

Leadership Principles
and
the Formation of a Rule of Life

by
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Although I've worked in business, government, and academia, I am writing primarily as a lawyer. I know that everyone may not always love and esteem lawyers. I have even heard somewhat believable reports that the National Institutes of Health are considering using lawyers in their experiments rather than rats. The reasons for using lawyers are: 1) there are more lawyers than rats; 2) the lawyers take longer to figure out the mazes so the doctors have more time to observe them; and 3) the doctors don't develop the strong affection for lawyers that they do for the rats.

I have two goals for this brief essay: 1) I want to describe for you some (but not all) of the leadership principles that one finds in Scripture and describe a method for formulating a rule of life; 2) I also want to give you some questions to ask yourself as you contemplate your future plans.

My worldview is an orthodox Christian view so I derive my thoughts about leadership characteristics and the planning of a rule of life from a Scriptural basis. The Scriptures are full of wisdom concerning leadership principles. I will describe eight principles and indicate some of the Scriptures relevant to each. Then I will describe a six step method for formulating a rule of life that may be useful in your decision making process concerning your life's goals and objectives.

Most of what I am about to describe you already know. I may present the selected leadership principles in a slightly different rubric to remind you of what you have learned. Some of these principles may seem like clichés, but frequently clichés become clichés because they have some truth behind them. Although I draw on ancient Scripture, each of the principles is supported by contemporary scientific/sociological studies.

I want to emphasize at the outset that these leadership principles and the formation of a rule of life are personal. These principles, your rule of life, and your definition of success should be personal to you and not governed by the opinion of others or by comparing yourself to others. Comparing yourself with others is a harmful, sometimes ludicrous distraction. When I was at the University of California at Berkeley in 1969, a young man went berserk in the library. He ran through the library shouting hysterically at his astonished fellow students, "Stop! Stop! You're getting ahead of me!" He was arrested. Your intrinsic character and value cannot be measured in terms of specific achievements compared to others. As Pamela Pettler noted:

"Simply stated, *people are getting ahead of you*. All the time. While you're at your desk, people working out at the gym are getting ahead of you. While you're at the gym, your co-workers are getting ahead of you. If a friend gets a promotion at work, she has gotten ahead of you. If a colleague reads a book you haven't read, he has gotten ahead of you. While you are reading this paragraph, *everyone* is getting ahead of you. The silliness of this concept is that it can be applied across the board anywhere, anytime. On the road? Drivers of more expensive cars have gotten ahead of you. Watching TV? All the writers, actors, and technical crews have gotten ahead of you. At Marine World? The *dolphins* have gotten ahead of you."

Rather than living your life from the outside -- in and judging your worth by external criteria, live from the inside -- out. Keep your communion with God at the center. Decide your own goals and your own measure of success. Avoid measuring yourself by comparing yourself with others. Such comparisons will distort your perception and frequently steal your joy, and joy is the serious business of heaven. (C.S. Lewis).

As you consider these principles and the formation of a rule of life, do not regard an outward formalism as more important than the inward disposition of your heart. These principles and the rule of life are merely guides, not onerous demands for the perfect fulfillment of duties. Keep a festive spirit and do not substitute any rules or principles for the zeal of a love towards God.

I. IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD, RISK IS UNAVOIDABLE. LEADERSHIP REQUIRES *THOUGHTFUL* ACTIONS. BE WILLING TO TAKE RISKS.

"Fear not for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God; I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

"Take courage, all you people of the land, says the Lord, work, for I am with you says the Lord of hosts." (Hag. 2:4)

"Be *doers* of the word, and not merely hearers." (James 1:22)

"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." (Eph. 6:10)

Stephen Covey in his wonderful book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, emphasized the importance of being proactive. One must take the initiative to be effective and to take the initiative, one must take some risk. Risk is unavoidable. Frequently one takes more risk by attempting to avoid risk and doing nothing. Take *prudent, thoughtful, well researched* risk; if successful, you will gain more control over your life.

The person you have the most control over for taking action, of course, is yourself, and, despite the elegance of the Genome Project, you are not determined mainly by your genes. If you think you are, read a recent book by David Shenk entitled *The Genius in All of Us*. He presents dramatic scientific evidence that a human being has an internal capacity to excel far more than the current *zeitgeist* allows.

Our brains and bodies are extraordinary; they are "beautifully and wonderfully made." (Ps. 139:14). I wrote a book about a relatively new field of mathematics known as algorithmic information theory and the complexity of information in DNA. Mathematically, the complexity is a measure of the enormous information content found in highly irregular patterns in DNA instructions. A human being is astonishingly complex. For example, if you took a man's arteries and capillaries and veins and stretched them from end to end for as far as you could, that man would probably die.

