**James Bryan Smith** in his book "Good and Beautiful Community" provides an approach to writing a rule of life that focuses in three areas:

- 1. Ways to increase our love for God,
- 2. Ways we care for ourselves,
- 3. Ways we work for the good of others.

Some examples to help give you a picture of the many expressions these can take.

#### **Loving God**

- Prayer of Examen. While I do not practice this every day, I have a regular pattern of reviewing my day to take note of where I was aware of God's presence, and where I was not.
- Engage in scripture memorization: memorize the Sermon on the Mount in this year.
- Have one day of solitude every other month.
- Read a passage of scripture and reflect with APP via text daily.
- Make it a priority to pray with our entire family every day.
- Begin each day with a prayer focusing on Thankfulness and Joy, inviting Jesus into my day.
- Praying Psalm 23 during my morning devotional time.

#### Care for ourselves

- Sleep. To the chagrin of my wife at times, I have always been 'early to bed, early to rise.' As a general practice, we aim to be in bed shortly after 10 pm and I am up around 5:30 am most mornings. I take naps 1-2x a week.
- Spend a minimum of 2 hours in weekly personal creative expression which includes song writing and playing music with friends.
- Live within my limits. As an introvert I need time away from people.
   Don't over-commit, make sure there is enough margin in my life to find space to be alone.
- Retreat once or twice per year with 2 high school friends who are part of my APP.
- Go to bed no later than 11 every night except Thursday and Friday.
- Quality family time at least once per week. Include a family meal once per week.

#### Work for the good of others

- Engage my brother on a bi-weekly schedule, modeling a Christ-directed life for him.
- Each week spend time 1-on-1 with those in my close circle of friends.
- Intentional connection with neighbours at least once a month.
- Praying for the success of other local churches each evening.
- Date night with my spouse once a week.



### **Race Ready**

September 8, 2019 ~ Mike Sotski

# Who or what holds the place of importance in our lives?

#### Training involves making a plan

Hebrews 5:14

Solid food is for those who are mature, who through <u>training</u> have the skill to recognize the difference between right and wrong.

Train for godliness: it makes the life that is now better, not easier,

not without hardship and suffering, not full of earthly riches, but the most contented and most fulfilled, because we are living the life we were created for.	
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#### Training is sacrifice. Training can be mundane.

#### **Craig Groschel**

Small disciplines, done consistently lead to big results over time.					

#### **APP Questions**

- Are there particular practices that cause you to feel closest to God? Things like worship, scripture reading, prayer, service, retreats, thanksgiving, being in nature.
- Ask God, "What daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rhythms do
  I need to establish to help me connect with you in ever
  increasing measure?"

## Some things to consider when you are creating a **Rule of Life**

- 1. When and where do you feel closest to God? How do you enter most deeply into an awareness of His love for you?
- 2. Are there particular practices that open you to God? (ie. worship, scripture reading, prayer, fasting, gratitude, retreats, solitude etc.)
- 3. Are there practices that seem to hinder you?
- 4. What receives the most attention in your life currently? Job, family, friends, hobbies. (These are not bad things. But when we love them more than God, they can compete for our hearts and become an idol.)
- 5. What practices suit your daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rhythms and cycles of life?
- 6. What limitations are built into your life at this moment? What are some longings that you are experiencing these days? Are you even aware of them?
- 7. Where do you want to change? Where do you feel powerless to change? Ask for the Holy Spirit, by his grace, to help you do what you cannot do through effort alone.
- 8. Choose several disciplines to work into your rule of life. Choose some that appeal to you because they fit easily into your life and help you connect with God. But also allow God to invite you to challenge and stretching places.
- 9. Ask God, "What daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rhythms do I need to establish to connect with you, Lord and give myself over to your life transforming power?" As you hear, jot them down and begin to put them into practice. This may mean you set your calendar around these habits so they can begin to have the right priority in your life.
