

Rule of Life

Rhythms Of Life

As I reflect upon how I wish to spend my time, I am reminded of a quote from C. Michael Hawn (2003), who states that “the choice is not among the past, present, or future, but that we participate in all three: Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again” (p. 17). The ways I have used my time in the past influence how I will approach my time in the present, with orientation towards my hopes for the future. My desire for my rhythms is that they reflect an inherently relational sense of worship of God, as "the worship of the living and true God is essentially an engagement with him on the terms that He proposes and in the way that he alone makes possible" (Petersen, 1992, p. 55). My time is a reflection of worship, and the following sections will outline my current season, my anticipated seasons, and how I shall celebrate and worship through a daily, weekly, and monthly rule.

Current and Anticipated Seasons. As a graduate student working on a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and an M.A. in intercultural studies simultaneously, I am in a whirlwind season of growth, learning, stress, and passion. My schedule consists of school, work, practicum hours, homework, and research, and in-between that I find time to build relationships, attend my own personal therapy for growth, and engage in relaxing activities that fulfill me. However, I am realizing that I need to engage in more activities that are fulfilling and sustaining in the form of intentional worship. To do this I plan on using daily and monthly rules/goals to add to my current schedule and make the most of my free time during this season of limited “free” time.

Daily. Every day I wake up, drink coffee, and head to either school or class where I am engaged in research, serving as a therapist, or learning. However, a basic element of my daily life

is my morning coffee ritual, which I now view as an opportunity for worship. I plan to invite God in by reciting the prayer I wrote for class regarding peace. As someone who lives with and is working through high levels of anxiety, starting my day with prayer for myself and others to acknowledge God's plan, intention, and love for His creation will allow me to center day to seek God and His purpose. On stressful days, I often don't make time during the middle of my daily rhythm to invite God in or to reflect on His intervention on my day, or where I need to embody His grace more. I plan on setting aside 10 minutes during my lunch break to do so. Finally, I really experienced growth when I journaled nightly for this class to see where God invited me and where I accepted His invitation, and where I failed to do so. Dr. Howard (2015) states in his lectures that God invites us into worship, and that it is an interpersonal relationship where the worshiped in known that the worshiped is present. My daily time cannot be solely focused on myself (which often happens on stressful days), and I must acknowledge the invitations, including reflecting where I did not engage, so I can continue to strive to obey God's call and invitation more each day.

Monthly. Because of the ever changing nature of my schedules and seasons, I want to plan a monthly ritual/rule of taking a retreat of sorts, whether that is going on a hike, walking around the lake by my house, or simply cutting myself off from technology and distractions to reflect on how the previous month has gone, and where God is leading me. As Dr. Howard states (2015), a rule of life can reflect what God wants from you right now, and it is better to start small, and prayerfully consider what is needed.

Ultimately, to quote Dr. Howard, "we long for the whole of our life to be centered around our relationship with God and our fulfillment of the gospel" (2015). And while starting my day with prayer, and creating breaks and daily reflections may seem small, it is something I am

currently not doing, and is something I can realistically add into my schedule that will stretch, challenge, and encourage me to be centered around Christ, so that at my monthly reflections, and may see what else is needed and adapt this rule as to continue my growth.

The Ordinary

In Romans 12:1 (Common English Version) it states that we present ourselves as a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God. A wiki post from Relevant Magazine reflected that worship mandates obedience, and often this involves sacrifice. In my ordinary activities, I want to continue and add to a life of obedience, even if this means sacrifice. As a graduate student living off loans, I already handle my money with care and respect, but I do not currently give tithe. I wish to change this to demonstrate that I honor God with my money and recognize his financial blessing, even when things are tight.

Furthermore, I was touched by Luther's "The Place of Trust", and resonated with using God's love and care for creation to illustrate His love for us (Foster & Griffen, 2000). As I learn to recognize God's love for humanity, I want to actively care for His creation. I learned and was motivated from the Wiki Post "The Order of Sustainable Faith" to recognize the 'footprint' I am leaving on the world, and to be take action and to sacrifice certain comforts/conveniences to support the world God created. I am dedicated to using only reusable water containers, and to bring my own cup/mug to coffee shops to decrease waste. I am motivated to walk instead of drive whenever possible. I am motivated to be conscious of where my food/clothes, products are coming from, and to act upon information and change if I find they are made in a damaging or harmful way to humans or the environment.

The Inner

Dr. Howard (2015) states that our worship life is brought into the service, and that our

attitudes, values, and practices inform our experience and participation in corporate worship, and vice versa. I wish to persevere an attitude of peace and trust, while simultaneously humbling myself before others and God. Catherine Marshall wrote about her conviction to fast from criticism, and found that a critical spirit can prevent positive relationships between people (Foster & Griffin, 2000). I wish to battle my vice of anxiety and criticalness. I excel academically and interpersonally in the psychology realm; however, this has led to a difficulty to let go of my intellectualism and let God take control, and relate to others who do not embody my intellectual lens of life. I have been hurt by people in the church, and for a long time it led me to believe all people in the Church will hurt me, and to protect myself I dived into study and my field, where I had control and excelled. However, I want to give God control.

As my seminary and psychological career continues, I am seeking healing for my cynical nature towards the church, and my ability to trust in God and that he can heal all wounds. I want to experience the increased joy that comes with trusting God's provision and plan for me in all areas of my life. My current method of learning to trust God more is to invite him into my daily life, illustrated earlier. In such a difficult and stressful season, I seek control of my own understanding to control my anxiety, but this only works temporarily. I want to embody a trust that God's hand is upon me, and that his love and peace will sustain and protect from anxiety, and an understanding that when I am feeling anxious, God is still Good and still in control. As I stated in the "Take Away" forum I intend to continue to build rhythms into my day that invite me to listen to the spirit, and practice the discipline to follow through with the invitation. I want to embody a worshipful lifestyle, not just worshipful acts. I will seek the God that draws me out and invites into His community with love and trust for transformative healing.

References

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