This example illustrates that one should take *prudent* risk. One has to risk failure in order to move forward. Olympic figure skaters know this very well. They need to take risks, fall down repeatedly and try again. If they don't take risks, they won't be able to train their brain and their muscles to learn their skills and then improve upon them. If they are not falling down from time to time, they are not reaching for their full potential; they are not learning to their maximum.

Even with the best of intentions, we cannot avoid mistakes. For example, persons who write the announcements in church bulletins are intending to provide a service to the congregation by giving helpful information or directions, but mistakes happen. Here are some announcements written in actual church bulletins that show the difficulty in human communications:

1. The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
2. Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM -- prayer and *medication* to follow.
3. Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
4. Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.
5. Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

Yes, mistakes are unavoidable in an imperfect world. But the essential leadership characteristic is to be pro-active, take the initiative and risk making mistakes. The most important part of being pro-active is making a thoughtful start.

When I was in law school, I was talking to my mother on the phone and telling her how much work I had to do and how difficult all the papers and assignments would be to complete. She responded by saying, "I know how you can do it." I asked "How?" She answered, "You just start." Her advice is consistent with a Chinese proverb that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

From time to time, we may be stymied by an overwhelming amount of complex work. When one faces a complex task, it is best to break it down into component parts and attempt one at a time. In his recent book, *The Talent Code*, Daniel Coyle discusses the advantages in breaking complex tasks down into component parts. In certain activities, he centers his reasoning on scientific discoveries about the myelin sheath (the active insulation wrapped around nerves).

Coyle reviews the common method of what he terms "deep practice" in the remarkable success of the Bronte sisters, Korean golfers, Russian tennis players, classical violinists, and Caribbean baseball players. To consider the tennis players as an example of the efficacy of deep practice, one tennis court in the suburbs of Moscow has produced more top 20 women players than all of the United States. The essence of his discovery of the reasons for this efficacy can be summarized in three paragraphs. Each paragraph contains information for increasing the speed, strength and accuracy of one's active myelin as it influences one's nerves and muscles:

- 1) Break the skill you are attempting to learn into component parts or "chunks." Practice the movement in each chunk or segment separately, gradually adding a separate segment over time until each piece is integrated into a smooth, coordinated whole. Practice each chunk *slowly* so myelin can adjust to trigger the correct response in the nerve fibers that move muscles or affect thought in the brain.
- 2) Do many repetitions. Coyle holds that high intensity, focused deep practice sessions with consistent repetition will increase the speed of our acquisition of new skills. This also applies to education; the more one reads, the faster one learns.
- 3) Repeat the repetitions until your slow practice allows you to integrate your component movements into a coordinated whole. Continue to practice and you will experience *flow* (a pleasant and effective mood that enhances productivity; I will discuss the concept of flow in a few minutes).

Malcolm Gladwell in his recent book, *Outliers: The Story of Success*, noted that at Berlin's elite Academy of Music, the group of violinists who had the potential to become world-class soloists, single-mindedly practiced over thirty hours a week. By the

age of twenty, these elite performers had each totaled 10,000 hours of practice. In his study of various disciplines, Gladwell concluded that 10,000 hours of repetitive practice was the common ingredient in performance at the highest levels of excellence in these disciplines.

Of course, one need not attempt to be a truly elite performer. Some competence is sufficient for many of us and not all of us want or need to perform at the most excellent level. For example, recently, I began to follow Coyle's recommendations for deep practice in my attempt to play the violin. I tried deep practice at my house with all the windows open. When I stepped outside for a breath of fresh air, I noticed my neighbor gardening next door. I asked, "How do you like my execution?" My neighbor looked up and said, "I'm in favor of it."

Deep practice takes some time, but the principles appear to speed the learning process by means of slowing down in repetitive practice. Breaking complex tasks down into component parts also allows us to see the synthesis of the whole. The key is to recognize the syntheses among component parts and to continue building these syntheses until one reaches "intelligibility," defined as the ability to grasp the integrated whole and act consistently with it. (Elliot Richardson).

