

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Church-wide Initiative

Go the Next Step to Develop a "Rule of Life": Part 8 Acts 2:42-3:1

Intro: Today – This 7th pathway is critical so the rest of the six pathways can happen – Know Yourself, Go Forward, Journey Thru The Wall , Enlarge Your Soul, Discover Rhythm, Grow Into Emotional Adult.

The Problem of Emotionally Unhealthy Spirituality

Pathways

Know Yourself that You May Know God

Going Back in Order to Go Forward

Journey Through the Wall

Enlarge Your Soul Through Grief and Loss

Discover the Rhythms of the Daily Office and Sabbath

Grow into an Emotionally Mature Adult

Go the Next Step to Develop a "Rule of Life"

Pete Scazzero wrote **EHS** for New Life Fellowship Church first. Had been teaching over 3-10 yr. period material.

There are powerful forces ripping apart the church.

Temptation to be ½ inch deep/ live off other's spirituality/ on run/head not experience.

There exists the *Internal* Resistance of our Fallen Flesh.

Our tendency is to do our will, not God's will.

Our fears make us possessive. We twist God's arm in prayer that he do OUR WILL!!

There exist powerful *External* forces of culture/world seek to cut you off from Christ.

So many distractions pulling me away. Screaming "ATTACH TO ME!"

There really is an evil one who quietly lures us away from God!! Satanic powers.

Os Guinness – wrote *The American Hour* – the combination of capitalism, technology and modern communications have created the most powerful civilization ever – global culture.

Core values – information (internet ads), convenience, options, time maximization, comfort, feels good, happiness, independence, entertainment, instant gratification, skepticism, image, style, control. – Modern culture –inherently narcissistic (about me).

In our advanced modern world – shift has gone from community to individualism, from authority to preference, from exclusive claims of CHRIST to combination of anything goes

USA numerically strong in Christians but is seriously distorted.

Churches Asia, Africa, Latin America – pre-modern. Large #'s. This wave is coming

Deepest problem in Western church-Western church itself – not external enemies or traitors.

"Meltdown of true Christian behavior" - result is virtual no distinction of people attend church (call themselves Christians) and not – seen in such areas as our sexuality, our handling of materialism\$ and issues of racism.

Studying church history – the church's response to compromise and crisis has consistently been one of new monastic movements. When the emperor made Christianity legal and easy in the Roman Empire in 300's, men and women fled to the desert in great numbers to create alternative communities in the desert – alongside the church. In the midst of worst time in church history – Crusades – Francis of Assisi gave away all his wealth to begin movement for CHRIST to the poor.

New Life Fellowship – not leaving the local church but integrating the riches of monastic spirituality

into our local church and mission. We are on a journey that continues to unfold.

3rd Treasures Contemplative Spirituality: Daily Office, Sabbath **Rule of Life**

ANCHORS!!! STRONG ENOUGH TO GET US TO SLOW DOWN AND REFOCUS.

Structure to guard our hearts/ stay in God's presence/pay attention to God.

Few people have a conscious plan for developing their spiritual lives.

Every person has an Unconscious plan for developing their spiritual lives.

e.g. Attend church, small group, pray 10 min. before bed.

"Rule" – Greek word that originally meant "trellis". A frame or structure of latticework

A trellis is a tool that helps a grapevine become more fruitful, rich, full

"We are the branches. Jesus is the vine." John 15

Structure so we can abide in Christ and bear much fruit.

RULE OF LIFE – 3-5th century men and women withdrew to Egyptian desert

1000' – saw society as shipwreck in need of salvation. Swimming for their lives

Pachomius, set up communities of hermits – early 300's because people were doing unhealthy things in name of Christ.

No accountability/community. Began to gather them in communities (monasteries). Around a RULE OF LIFE e.g. One community in 300's in Egypt with over 5000 men and women.

Organized their daily life around an agreed upon plan of work, prayer, Scripture, rest.

Monasteries/communities to this day have a Rule of life (St. Benedict's most famous).

I believe it is a deeply buried treasure for us!!

