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## Session Five: Rule of Life

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### Description

There's a parable about a man who died. His plan was to tell God all the things he had accomplished during his life. Instead, to his surprise, God asked "How have you enjoyed the life I have given you?" Some of you may have grown up in churches where God's love was tied to your actions. To be loved you needed to "do". I believe that God is more interested in our *being* than our *doing*.

Are you making time to enjoy God? Your family? Your friends? Are you making time to play and laugh?

Sometimes it's a question of priorities. We may say that a Core Value is spending time with others, but our actions tell a different story. There is an expression about "turning the stone into bread". This expression is about over functioning: Doing more than we are called to do. Sometimes we think that we are the only one who can do something. This may be true in some instances, but are there times when we can share the load with others or come back to the task another day? How are you choosing to spend your time?

In Session Four you filled out your Family Rule of Life Commitment Form, signed it, decorated it and put it up where everyone in the family can see it. You also decided on a realistic schedule and how best to keep track of it.

In this session you will select the date that your Family Rule of Life begins. You will then enter your chosen Vital Behaviors on a calendar, weekly list, or whatever action plan works best for you and place it (whether digitally or in paper form) where everyone in the family can see it.

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### Materials Needed

Last session's Family Rule of Life Commitment Form that you all signed. Your family's calendar in any form. Writing utensils. Colors for smaller kids. Handouts (below) to help you document your plan.

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### Handouts

Sample Family Philanthropy Plan, Family Philanthropy Plan Template, Weekly Family Rule of Life Activity Sample, Weekly Family Rule of Life Activity Template, Family Rule of Life Monthly Calendar Sample, Family Rule of Life Monthly Calendar Template.

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## Living out your rule of life

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### Read aloud the quote or scripture

#### WHEN I AM AMONG THE TREES

"When I am among the trees,  
especially the willows and the honey locust,  
equally the beech, the oaks and the pines,  
they give off such hints of gladness.  
I would almost say that they save me, and daily.  
I am so distant from the hope of myself,  
in which I have goodness, and discernment,  
and never hurry through the world  
but walk slowly, and bow often.  
Around me the trees stir in their leaves  
and call out, "Stay awhile."  
The light flows from their branches.  
And they call again, "It's simple," they say,  
"and you too have come  
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled  
with light, and to shine." – *Mary Oliver*

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### Questions for discussion (10 minutes)

1. What kind of person do you want to be? What is the most meaningful compliment you have ever received? Why was it meaningful to you?
2. What kinds of activities are happening in your life when you feel fully alive? What are the things at play in your life when you do not feel fully alive?
3. Depending on your beliefs, how do you know when something you are doing moves you closer to God? How do you know when you are moving away from God?
4. What does it mean to listen? Is it a different thing to listen to God versus listening to a person? What do you think it feels like to listen to God?

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### Rule of life activity

#### Mapping out our plan

1. Get Last session's Family Rule of Life Commitment Form and either open the handouts on a computer or mobile device or print them: *Sample Family Philanthropy Plan*, *Family Philanthropy Plan Template*, *Weekly Family Rule of Life Activity Sample*, *Weekly Family Rule of Life Activity Template*, *Family Rule of Life Monthly Calendar Sample*, *Family Rule of Life Monthly Calendar Template*.

2. Spend some time as a family talking about the best way to keep track of / calendar your Vital Behaviors. I.e; If you have agreed that you will have dinner as a family two nights a week with no mobile devices, how will you make that happen? Will that be on a family “Outlook” calendar, so everyone has access to it? Will it be on a paper calendar in the kitchen? Will it be on a weekly list on the fridge?
3. In the handouts you will find a Family Rule of Life Monthly Calendar Sample and a Weekly Family Rule of Life Activity Sample. Review both the Calendar Sample and the Activity Sample and decide as a family which will work best for you or come up with your own. The purpose is to select a method that will keep you on track with your plan.
4. Now if you selected the Monthly Calendar method, get the Monthly Calendar Template Handouts. If you chose the Weekly Activity method, get the Weekly Activity Template. As a family, fill it out together for one or two months. You may find, after one month that you need to adjust the plan. That’s ok! Next month you can adjust as needed.
5. I recommend that after you fill out your template, you decorate it and put it up where everyone can see it...maybe on the fridge.
6. Digital Plan: Today many of us use Outlook, Google or other digital calendars to keep track of our schedules. In order to stay on track, I recommend you now grab your computers / cell phones and enter your plan into your digital calendars to keep each other accountable.
7. Lastly if one of your Core Values is *Giving* get the handouts: Sample Family Philanthropy Plan and Family Philanthropy Plan Template. Review the sample and make a decision about how you want to document your family philanthropy plan. Then either fill out the Family Philanthropy Plan Template and put it where you all have access to it or create your own.

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## Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
  2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why.
  3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?
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Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Volunteer to read a book to someone at a retirement home or elementary school
- Volunteer to do the family dishes when it isn't your turn
- Bake cookies and take them to your local fire station to say thank you
- Volunteer to walk dogs at your local animal shelter
- Sponsor a child with a charity organization