II. DON'T LET THE WORLD AROUND YOU SQUEEZE YOU INTO ITS OWN MOULD, BUT LET GOD TRANSFORM YOUR MIND FROM WITHIN.

"Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your mind from within, so you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity." (Rom. 12:2)

"Let Christ's teaching live in your hearts, *making you rich in the true wisdom*. Teach and help one another along the right road with your psalms and hymns and Christian songs, singing God's praises with joyful hearts. And whatever work you may have to do, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, thanking God the Father through him." (Col. 3:16)

Leadership comes from one's beliefs, whatever they may be. Some leaders move and act from false or negative beliefs, and end up causing considerable harm. For the Christian, belief (faith) "comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom. 10:17). Meditating on the Word of God produces more capacity for good leadership. Scripture is only useful if we think about the words and remember them. Scripture memorization and repeating a scripture throughout the day can help make for a better day. When one listens to one's inner voice repeat Scriptures, one moves into communion with God; and in the presence of God, there is the fullness of joy. (Ps. 16:10). To see what I mean, read the little book *The Practice of the Presence of God* that concerns the wisdom of Brother Lawrence, a rather physically awkward, but happy Carmelite lay brother who lived in Paris in the 17th century. For him, the essence of being was joyful communion with God.

Neil Atkinson, my college roommate who worked successfully to establish Young Life in this area, and I stay in communication and encourage each other to memorize paragraphs of Scripture and repeat them during the day. Try this as an experiment. Write the following passage (or one you select) on an index card. Carry the card with you and then memorize it phrase by phrase. As you move through your day, repeat the Scripture with your inner voice. You may be surprised how this exercise improves the quality of your attitude and your relationships. This passage is from Colossians 3:12-17:

"As, therefore, God's picked representatives of the new humanity, purified and beloved of God himself, be merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind. Accept life, and be most patient and tolerant with one another, always ready to forgive if you have a difference with anyone. Forgive as freely as the Lord has forgiven you. And, above everything else, be truly loving, for love is the golden chain of all the virtues. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, remembering as members of the one body you are called to live in harmony, and never forget to be thankful for what God has done for you."

Hymns and spiritual songs, of course, are another way of remembering Scripture, and, as I have written in my book, *A Case for The Divinity of Jesus*, we have very strong historical evidence concerning the earliest hymns and creeds that were sung by the earliest church shortly after the time of the crucifixion. If you dig deeply in the research, you will find that the faith has trustworthy historical foundations.

III. FOCUS ON WHAT IS TRUE, HONORABLE, JUST, PURE, LOVELY AND PRAISEWORTHY; CONTINUE YOUR EDUCATION THROUGHOUT YOUR LIFE.

"If you believe in goodness and if you value the approval of God, fix your minds on whatever is true and honorable and just and pure and lovely and praiseworthy." (Col. 4:8).

Cognitive therapy, as practiced at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, has demonstrated that feelings and actions follow thoughts. Thoughts are incredibly powerful. In my book, *A Case for the Existence of God*, I describe the work of UCLA

research psychiatrist Jeffrey Schwartz and Berkeley quantum physicist Henry Stapp. They have demonstrated that one's thoughts can change the physical structure of one's brain. Persons have mental volitional power that allows them to make choices and be responsible for their actions. This is consistent with results obtained by Dr. Herbert Benson at Harvard's Mind/Body Institute. When one stops and thinks about it, it is remarkable that nonmaterial information-based processes can change physical matter, including the alteration of neurons. Yet that is the observed result demonstrated by brain scans performed with the newest technologies. A strict materialistic view of reality appears completely inadequate when one recalls that information is not matter or energy. (See Schwartz and Begley, *The Mind and the Brain*; Stapp, *A Mindful Universe*.)

All of us have an inner voice. Frequently, that voice can lie to us and present scenarios for negative outcomes. In other words, we tell ourselves bad news and predict bad events. (In my view, this is *part* of what happened in the recent stock market panic.)

Telling ourselves bad news and giving bad predictions frequently distorts reality. Question any negative thoughts and focus on whatever is pure, lovely, praiseworthy and honorable. Try to tell yourself the truth which may begin from a Christian perspective with the acknowledgement that we live in an imperfect, but nevertheless, beautiful and fruitful world held in the power of a loving God. Again, the memorization and repetition of Scripture passages help to focus one's mind and heart on the love and faithfulness of God.

Learning should be a lifelong process. I have many good friends who are well into their 80s who are outstanding academics in physics, theology, philosophy, and other disciplines. They continue to learn and are fascinated, just as you are by the acquisition of new knowledge. In my view, as long as one has the capacity, learning should never stop. The amount of time available for deep study, however, will vary throughout one's life, but the important habit is to continue one's education.

Most concepts in our disciplines are more comprehensible than they appear at first glance. Learning is often merely the result of becoming acquainted with a new vocabulary or with new symbols and the principles of their relationship. For example, when one learns a new language, such as French, basically, he or she is merely gaining knowledge of symbols and the principles of their relationship. In a language this means understanding vocabulary and grammar. In mathematics and finance, it means symbols and equations. The key is to set aside time to concentrate on the symbols and the principles of their relationship. Your concentration will create new physical structures in your brain that will allow for an understanding of the discipline.