Acts 2 – God the Holy Spirit comes. A great turning in God's movement in history. The people of God become the Spirit filled body of Christ. 3000 converted!

The churches life is described as people devoted.

"spend much time in, engaged, saying 'no' to certain things to say 'yes' to this"

Apostle's Teaching – Learning

(Bible, Nicene Creed, memorizing Scripture, OT Survey –

"School of the Lord's Service"

Sat at apostle's feet hungry for instruction.

Not an anti-intellectualism – concern for doctrine.

When accept Christ – you are baby (regardless of age, education).

This is our life – always learning.

Fellowship – means *sharing*

Not an individual, private affair – you are not spectator

Form a new family – family of Jesus – healthy

We all bring in our family of origin (how we do life – conflict, anger, relationships, success, etc) now we learning together.

Note: many of these verses have to do with sharing.

Family – difficulties, conflicts, betrayals. Losses, crisis, seasons.

Financial element mentioned – call to generosity.

Breaking of Bread – Lord's Supper – both in church's worship and in homes. Thanksgiving, dependence on Jesus, humility, limits, worship,

Each week – we now offer it.

Prayer – personally and corporately

3 categories – Talking to God, Listening to God, Being with God. All needed.

Our of unceasing communion I discern God's will

Acts 3:1 – See Peter and John going up to temple for DAILY OFFICE (3 pm)

***They were very intentional – not just showing up to church!!!!

(not about convenience, comfort, God works for me as junior partner in firm, fire insurance for heaven, make my life more efficient)

Catechuminate. Once Gentiles came in w/ whole new world view – training set up.

KEY – they needed to be weaned from the world, the flesh and the devil if they were to live out their faith as Christians.

Benedict's Rule – "Your way of acting should be different than the world's way; the love of Christ must come before all else."

Psalm 27:4: David – One Thing I Ask...

This is resetting your entire life to God (setting clock).

This is about keeping God at the center of your life!

This is a new way of being! (Helps me pay attention to God and what is in my heart -murky depths. Structure serves me to live in God's presence).

APPLY – CCCLIVE.TV family (we are a community following Christ. Trellis/ "Rule of Life:

Every local church community/family has one.

We're a community of God's people gathering in multiple locations.

Vision One Church In Multiple Locations / Multiple Expressions - why to learn to love God & people maturely.

Mission To partner with the Holy Spirit to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Christ.

And we have a trellis, a way that we follow Jesus. We call that our Kingdom Partner Agreement - others would call a membership class.

Kingdom Partner Agreement

Participate in Weekend Experiences - worship/teaching.

Participate in Life Groups

Engage In Acts of Service

Contribute Financially

Love our City - in Mission

Live Biblically - devotions & Journaling in all aspects of life.

4 x Es - Discipleship Process

Engage - culture & community

Establish - teach people to love God & others well (1st Purple book & the EHS)

Equip - learning to serve alongside our God,

Empower - discover the unique gift on your life to release you to start the whole process again.. NHLI 2012

Fab 5

Experiences

Life Groups

LifeKids - Children's

Switch - Youth

Love This City - Missions

And people join us or want to become associated with our local church on the basis of our trellis, structure or RULE of life. They say, "I like the way this trellis works to help me follow Jesus. I mean I can grow here. It helps me grow upward and outward towards Jesus. And so I choose to go to this local church." So every local church has a trellis that comes from its history.

To Be Part of this Family Trellis includes 6 commitments:

- To submit to the oversight and shepherding of the leadership in the areas of doctrine, direction, discipline and discipleship.
- to be involved in a small group/community
- to discover and use your spiritual gifts
- to serve as appropriate and needed.
- to give financially (generously and sacrificially) to support the ministry of NLF
- to consistently take one step in developing your own personal "Rule of Life"

KEY – Each member of our community develops their personal "Rule of Life."

Read opening 2 paragraphs.

"A "Rule of Life" is a set of *conscious* guidelines to help us keep God at the center of everything we do. It is our unique combination of spiritual practices that provide a structure and direction for our growth in Christ. A "Rule of Life" is a pattern of daily actions we choose to help us to *intentionally* pay attention and remember God in everything we do.

