spend time in prayer and contemplation, answering the questions as they relate to areas of your life.

- **Plan Ahead** – Ideally, set aside an entire eight- to ten-hour day to focus entirely on writing a Rule of Life. The most ideal situation you can do right now, if you're interested in writing a Rule, is to get out your calendar and pick an entire day away for this. If you're married, coordinate with your spouse to trade off days away. If an entire day away is not doable, then plan to spend 1-2 hours in separate times in each section.



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- **Get Away** – Ideally, find a place to get away to. You could also spend the day at a public library or park, or even at home if it's not too distracting. Go somewhere life-giving!
- **Be Prepared** – Take with you only a Bible and a blank notebook. Don't bring your laptop or smartphone. Type up your notes later and resist listening to music, if possible.
- **Start with God's Word** - Consider spending the first few hours of your day simply reading through passages of Scripture that help quiet and center your heart. Also, take some time to pick a key verse for each of your eight main categories. You're not in a hurry!
- **Pray through Your Areas** – Prayerfully reflect on the eight main areas in this packet, and you may get a good sense of which area to focus your attention. Usually, you find it easier to ignore the area of your life that needs the most attention.

Often, family finances are the last thing you want to spend time thinking and praying about, but it's an area where your heart might be easily moved to sin, and created a practice of regular submission to God with your money and possessions may be an important step.

### STEP 2: Work through each category, prayerfully filling out your current practices.

- **Write Out Your Commitments** – There is a big difference between goals and commitments. A goal is something you want to achieve, such as running a marathon. A commitment is a rhythm of life that puts you in a place to get there, such as running four miles five days a week. Goals are overrated; commitments are underrated. When your retreat day is complete, and you are back in the world of technology, translate each of your commitments into your calendar.

**STEP 3:** Spend a few weeks in your rule. What is working? What isn't? What do you need to adjust? What is bringing you life? What is draining you?

**STEP 4:** Commit and come back. Commit to living this out and letting it be the guardrails for your life. Then every quarter come back and see what changes, if any, you need to make to maximize your rule.



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### CORE PRACTICES AT OBJC

Oh Be Joyful Church has chosen the following eleven practices to incorporate into the life and body of the church. These practices were both practiced by Jesus and essential in your own walk in Christ. Some of these practices may appear in multiple places in your plan. Sabbath might appear in both the mind and rest section of your own Rule of Life. Include each practice as appropriate in your own life and rule. But do not feel like you need to incorporate every rule.

<b>WORSHIP</b>	Entering into the supra-natural experience of the glory of God.
<b>SABBATH</b>	A day set aside for rest and worship, including church on Sundays.
<b>COMMUNITY</b>	Partners for the journey, to share life and the Lord's supper.
<b>GENEROSITY</b>	An inward reality that results in an outward life style.
<b>MEDITATION</b>	The ability to hear God's voice and obey his word.
<b>SERVING</b>	The many little deaths of going beyond ourselves which produces in us the virtue of humility.
<b>CONFESSION</b>	Experiencing the grace and mercy of God for healing the sins and sorrows of the past.
<b>SILENCE &amp; SOLITUDE</b>	An open relational space for being found by God and freed from competing loyalties.
<b>FASTING</b>	The voluntary denial of an otherwise normal function for the sake of intense spiritual activity.
<b>BIBLE STUDY</b>	The mind taking on an order conforming to the order of whatever we concentrate upon.
<b>PRAYER</b>	The interactive conversation with God about what we are doing together.



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### IDENTITY

Our identity is the core of our worth or self-worth. It is the place where we keep bringing the question of “who am I”. If we don’t take the time to find our identity in Christ, we will keep going to the world to find our significance. Take some time to answer the questions below to begin to discover what is forming you? Also, begin to reflect on how you feel about your answers.

1. What is important to you in life?
2. Where are you putting your identity? Who influences your identity?
3. How do you generally feel about yourself? What do you see when you look in the mirror?
4. What is your definition of identity?
5. Where are you going to define your identity?
6. What are some of the messages you receive for the world?
7. How do those messages make you feel?
8. What action do you specifically take (healthy or not) to counteract those feelings?
9. How are those messages attaching to your identity?