Effective communication is something we all need to work at constantly. The difficult, but remarkable, process of communicating a thought from one mind to another often results in misunderstandings due to imprecise language or misinterpretations of one's intent. Because of the imperfections inherent in communication, I encourage a review of your study of the principles of grammar.

Grammar defines the logic of a language and assists in the conveying of our ideas. The rules of grammar make our thinking more precise and our writing clearer. For example, consider the sentence: "I smelled you frying chicken." What precisely is being smelled? Follow the rules of grammar to clarify your writing: "I smelled your frying chicken." If you are willing to spend some time studying grammar, I recommend reading C. Edward Good's book, *Whose Grammar Book Is This Anyway?* Improve your grammar, and you will increase the precision of your thinking.

IV. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER GIVE UP; BE PERSISTENT; TRY TO TURN YOUR FOCUS TO ONE THING AT A TIME.

"But this *one thing* I do: forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead, I *press on* toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3:13-14)

On October 29, 1941, when visiting his alma mater, Harrow School, after the German blitz on Britain, Winston Churchill said these (or similar words) to the students: "Never, never, never give up."

My point is to emphasize the necessity of persistence. President Calvin Coolidge (known by some as "silent Cal") may not have said many things, but by these words he articulated an important leadership trait:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan '*press on*' has solved and will always solve the problems of the human race."

Your mind is only able to think about one thing at a time. (Dr. William R. Stizrud, neuropsychologist). There will be times in your life when you will be so busy that you may not be able to focus on as many projects as you would like. During my time in the Ford White House, I worked from time to time with Elliot Richardson, one of two persons (the other was George Schultz) to hold four cabinet positions and also a former Ambassador to the Court of St. James. He was then Secretary of Commerce. We became friends, and I learned many things from him over the years. He emphasized to me the importance of consecutive thinking time.

In today's technological society, we are constantly reacting (like Pavlov's dog) to technical messages and information. I recommend reading a very short, but good book by Dave Crenshaw entitled *The Myth of Multitasking: How 'Doing it All' Gets 'Nothing Done.'*

When one is distracted by phone calls, emails, text messages and other interruptions, one loses productivity. The science behind this is quite clear. TNS Research in a study sponsored by Hewlett Packard conducted a survey of 1,100 Britons and discovered that I.Q. drops significantly when one fails to focus on one thing. In 80 clinical trials, Dr. Glenn Wilson, a psychiatrist at King's College London University, monitored the I.Q. of workers throughout the day. He discovered that I.Q. dropped 10 points among persons who attempted to juggle messages and do their work.

When a New York executive of Tommy Hilfiger was visiting me in Holland, he was constantly checking his cell phone and messages during the course of a conversation. I mentioned the drop in I.Q. that the studies had indicated for persons who were constantly checking and attempting technical messages. He responded with a hesitating, almost stammering, sentence, "Do...you...really...think that is t--r--u--e?" He meant the response to be humorous, and it was, but the study indicates that we may be lowering the quality of our thinking if we allow technical messages to interrupt an attempt at deep study for the task at hand.

One cannot multi-task with text messages, constant phone calls, emails, and expect to perform at one's highest level of productivity. Set aside time for communications and time for focused work. Keep these times separated. Deep, concentrated study will allow you to finish your work much faster and leave more time for communication with friends, family and your community.

The power of focus and concentration on one area at a time has been demonstrated frequently throughout history. Einstein focused most of his life on physics. He was passionate about physics. If you are fortunate, you will be able to work on your passion. If you can determine what your passion is and work on it, you will do well, because you will concentrate on it in a deeper way than you will on other matters.

If you are wondering what your passion is, I recommend the book, *Authentic Happiness* by Martin Seligman, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and former President of the American Psychological Association. The book is very helpful in explaining the concept of *flow* where one becomes so involved in a field of study that one loses track of time. Have you ever had that happen to you? If you are looking for a method of identifying your passion, read *Authentic Happiness*.

In this book and in his work at the University of Pennsylvania (see www.authentic-happiness.org), Seligman draws on groundbreaking psychological research to demonstrate how a positive psychology is shifting the psychologist's profession away from an emphasis on pathology, abnormal personality traits, and mental illness to positive emotions, virtues and strength. One's signature strengths can be nurtured throughout one's life to improve ourselves and the world around us. Seligman presents questions that help to identify one's signature strengths and assist in finding one's passion.