GOAL IS CONTINUAL REMEMBRANCE OF GOD

Your personal "Rule of Life" is a constantly changing document, a "live" work in progress – always. Give yourself lots of time for the slow development of what works best for you. As you examine your life, you may notice many areas that need work. The best approach is to start with only one or two elements for the first few months. Then, after you experience some success with those (you will soon notice that each element in itself is bottomless), you will want to add another building block to your "Rule". Or you may want to stay with the same element to work on over a long period of time."

4 BROAD CATEGORIES

Prayer

1. Scripture – God speaks to us through Word.

I may read thru Bible in 1-2 yrs., use BCP lectionary, meditate on passages, Psalms, Lectio Divina

2. Silence and Solitude

May be sitting in church alone – lunch = part of Daily Office

Going away on retreat 1x yr/ quarter 2 - 5 minute blocks per day

3. Daily Office – stopping pausing

1x a day – Adding 2x!

Morning prayer – I offer my day to God

Midday prayer –Pause to center. My hope is in you.

Evening prayer – Thank him for his faithfulness. Before I go to sleep – ..."

4. Study –

reading/courses/ School Bible...

Rest

5. Sabbath

Rhythm – setting apart a 24 hr. period to not work! Stop, Delight, Rest, Contemplate

6. Simplicity

Removing distractions. Remaining free from attachments

Tithing

7. Play and Recreation

Finding activities that are pure, recreate and breathe life in you PLAN

Taking up hiking, cooking, art, music --

Activity

8. Service and Mission

How can I use my time, talents, gifts to serve others? Children's church, SG.

9. Care for the Physical Body

Nutrition, exercise, sleeping 8 hours, energy level

Relationships

10. Emotional Health

This is entire 8 week series – Know yourself, Go Back, Grieve losses, Self-care
Grow into Emotional Adult
I'm not responsible to make people happy –but love them.
Loving thing is not to make them feel good but to mature/be responsible
Get into small group EHS, PAIRS, Women's, Mentoring, Counseling season.

11. Family

Growing in your marriage, parenting – Marriage Group
Way you relate to your family of origin (Getting training)

12. Community

(Companions for Your Journey) – get into small group.

Other

You will probably notice many areas that need work.

You will need to find what works best for you. (writing it for some – yoke/bondage)

You will need to know yourself. Process . Your Seasons!

Pete Scazzo quote: "And listen, I was one of them where I was doing silence. I was doing scripture. But I was a beast as a husband because I wasn't doing the emotional health piece. I wasn't growing as an emotional adult. But I was doing some of the other stuff."

Jesus said "*My yoke is easy and my burden is light*" – if feels heavy – not for you.

***DO 2 ELEMENTS – EH and CS

Luke 18 Why? It is easy to become Pharisee—e.g. me - marriage. pre-EHS days.

We did lots of Christian practices!! BUT STUCK!!

Purpose of the structure is to live in the presence of God.

We get so busy in life (tied up in pride/fear) it becomes hard to admit how deep roots of our sin go. Living in repentance –admitting the truth about your sinful self.

Take 3 minutes: Silence and Solitude. Listen to God...

What is your present plan? Rule (trellis)?

Pick two – Ask God. Listen to your desires. Not my will but yours!

Pay attention to your breathing as a way to slow down your racing thoughts and restless bodies

To Non Christians – Christ died. Christ has risen. Christ is alive. Receive Him.

Prayer of Confession (BCP)

Most merciful God
We confess that we have sinned against you
In thought, word, and deed,
By what we have done,
And by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
Have mercy on us and forgive us;
That we may delight in your will,
And walk in your ways,
To the glory of your Name. Amen.

Whatever you have done the Father cannot NOT love you.

"Take. Eat. This is my body.

"Take. Drink. This is my blood of the new covenant."

Past – cross

Present – communion with the risen Jesus Christ

Future – taste the banquet that is to come (messianic) eat with Him forever. Hope. Certainty. Lord God Almighty. Make all things new. See Christ face to face. Taste eternity now.

Real happiness in this life is found in God and His will

Let go of your fears and anxieties – Swim into the love of God.