



CRAFTING A
RULE OF LIFE
WORKBOOK

An intentional Spirit led plan
and set of practices that helps
us love and follow Jesus in all of
life

NAVAH

WHAT IS A RULE OF LIFE?

A Rule of Life is an intentional Spirit led plan and set of practices that helps us love and follow Jesus in all of life and be formed into His likeness as disciples.

It's a way of ordering our everyday lives and schedules around the person, priorities and practices of Jesus and His Kingdom with the help of the Holy Spirit! We want Jesus' wise and loving "Rule" in our lives rather than life's chaos to rule over us.

Notice that it is a "Rule" of life not "rules". Our English word "rule" comes from the Latin "regula" which was used for a trellis in a garden, a support structure for the vine's health and fruitfulness. Referencing Jesus' stunning invitation in John 15, Pete Scazzerro says,

"A Rule of Life is a trellis that helps us abide in Christ and become more fruitful spiritually."

We are not talking about a list of legalistic "rules" or self-imposed standards.

Esther de Waal, writer on monastic spirituality, writes that; "regula", a feminine noun, carries gentle connotations: a signpost, a railing, something that gives support as I move forward in my search for God."

Beautiful, a "rule of life" is a gentle guide, a support structure, that trains our actual living towards God and his transformative love.



WHAT IS A RULE OF LIFE?

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and
learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and
you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Matthew 11:28-30

Can we hear Jesus' invitation in our world where we feel anxious, overwhelmed and weighed down? An invitation to “come” to Jesus, to “learn” from Jesus, to receive Jesus' easy “yoke” (teaching and way of life), and to “find rest for our souls”?

A rule of life is a practical tool to continually say “yes” to this invitation.

Taking Jesus' yoke will deeply form us, but it's not just for us. Formation into Jesus' likeness is always about LOVE and therefore for the sake of others. Who we are becoming in Christ becomes a gift to the world and our growing maturity leads to Jesus' servant mission.

We are a prayerful family on mission following and being formed by Jesus together in all of life.

Father, thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus and the indwelling Holy Spirit continually bringing us home and making us beautiful! Everyday in every way we want to be a beautiful home for you! Jesus, you are worthy of the reward of your suffering, in sacrificial love we join your story to bring home and make beautiful!

PRIMER QUESTIONS:

Take time to pray, inviting the Holy Spirit into the process of crafting a Rule of Life with you. Release any sense of performance or anxiety to 'get this right' and trust the Holy Spirit's voice and leading.

“Father, you love me most and always lead me for my best. You know my struggles, stresses and unique design. I surrender to you Holy Spirit and invite you to shape this ‘rule of life’ with me.”

1. Prayerfully consider what your aim in crafting a Rule of Life is. Describe your ‘why’.

2. As you think about crafting a Rule of Life are there any emotional or mental obstacles that arise in you?

3. Write down what you currently do that helps you connect with God, nurtures your spirit or fills you with delight (consider: people, places, activities).

4. Write down what you need to avoid, limit, or eliminate that pulls you away or distracts you from abiding in Jesus.

5. What life circumstances in the next 3-6 months need to be considered when crafting your rule of life?

e.g. a demanding season at work or school, a newborn or young kids, a special needs family member, vacation, moving, health issues, caring for aging parents, major life transitions

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CRAFTING YOUR RULE OF LIFE

START SMALL AND SLOW: A simple small act of obedience over time brings internal and external change. The hardest part is often just to get started, start small and set realistic goals and expectations. Steady and consistent action will create habits that become second nature to us and transform the world around us. Remember these are practices, you have to practice to get good at them and none of us are experts right away. Choose a few things you can actually practice rather than many you may forget.

BE SPECIFIC: Be practical and clearly define your practices adding times, specific days and actions. Try not to be vague or general in your language.

For example: 'Read through the New Testament in one year, each night for 10-15 minutes before bed instead of being on my phone.' Rather than: 'read the bible'

SCHEDULE AND RHYTHM OF LIFE: Think about practices that you can include into a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual rhythm. Everything doesn't need to be practiced everyday and some practices need extended or varied versions in different seasons.

For example: Silence and Solitude can be practiced for a few minutes a day, a few hours a week, a day of retreat quarterly and a couple of days annually.

SEASON OF LIFE AND STAGE OF DISCIPLESHIP: Certain seasons and life circumstances will require you to limit how many practices you choose to implement at one time. If you're new to following Jesus or just starting to craft a 'rule', don't copy someone who has been doing it for years or is in a different season to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you take the next step in your journey as a disciple of Jesus.