Signature strengths and passion are not always completely correlated, but the concept of *flow* increases productivity and joy. Flow is the optimal mental state where one is completely immersed in what one is doing, fully focused and involved. Proposed by Mikhail Csikszentmihalyi, who headed the psychology department at the University of Chicago and then became a co-worker with Peter Drucker at the Claremont Graduate School, flow is a single-minded immersion in one's task. This immersion frequently results in joy (e.g., an athlete performing in "the zone.")

Csikszentmihalyi studied the principles and practices of the Montessori Method of education. In his view these practices set up continuous flow opportunities for the students. In a multi-year study of Montessori education he confirmed that students experience flow more frequently in Montessori settings than in other educational environments.

V. LEARN YOUR TRADE FROM THE BOTTOM TO THE TOP -- THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM AND INSIDE OUT -- OUTSIDE IN; DON'T ATTEMPT TO LEARN ONLY THE TRICKS OF THE TRADE.

"Whatever you do, put your whole heart and soul into it, as into work done for the Lord, and not merely for men --knowing that your real reward, a heavenly one, will come from the Lord, since you are actually employed by the Lord Christ, and not just your earthly master." (Col. 3:23-24)

Learn the details of your trade thoroughly. For example, if you are in finance, learn the details of accounting. Finance is merely sophisticated, and sometimes mathematical, accounting. Learn how to read balance sheets, cash flow, and income statements. There are no shortcuts. The easiest path is actually to gain detailed knowledge of your trade.

Although detailed knowledge may seem difficult to obtain, it is really only the result of devoted methodical study. If you read deeply in your field, you will become proficient. Life is much more fun if you are good at what you do for a living. This can be accomplished by studying the leading writings in your area. In certain disciplines this will mean reading the best and most recent research from the leading academic institutions. Bear in mind, however, that you need not gain a perfect knowledge of everything. (All you can do is all you can do; but all you can do is enough).

VI. TAKE A GENUINE INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF OTHERS; *AMOR VINCIT OMNIA* (Love conquers all).

"Let us have no imitation Christian love. Let us have a genuine break with evil and a real devotion to good. Let us have real warm affection for one another as between brothers (and sisters), and a willingness to let the other man have the credit...And as for those who try to make your life a misery, bless them. Don't curse, bless....Live in harmony with each other. Don't pay back a bad turn by a bad turn to *anyone*....As far as your responsibility goes, live at peace with everyone." (Rom. 12:9-18)

"No one has ever seen God; but as long as we love one another, God will live in us and His love will be complete in us because He allows us to share His Spirit." (1 John 4:7-8, 12-13)

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est. (Where there is love, there is God.) God is love, and our principle reason to love Him is because He first loved us. Love for one's neighbor does not spring from the accomplishment of self-fulfillment. Authentic love for one's neighbor is a natural response of gratitude for God's first love for us. *Agape* is the principal Greek word in the New Testament to describe God's love. Agape love is unconditional love that does not demand anything for itself; it is completely lacking in self-seeking. There are no *ifs* in unconditional, agape love. This kind of love requires strength, the exercise of one's will, and a consistent communion with God.

Armand Nicholi, the author of *The Harvard Guide to Psychiatry* and *The Question of God*, describes agape love as the key to all successful relationships among individuals and within groups and organizations:

"Agape relates to a basic principle of human relationships. When you will the best for someone and act accordingly, even toward a person you do not like, you begin to dislike that person less and like him or her a little more. The opposite is also true. The more cruel you are, the more you will hate; and the more you hate, the more cruel you will become -- and so in a vicious circle forever. This principle can be observed over and over again in all human relationships. If we do people harm, we dislike them more -- perhaps because they make us feel guilty. Although agape is based primarily on the will, the exercise of this form of love influences our feelings, often by reversing negative feelings into positive ones."

"Everyone can observe throughout their lives that agape is the key to all successful relationships, even those within groups and organizations. In corporations, universities, and other institutions, I have noticed that the real problems confronting people do not concern the primary tasks of the organization but result from conflicts between and among people. These conflicts arise from people acting primarily on feelings of rivalry, jealousy, hatred, revenge or vindication, rather than on the will. If agape determines how we relate to others, we can save ourselves and those around us a lot of unnecessary pain."

Fyodor Dostoevsky once remarked, "To love a person means to see him as God intended him to be." Agape love is willing the highest and the best for the other person. It is an unlimited love with an inherent power to transform the giver and the receiver.

The fruits of love in one's career are remarkable. Very few persons succeed over any substantial period of time if they act out of the negative feelings Dr. Nicholi described above. Love, on the other hand, ultimately wins.