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### SECTION 1: PROTECT YOURSELF IN CHRIST

Your heart and mind are under a constant attack of information, images, suggestions, and distractions. Much of which is contrary to what the Bible teaches and wants you to believe you will find significance outside of God's promises. Which is why you need to constantly, and daily, guard your heart and mind from these dangerous arrows.

In this section, write out what steps you need to take to first off protect your heart and mind from these destructive thoughts. But also, where do you need to be focusing your heart and mind? What good, righteous, thankful, and holy thoughts?

#### SCRIPTURE:

**Proverbs 4:23** Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. (NLT)

**Romans 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world,<sup>[c]</sup> 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. (ESV)

**Philippians 4:6-8** do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (ESV)



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### MIND

**Romans 12:2** tells us that transformation comes from renewing our mind. Many of you have built unhealthy and, in some cases, even harmful practices in your life and feel stuck in attempting to get out. Yet, God has built our minds to be “formed” in to the type of people we want to become. Through practice you can rewire your brain to think more fully upon God instead of social media, news, entertainment or political prompts. Thus, creating the “mind of Christ” (**Philippians 2:5-8**) in all you do. What healthy practices do you currently engage in on a regular basis? How is your mind wired in an unhealthy way through social media, thoughts, lies, internet, entertainment, political, or social distractions?

**Practices:**

- A digital diet plan
- Sabbath day or Digital sabbath
- Regular reading of scripture
- Small groups
- Church on Sunday
- Limit on television/streaming services/social media/internet

**Getting Started:** Create a daily gratitude practice, Schedule your screen time out for the week (streaming/Television/internet), Create a weekly sabbath or digital sabbath, where there are not electronics for the night. Begin a steady intake of biblical truth and teaching (podcasts, reading, scripture memorization, Bible study)

If you are new to this practice, begin with a regular time of reading the New Testament or Psalms in the morning before looking at your phone or other electronics. Quantity is not the goal, if you read only 5-10 verses a day and truly digest God’s word, that is a great start.

**Questions:**

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
- 2) What practices do you need to add in, cut out, change, or engage in more often?

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## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### HEART

Your heart is the wellspring of your life and should be carefully guarded (Proverbs 4:23). With many messages coming in from many different directions our sources of truth can become diluted. Which can cause us to be anxious, depressed, and confused about what to believe and what is truth in our life. But if we are going to travel the path of Jesus then we need to see his truth in all we do. How are you seeking God’s truth in your life on a consistent basis?

#### Practices:

- Guard what comes into your life
- Rest
- Seek gospel-based accountability for truth
- Seeking truth through daily scripture reading
- Boundaries in relationships and online
- Seek God in all things

#### Getting Started:

- Take a truth inventory, by reviewing your life — the people, situations, beliefs and fears you have engaged with in our past — you can begin to see the truth about yourself and the role you’ve played in your troubles.
- Limit time online with news or social media
- Draw boundaries around unhealthy or toxic relationships

If you are new to this practice begin by understanding what makes you anxious or depressed. Use your morning to find scripture to pray over your specific anxiety, especially around those areas or truth.

#### Questions:

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
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## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### SECTION 2: PREPARE YOURSELF IN CHRIST

There are no “accidental saints,” to live a life as an apprentice in Christ will take dedication, discipline, and intentionality. How do you need to shape your life to truly make Christ your first priority? This includes taking care of your body as well. If your health is an obstacle to spending time with Christ and you have the ability to make a change, then this is an important step in creating a life centered on Christ. But be sure to not make it a practice you worship instead of Christ.

In this section, you want to be able to determine what type of space you need to create in your life to make time for your spirit and body. When will you come before God, what will you do, and what practices will you first engage? You might want to fill out the Spiritual Pathways Blueprint for more detail around your spiritual life. Then what steps do you need to take to better your health in order to have more energy to engage God and others in Christ?

#### SCRIPTURE:

**John 15:4-6** 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. <sup>5</sup>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. (ESV)

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (ESV)





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### SPIRIT

To live a life in Christ is to abide in Christ as Jesus mentions in **John 15**. If we are to abide in Christ then we need to enter into the practices, or disciplines, as practiced by Christ for the purpose of transforming us into people of love. This is not an exercise to “try really hard, but to train really hard.” What practices do you currently use consistently?