UPSTREAM AND DOWNSTREAM PRACTICES: Upstream practices are practices that may be difficult or feel hard for you, but are areas you know the Spirit is challenging you to grow in. And downstream practices are those practices that you find easy, life giving, and joyful. As a general rule, have just a few upstream practices, and lots of downstream practices.

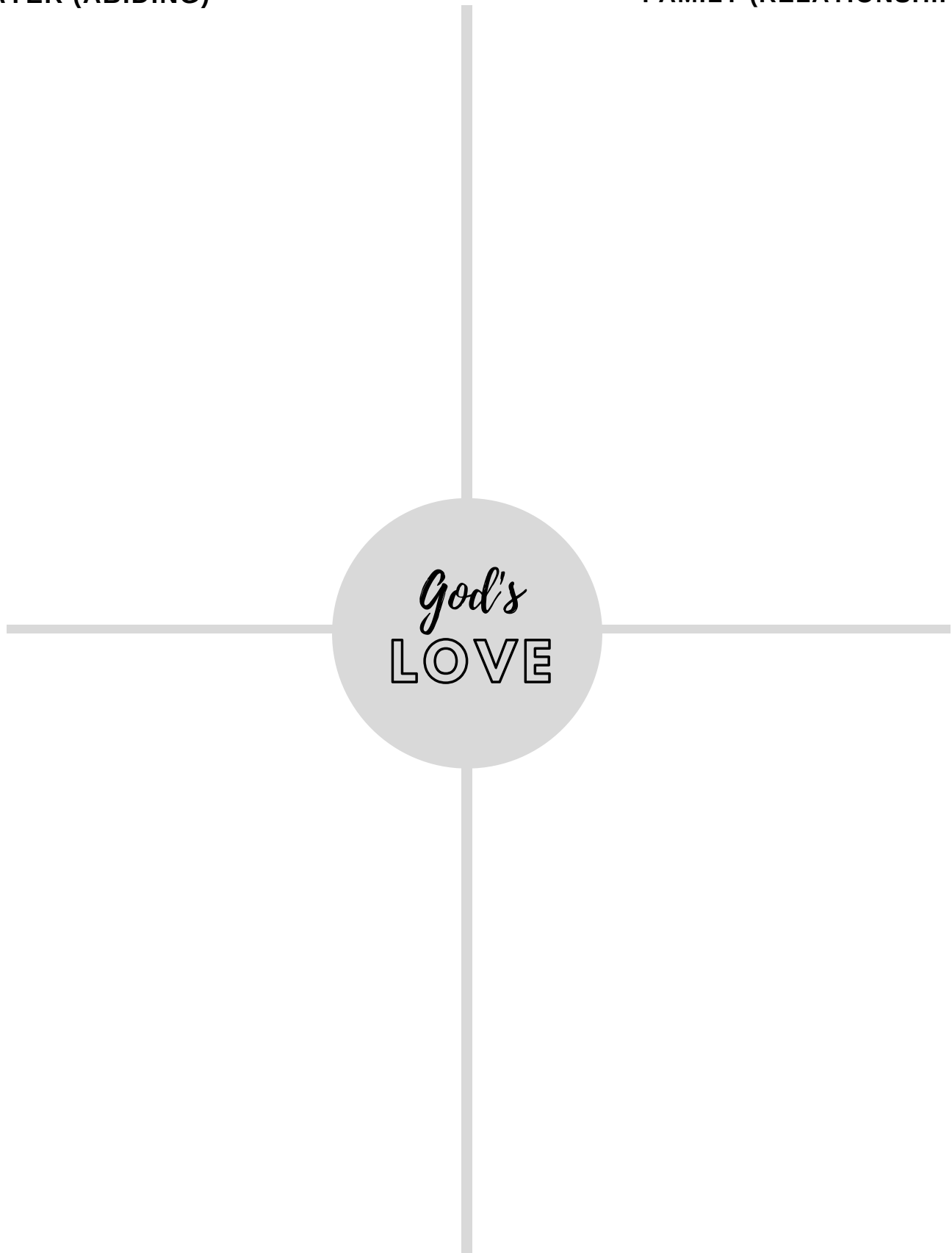
SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: Think about who you could ask to support you in your 'rule' and encourage you to stay obedient to Jesus' commands in your life. Commit to a few dates where you will 'check-in' with them.

REVIEW AND ADAPT: Regularly review your 'rule of life' and make sure it's still bringing you life with God and others. Engage in trial and error, and discover what works for you in your season of life. Remember to include some joy, play, and fun.