VII. MAKE A QUIET TIME A HIGH PRIORITY.

"Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10)

"He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those *who wait on the Lord* shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Isa. 40:29-31)

As I mentioned, our lives are full of technological interruptions and an overabundance of information. We need to make a daily appointment for a time of communion with God that is not subject to interruptions or distractions.

One of my mentors is Dr. James M. Houston, who was part of C.S. Lewis's faculty study group (not the Inklings) at Oxford. He taught geography at Oxford for 23 years and then became a theologian and founded Regent College at the University of British Columbia. Jim is a wise and caring person. In speaking on Psalm 62:1 ("My soul finds rest in God alone"), he emphasized the need for contemplation even as we live actively in a world of increasing technology:

"There is no doubt that meditation needs to be practiced much more than we are accustomed to....We are distracted by so many opportunities, and our minds are extended by so much information, that we find it very difficult to know what is the *one thing* that we should do that will change our lives and redirect our vitality. That is why the great bane of Christianity today is that most of the time we are notional Christians, and not Christians in formation, that is to say that our very lives and characters are being affected by what we have learned of the ways of God. Because we live in the information society this of course is our proneness, simply being distended by information and not being reformed into the image of Christ."

There is more to life than increasing its speed. When I was a sophomore in college, I gave a chapel talk based on a little booklet *Quiet Time*. The phrase I borrowed was "What does it profit us if we dwell in Jerusalem, but do not see the face of the King?" In other words, from my perspective, Augustine was right in his statement that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. The Christian life is to be a life of communion with God. This affects the quality and joy of our lives. We miss the center of our faith if we are not in communion with God. Remember the answer in the catechism: "Our chief end is to know God and to enjoy Him forever."

For my daily quiet times I like to read the Lectionary assigned readings on the day. I then read a Scriptural series of verses contained in a thematic structure in a book known as *Daily Light* and use either the *Oxford Book of Prayer* or John Baillie's *Diary of Private Prayer*. These readings are not long, but they encourage a dialog with God. This format is one I am currently using. I merely mention it as an example of what one might include in a quiet time. However you decide to structure a quiet time, do it prayerfully with an emphasis on Scripture. Contemplative prayer, for example, may center one's being, but for the Christian the contemplation needs to be directed toward God and not merely centered on the self. The goal is communion with the Triune God, not an isolated focus on one's self. The reality of the latter is a form of self-worship, something akin to the Gnostic distortion of the Christian faith. (See Chapter 7 in *A Case for the Divinity of Jesus*).

VIII. CREATE AND PERIODICALLY REVIEW A RULE OF LIFE

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and *acts* on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock." (Matt. 7:24)

As I have indicated, one cannot do everything. To create balance one must determine goals and set priorities. Peter Drucker has written about the need in today's society for all knowledge workers to become responsible for their own goal directed behavior. All now need to become their own CEO about their lives and determine where they belong and where they can live a balanced life consistent with their values and goals.

Determining and setting goals can make an enormous difference. One of the persons I had the privilege of working with in the Ford White House was Peter Wallison. I was Nelson Rockefeller's White House Fellow at the time Rockefeller was Vice President and Peter was his counsel. Peter later became President Reagan's White House Counsel and wrote Nancy Reagan's favorite biography about her husband.

When President Reagan died, Peter and I met for lunch and talked about the strengths of Rockefeller, Ford, and Reagan. I asked Peter what was Reagan's best management trait. Peter said that one way to describe it was the phrase, "Lions don't hunt rabbits." By that he meant Reagan had set about 5 main goals for his presidency, and he wanted to focus on those goals so that he could accomplish them. He did not want to be distracted by matters that other people were telling him were urgent and important.

Consequently, the first thing Reagan did every morning was to give all the rabbits that were on his Oval Office desk to his chief of staff, Jim Baker. He then turned his attention to his 5 main goals. Lions don't bother to hunt rabbits. They go after the big game that is most important to them. What is the lesson here for each of us? It is to define and articulate and then hunt our own personal big game. In other words, we need to ask ourselves what do we *personally* want out of life? This is an essential question for building an adequate foundation for effective decisions.

One method of reflecting on essential questions about one's life is the method articulated by St. Benedict who lived about 70 years after the fall of Rome (410 A.D). He lived between 480-540 A.D. He was not himself a monk, but created a guide or rule for the monks living in small monasteries at that time.

About 23 years ago I learned about the process of formulating a rule of life and modify the rule every year. I keep it on the front pages of a leather business journal I carry for the purpose of keeping notes about the pending matters I need to address. I look at the rule from time to time and note where I am following the rule and also the extraordinary number of places where I am not adhering to my rule.