#### Practices:

- Dedicate every day to God as you wake in the morning
- Daily scripture reading
- Daily examen (Morning/Evening rituals)
- Daily prayer
- Intentional times of worship
- Silence & Solitude

#### Getting Started: Choose one to begin with

- Commit to a daily routine (preferably in the morning) of scripture reading and prayer.
- Attend church weekly
- A time of silent and solitude
- A weekly sabbath time

If you are new to this practice, choose one practice and start with just 10 minutes a day. Read a Psalms and pray. Take a walk without the distraction of your phone. Commit to a daily/weekly routine.

#### Questions:

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
- 2) What practices do you need to add in, cut out, change, or engage in more often?

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### BODY

We are integrated human beings, which means our mind, bodies, and soul all function together. They cannot be separated and function properly. A truly holistic, embodied spirituality is God’s perfect plan for us as seen fulfilled through the practices of Christ. Yet, much of what we see, observe, and absorb tells us that our bodies are separate from the rest of us. This philosophy allows you to engage in sexuality as nothing more than a pleasure response to a feeling. Our bodies are a temple and we should be offering them as a spiritual act of worship (Romans 12:1) not to fulfill our own personal desires.

- How do you offer your body as healthy and holy before God? What practices are involved in this process?

#### Practices:

- Healthy diet
- Regular exercise
- Regular water
- Limiting alcohol intake
- Regular sleep schedule (going to bed and rising at the same time every day)
- Sexual integrity

**Getting Started:** Start this practice by getting on a consistent sleep schedule. Then add in a daily or weekly exercise routine, which might begin with a short walk. Review your eating habits and seek out a nutritionist if needing to make some dramatic changes. Create some realistic goals and take it slow.

#### Questions:

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
- 2) What practices do you need to add in, cut out, change, or engage in more often?

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### SECTION 3: PRACTICE HARMONY

One of the greatest challenges we face in our modern society is balance. While complete balance may not be attainable, many of us can certainly do a better job of balancing our necessary work in life, with much needed and deep rest.

In this section, spend time looking deep into your work (job, career, school, stay at home, etc...). How are you holding this part of your life? Does it own you, or do you own it? What do you do with your time at work? How can you give it better to Christ? Then think about how you are resting. Do you have scheduled time of rest in your calendar, beyond nightly sleep? Why or why not? How can you begin to incorporate intentional rest into your life?

#### SCRIPTURE:

**Luke 20:25** He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (ESV)

**Exodus 20:8-10** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work. (ESV)

**Matthew 11:28-30** 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." (ESV)



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### WORK

When humans were created by God, they were placed in a Garden with the directive to "work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2). Embedded in our humanity is God's call to transform our world into a reflection of Eden. The utilization of our resources – time, money, talents, and capabilities – holds significance to both God and others. Ideally, work becomes a manifestation of love and justice, while at its worst, it may manifest ambition and greed. The generation of income through our work underscores the importance of responsibly managing these resources as a crucial aspect of our discipleship to Jesus. Embracing a life marked by simplicity and generosity aligns with Jesus' vision for life in the kingdom. Reflecting on the habits integrated into your work and financial life becomes essential in the journey of stewardship before God.

#### Practices:

- Time of "deep work" each week
- A fixed hour schedule
- Dedicated time to an entrepreneurial project
- Tithing
- A blessing fund
- Sponsoring a child

**Getting Started:** Commit to spend several hours each day devoted to your most important work, and to give away a minimum of ten percent of your gross income (tithing), with special attention to the church and the poor.

If you are new to this practice, start by setting aside a percentage of your income to give away, even if it's just 1-2%, and doing a weekly act of love through your work.

#### Questions:

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
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### REST

Rest holds a crucial role in our spiritual development. It becomes challenging to tempt individuals who are well-rested, in good health, and content. Furthermore, when we are adequately rested, love naturally emanates from within us. The significance of rest is evident from the second page of the Bible, starting with the Sabbath story, highlighting its essential role in living harmoniously in God's world. What specific practices and rhythms of rest have you incorporated into your life?

#### Practices:

- Sleeping 8 hours a night, most nights
- Morning quiet time
- Weekly Sabbath
- Nights with no electronics
- Intentional rest on busy weeks, etc.

**Getting Started:** Commit to a daily quiet time and a weekly sabbath

If you are new to this practice, start with a few hours on your day off to just relax and connect with God.