LOVE IS CENTRAL: We are created to receive, enjoy and share God's love. The point of a 'rule of life' is to gently guide you in your growth and transformation, to aid you in becoming a person of love. If your 'rule' is hindering healthy relationship with God and those around you then it's probably time to go back to the drawing board. Remember to keep the aim in mind- we are growing in love and being transformed by the person, priorities and practices of Jesus.

PRAYER (ABIDING)

FAMILY (RELATIONSHIPS)



God's
LOVE

MISSION (WORK)

REST (HEALTH)

Jesus said: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’
This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matt. 22:37-39

PRAYER (ABIDING) All of life in God's presence

“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.” John 15:4

“We love him, because he first loved us.” 1 John 4:19

We live in wholehearted love and Spirit dependency as friends of God who abide in Jesus.

Take a moment in silence and invite the Holy Spirit to help you reflect on these questions :

1. What are my current practices in this area of formation?

2. What is God's invitation to me in this area of formation? Which practices should I continue, start or stop?

3. Is there anything in my life that is preventing me from growing in this area of formation?

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

Morning prayer, Scripture reading, silence and solitude, journalling, the daily office, the examen, sabbath, fasting, prayer retreat, lament, common prayer guides, breath prayer, listening prayer, music, gratitude, being in nature, prayer walks, pilgrimage, Lectio 365 APP, devotionals, art, intercession etc.

A POSSIBLE PLACE TO START: Scripture reading, silence and solitude

Set aside ten minutes a day to spend time with God, ideally first thing in the morning.

Prayerfully and slowly read a Psalm and practice one minute of silence in God's presence.

FAMILY (RELATIONSHIPS) All of life with God's people

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:34-35

We live as beloved children of God called to be His family and love others as Jesus has loved us.

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EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

Gather with the church, share meals, game nights, gift giving, forgiveness, shared hobby with a friend, joint holidays/vacations, dates with spouse or kids, discipleship group, intentional consistent texts/calls, blessing a person who has hurt us, setting boundaries, regular lunch with coworkers, celebrating life events, sharing communion, birthday parties, intentional time with friend, visiting the isolated (elderly, prisoner etc.)

A POSSIBLE PLACE TO START: Gather with the Church, Intentional time with a friend
Gathering with your church family weekly and a weekly time with a close friend or family member to connect.

MISSION (WORK) All of life with God's passion and purpose

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:20

Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Romans 12:1

We live as Spirit empowered servants and co-workers with God sent to share the good news and do the good works of the kingdom.

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EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

Forming and following a budget, forming relationship with and serving someone in poverty, a fixed schedule, dedicated time to an entrepreneurial project, tithing, sponsoring a child, giving to Faith Fund, inviting a friend to Alpha, learn a new skill for your vocation, commitment to help someone grow as a disciple of Jesus, a regular night to host neighbors for dinner, spending time listening to coworkers, daily dedicate your work day to God, Lawn/yard care, meal prep, practice sharing salty statement, practice sharing personal testimony, learn 20 second teaching of Jesus, forgive those that offend you in your workplace etc.

A POSSIBLE PLACE TO START: A possible place to start: Daily dedicate your work day to God, Clarify your contribution

Spend a few minutes before your day consecrating your work to God in prayer and inviting the Holy Spirit to show you how to join Jesus in what He is already doing. You may want to pray Psalm 90:17- "May the favor of God rest upon us, establish the work of our hands, yes, establish the work of my hands."

REST (HEALTH) All of life with God's peace (shalom) and priorities

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matt. 11:18-29

Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done. Gen 2:3

He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right path for his name's sake Psalm 23:2-3

We live in rest and growing wholeness as we practice loving obedience to Jesus' way with the help of the Holy Spirit.