I want to emphasize that I seldom follow my rule well, but the rule is written in my journal so that I know its contents and can INTEND to follow it. We are flawed human beings and cannot even draft a perfect rule for our lives, let alone follow it well, but we can INTEND to ask ourselves significant questions about our lives and try to avoid wasting time hunting rabbits.

I want to outline briefly how one might formulate a rule of life.

1) First Step: Search for a meaningful scripture passage.

In the modified way I approach the rule, I first begin by searching for a Scripture passage to be the overarching guide to my rule and, consequently, a main guide for my life.

The verse I chose was 1 Thess. 5:16-18: "Be always joyful; pray continually; give thanks whatever happens; for this is what God in Christ wills for you."

This is the verse that I write at the very top of the rule and memorize. I try to say this verse as a prayer of gratitude throughout my day. I often forget to do so, but my INTENTION is to remind myself of this portion of the word of God as often as possible and to do so with an eye towards the One who holds the universe together. Thinking about God as one repeats Scripture turns Scripture towards prayer.

2) Second Step: Articulate your Ultimate Goal.

Secondly, try to articulate the ULTIMATE GOAL for your life. I distinguish goals from objectives. Goals, as I am using the term, refer to abstract overarching concepts. The ULTIMATE GOAL is one's North Star and one's destination. It should be consistent with, but need not be encapsulated by, the Scripture verse one selects.

Objectives are action items that move one towards one's ULTIMATE GOAL. They fit in the framework that one builds under one's ULTIMATE GOAL.

To write one's ULTIMATE GOAL, one needs to ask two questions: 1) Who do I want to be? 2) What do I want to do? Think of the ULTIMATE GOAL in terms of your whole life. Who do you want to be? What do you want to do?

Stephen Covey encourages his readers to think about their funerals and what they would like persons who played different significant roles in their lives to say about them at their funerals. I think it is a worthwhile exercise to try to help one identify who one wants to be and what one wants to do with one's life.

Let me describe three hypothetical responses to the question: What would you want your best friend to say about you as he looked at you in your casket.

The first person could respond, "I want him to say that I was generous, thoughtful, and one of the city's best doctors."

A second person could respond, "I want him to say that I was a competent businessman who gave time and money to noteworthy charitable causes."

A third person, in more of a Woody Allen style, might respond, "I want him to say, 'Look, he is moving!'"

Actually, the exercise of asking how one would like his or her life described by persons who knew them well is a worthwhile method of exploring the questions: Who do I want to be? What do I want to do?

Given my own personal spiritual commitment, I articulated my ULTIMATE GOAL as follows:

"My ULTIMATE GOAL is to know God, to abide in Him and allow Him to abide in me through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit."

It is an abstract concept with some implications for objective action.

3) Third Step: View your life in categories and develop action objectives in each category.

Ask: How does each thing I do contribute to my ULTIMATE GOAL?

Once we have an articulation of our Ultimate Goal, we can reflect upon our action objectives in different categories of our lives. The process of breaking one's life down into different categories allows us to see what practical actions could move us towards a fulfillment of our ULTIMATE GOAL. I also look for Scriptural passages to serve as a guide for each category of my action objectives.

I know that we are whole human beings and that categories cannot cover all of our complex, integrated natures, but the discipline of addressing our lives in certain categories helps us reflect upon practical actions in our lives under the framework of our ULTIMATE GOAL.

The key thing for me to remember in constructing a rule of life was to always ask how the various objectives I defined contributed to my ultimate goal of knowing God. If this was my ultimate goal, my objectives must all reach out to Him. If they don't, my life will be increasingly frustrating.

To write this aspect of a rule of life, I personally use six categories for objective actions. I then select Scripture passages for guidance for each category.

1. Spiritual objectives
2. Physical objectives
3. Community objectives
4. Work objectives
5. Study objectives
6. Recreational objectives

4) Fourth Step: Consider practical action examples for each of the objective categories.

I emphasize action in each of these objective categories by writing lists of infinitives (verbs). Do not try to write a perfect list of action objectives. Perfection in writing the rule is an obstacle. (Again, all you can do is all you can do; but all you can do is enough.) Reflect and write. You will modify the rule periodically. It should represent your thoughts and reflections, but need not be perfect.

1. Spiritual Objectives.

Scripture: "Abide in me and I in you."