#### Questions:

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
- 2) What practices do you need to add in, cut out, change, or engage in more often?

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## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### SECTION 4: PARTICIPATE IN THE GOSPEL

To truly transform your life in Christ it is going to take a community of like-minded believers around you. This group will push you, hold you up, give accountability, and protect all in biblical love. Without a good community you will either fail or be stunted in your growth.

In this section, think about how you are building up a community of believers around you to help you in your journey. What steps do you need to take? Who do you need to engage? Then the flip side of this section is who are you engaging to bring into the Kingdom? What non-believers around you do you need to be more intentional about?

Most of this section will happen around a dinner table with a meal. As you think about both of these parts within this section, have the dinner table in the back of your mind as the "space" in which most of this will happen.

#### SCRIPTURE:

**Hebrews 10:25** And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. (NLT)

**Hebrews 13:12** Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

**Acts 2:42** All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.



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### COMMUNITY

We were made for community by God’s perfect design, by a very relational God. What relationships form your community before God? Who do you walk the Pathway of Jesus alongside? What are you doing to create, nurture, and deepen relationships where you can be accountable and vulnerable, while allowing others the same space around you?

**Practices:**

- Weekly phone calls/text with friends
- Regular times of coffee/meals with really good friends
- A weekly meal with church community
- Weekly date night with your spouse
- Quick touchpoint with your spouse/children nightly
- Regularly scheduled breakfast with children one-on-one.

**Getting Started:** 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 are new to this practice, start with a weekly get together with a close friend to connect at a soul level.

**Questions:**

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
- 2) What practices do you need to add in, cut out, change, or engage in more often?

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## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### HOSPITALITY

Jesus entrusted us with a directive to "go into all the world and preach the gospel," a gospel he exemplified through both his words and actions. During his time with us, he consistently invited individuals from diverse backgrounds to share a meal at the table. Rooted in the tradition of Jesus, hospitality is viewed not only as a manifestation of love but also as the most effective means to encourage others to both hear and encounter the gospel of God's love in tangible ways. How have you incorporated rhythms of hospitality and the gospel into your life?

#### Practices:

- Setting up a regular night to host neighbors for dinner
- Volunteer with an organization around town
- Set up a jar to collect your change to give away as needed
- Bless someone who is in need (friend, neighbor, waitstaff, etc.)
- Go through your closet and giveaway your stuff
- Invite friends/neighbors to church or a small group

**Getting Started:** Commit to invite someone to church with you over the next few weeks. Do something kind for a neighbor (plow their drive, mow their lawn, etc...)

If you are new to this practice start with a meal at your house with a friend or neighbor who is not a follower of Christ. Even the gesture itself shows you care and can be impactful for them.

#### Questions:

- 1) What practices are you currently engaged in on a regular basis?
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## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

Goals	PROTECT		PREPARE		PRACTICE		PARTICIPATE	
Practice	Mind	Heart	Spirit	Body	Work	Rest	Community	Hospitality
Daily								
Weekly								
Monthly								
Quarterly								
Annually								



## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### Examples #1 Single

Goals	PROTECT		PREPARE		PRACTICE		PARTICIPATE	
Practice	Mind	Heart	Spirit	Body	Work	Rest	Community	Hospitality
Daily								
Weekly								
Monthly								
Quarterly								
Annually								



## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### Example #2 Married with Kids

Goals	PROTECT		PREPARE		PRACTICE		PARTICIPATE	
Practice	Mind	Heart	Spirit	Body	Work	Rest	Community	Hospitality
Daily								
Weekly								
Monthly								
Quarterly								
Annually								



## OBJC Rule of Life Chart

### Example #3 Empty Nesters

Goals	PROTECT		PREPARE		PRACTICE		PARTICIPATE	
Practice	Mind	Heart	Spirit	Body	Work	Rest	Community	Hospitality
Daily								
Weekly								
Monthly								
Quarterly								
Annually								



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### RESOURCES:

- John Mark Comer, *Practicing the Way*,  
<https://practicingthewayarchives.org/unhurrying-with-a-rule-of-life/workbook>
- Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*, IVP Books, Downers Grove, IL, 2015, p.38-41
- Stephen A Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*, IVP Books, Downers Grove, IL, 2012.
- Renovare: <https://renovare.org/articles/rule-of-life-six-streams>