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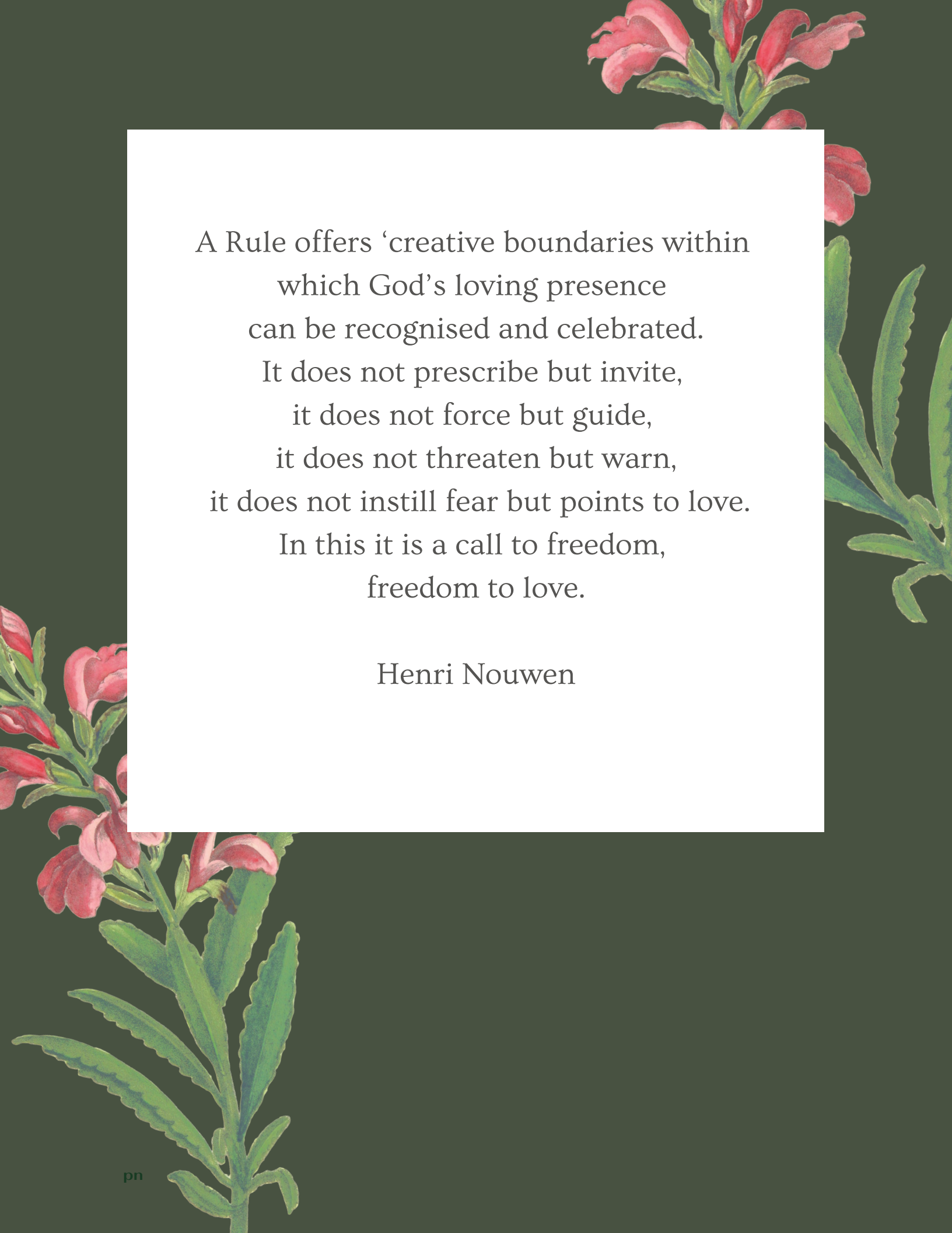
3. Is there anything in my life that is preventing me from growing in this area of formation?

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICES:

Morning quiet time, sleeping eight hours most nights, a weekly sabbath, a "nothing night" once a week, some form of exercise on a regular basis, eat balanced meals seated at a table, receive God's limits as a gift, eliminate hurry, practice simplicity, Reading Scripture in the morning, regular podcasts or book reading, gratitude, a digital rule of life, "parenting your phone," digital sabbath, a daily limit on device use, vacation, retreats, sabbaticals, a healthy diet, water, limiting alcohol intake, walking, rising at a certain time daily, activity in sports, annual doctor's visit, vitamins, honoring God with your sexuality, etc.

A POSSIBLE PLACE TO START: Sabbath

Start with a few hours to stop all work, rest, delight and intentionally abide/be with God. Work up to a 24 hour period once a week.



A Rule offers 'creative boundaries within
which God's loving presence
can be recognised and celebrated.
It does not prescribe but invite,
it does not force but guide,
it does not threaten but warn,
it does not instill fear but points to love.
In this it is a call to freedom,
freedom to love.

Henri Nouwen

Learnings, thoughts and questions
adopted and adapted from:

Emotionally Healthy Discipleship:
emotionallyhealthy.org

The Good Way:
thegoodway.live

Practicing the Way:
practicingtheway.org

Praxis:
rule.praxislabs.org



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