- a. To converse with Him in conversational prayer without ceasing.
- b. To listen to Him by reading His Scriptures and tend to respond by praying the Scriptures and talking with God about His Word.
- c. To praise Him in song.
- d. To meditate on His Word and memorize and repeat His Word.
- e. To be still in His Presence.
- f. To realize His Presence in me.
- g. To contemplate Him.
- h. To allow Him to live in me and through me.
- i. To spend 1 hour/day in quiet time learning from Him, realizing His Presence and allowing His friendship to transform me.
- j. To live "inside out" from the center of Christ in me to the world outside so that I am not governed by external events.
- k. To partake of the sacraments as often as possible.
- l. To attain the peace of a life surrendered to Christ and the joy of sin forgiven because of the cross.
- m. To walk humbly with God.
- n. To do all things to the glory of Christ.

2. Physical Objectives.

Scripture: "Your body is the temple of the living God."

- a. To exercise intensely each day.
- b. To eat a healthy diet.
- c. To have a sufficient amount of sleep.
- d. To watch a minimal amount of television.
- e. To read medical literature that may benefit my body without catching "medical student's disease."

3. Community Objectives.

Scripture: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

- a. To worship with a small group of friends.
- b. To create a lawyer's group to encourage attorneys in their faith.
- c. To have family vespers, retreat, prayers, readings, etc. Family is first and the centermost place of worship.
- d. To stay involved in the wider community of faith in this country without moving frenetically among meetings.
- e. To participate in encouraging persons I meet in international communities in their faith.

4. Work Objectives.

Scripture: "Whatever you do put your whole heart, mind, strength and soul into it as into work done for the Lord, for your real employer is Christ Himself."

- a. To emphasize relationships in work and give genuine friendship to everyone with whom I work.
- b. To write a business plan that would allow me to control my time by controlling my own assets, time and money and rely on my own abilities while attempting to be of service to others, including colleagues, clients, partners.
- c. To give value for value.
- d. To engage in daily dreaming and planning time.
- e. To keep a focus on my business and professional plan.

f. To listen well to others and care for them out of your own center in Christ.

5. Study Objectives.

Scripture: "Whatever is true and beautiful -- think about these things."

- a. To read the wisdom of others, especially the ancient wisdom of those who have gone before me and draw upon their insights (e.g., Bonhoeffer, Augustine, Teresa of Avila, Phillips Brooks, Gordon Allport, Paul Tournier, etc.)
- b. To look for and read contemporary writers who are wise in their approaches to God.
- c. To understand the insights of science and the beauty of the artistic world.
- d. To look for timeless truths concerning contemporary issues.

6. Recreation Objectives.

Scripture: "Rejoice always, again, I say, rejoice."

- a. To play at games I enjoy – basketball, tennis, golf.
- b. To join in athletic events in community with persons of all ages.
- c. To hike in nature, especially in Wengen (Swiss Alps).
- d. To dance and celebrate the remarkable nature of music and the beauty of coordinated movements.
- e. To laugh, smile and applaud the joy of living.

5) Fifth Step: Identify internal and external obstacles to fulfilling objectives.

I want to emphasize again that these are objectives. I do not always do them. I intend to attempt to do them.

All of the above objectives require time. One cannot do everything so one needs to act on priorities in allocating one's time. To try to set time priorities and to evaluate how well we are fulfilling our objectives, we need to identify the obstacles that hinder us from attaining our objectives.

Consequently, in writing our Rule of Life, the next step is to write an answer to the question: During the last 6 months, internally and externally, what prevented me from fulfilling my objectives?

Ask this question under each of the six objective categories and write down the obstacles that you see, within yourself and in external circumstances, that impeded the fulfillment of your objectives.

6) Sixth and Final Step: Write a practical daily and weekly example of how you intend to live.

After reviewing the obstacles, write a section entitled, "Practical Program to Follow Your Rule of Life".

In this final step you have two writings:

- 1) write an example of how a week following your Rule would look like; and
- 2) write an example of how a day following your Rule would look list
(allow for interruptions, especially for family or community obligations).

For example, my writing for a day could be:

8:00am Quiet Time 9:00am-6:00pm Practice Law 7:00pm Family Time 9-10:00pm Study Time

To reflect upon questions that necessitate an examination of the activities of our entire life requires a large quantum of time. Peter Drucker advises that we need 4-8 hours of consecutive time to think through major questions. I know that is difficult, but we want to avoid the idea expressed by Yogi Berra when someone told him that he was going in the wrong direction. He responded, "Yes, but I am making great time."

Isn't that the way we live our lives? We are so busy that we don't even bother to check our direction. We can't distinguish between lions and rabbits. We have to first find the North Star in order to be guided by it. Take the time to write your Rule of Life. The war is won in the general's tent.