

FAITHFUL FOLLOWER



RULE & LIFE

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FAITHFUL FOLLOWER



“Let us see that habits shape the heart. Let us stop fearing that limits are a threat to our freedom. Let us see that **the right limitations are the way to the good life.** Let us build a trellis for love to grow on. Let us craft a common rule of life for our time, one that will unite our heads and our habits, **growing us into the lovers of God and neighbor we were created to be.**”

Justin Whitmel Earley



Why should I develop a rule of life for my social media?

The term rule of life has its origins in the early church fathers and has been used to help communities develop rhythms for their minds, hearts, and bodies for their spiritual formation and flourishing. A good rule enables followers of Jesus to follow Him more faithfully and fruitfully. A rule of life for technology/social media creates rhythms and boundaries that guide your relationship with these tools and platforms which in turn flows into growing in love for God, neighbor, and self (the healthy kind, of course). Every person's rule of life looks different and may be based on the individual's current relationship with social media and technology.

Some of the questions we must ask ourselves before developing our rule may include:

- What is the vision of my life? (*What is my mission/purpose?*)
- What are my values? (*What beliefs or principles guide my life?*)
- Why do I have a social media account?
- How much time do I currently spend online in a day? A week? A month? A year?
- What impact does my social media content consumption have on my Christian spiritual formation (growth into Christlikeness)?
- Is what I am consuming reflective of the life of a follower of Jesus?
- Is what I am creating/posting reflective of the life of a follower of Christ?
- What are the predominant emotions I experience during my time online? How do I feel about myself/my purpose/my online and offline neighbor after I have spent time online?



What is your *why*?

What is your why? Why did you first set up your social media account?

- To stay in touch with family and friends?
- To keep up to date with the news or specific content that needs you to sign up for an account ?
- To showcase your business, talent, and skill?
- To manage a social media account for a business or organisation?
- Peer pressure?

If you have never thought about your 'why' before, take some time to think about it. Our why will help us establish healthy boundaries around social media and help us navigate what we consume and create. It will point us back to purpose when we lose ourselves in the wonderful and sometimes not-so-wonderful world of social media. Scripture reminds us that we will give an account of our lives on earth in the coming age. On an ongoing basis, we must remind ourselves that we will give an account for our digital lives. Take time to think about your why for social media. Take time to think about how you use it.

Scripture instructs us that in whatever we do, we do it unto and for the glory of God. The point of your life is to point to Him. While you may never feel called to use your account to share the gospel of Jesus online, perhaps you set up your account to share a hobby or a business. Even without captions, quotes, and verses on every picture, does your account and how you manage that account bring glory to God? With 1 Thessalonians as a model for imitation, are we examples of Christ? Are we, as Paul described, living epistles?

“ On an ongoing basis, we must remind ourselves that we will give an account for our digital lives. ”

Using social media as followers of Christ presents us with opportunities to showcase our passions and gifts. Scripture provides us with several accounts of people whose skills, talents, and abilities were used to bring glory to God in one way or another. God used Bezalel and Oholiab in Exodus 31 in their skill sets. For the longest time, I thought following Jesus meant becoming a full-time minister, but so many Bible accounts show us people who were radically changed and continued in the profession they were called to as changed people.



Our Holy God doesn't just give us a charge to holiness but calls us to partner with Him through the gifts, talents, and abilities to advance His Kingdom and let His name be made great on earth. What are you passionate about or gifted in that extends into your social media life? This may be music, business, art, photography, dance, culinary arts, engineering, environmental causes... the list goes on and on. Tish Harrison Warren put it this way, "Our task is not to somehow inject God into our work but to join God in the work He is already doing in and through our vocational lives."

For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above— spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them [living the good life which He prearranged and made ready for us].

Ephesians 2:10 (AMP)

What does a faithful follower engaging in social media look like?

Christ was God incarnate. We, as His followers too, are the in-flesh representatives of Christ on the earth today in both our online and offline lives. Jesus invited His disciples to follow Him, walk with Him and do life with Him as He sat with people, taught, and went about the Father's business. In John 15, He invites us to abide in Him and remain in Him, even when all technological trends try to pull us away.

The question is, will we be found faithful? Is there a possibility of being engaged in culture, connected to cause, and plugged into purpose without forsaking God or compromising the call of Christ? Do we possess the ability to engage in culture in an emotionally, mentally, socially, and spiritually healthy way? Are we, like Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, able to follow conviction in the midst of cultural trends and shifts and refuse to bow down to culture? Only by the power of the Holy Spirit will we be able to remain steadfast in the Word, rooted in our identity as children of God, and faithful to the call to live as followers of Jesus Christ.

We are called to be faithful followers, hanging on every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God, as Jesus did. Not hanging on to the words of those we follow; icons, celebrities, and even spiritual leaders. We are called to follow Jesus. Follow, ensue, pursue, chase, stalk, and conform to His likeness with reckless abandon.

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Only by the power of the Holy Spirit will we be able to remain steadfast in the Word, rooted in our identity as children of God, and faithful to the call to live as followers of Jesus Christ.”



Follow my example as I follow the example of Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Philippians 3:17(NASB)

Who we choose to follow and what we pattern our lives around may lead to Christlikeness or worldliness. Paul says to the church at Corinth, "Follow me as I follow Christ." To the church at Philippi, he says, "Join in following my example." We follow the model and pattern of those who followed Jesus, but if we follow them more closely than Jesus Himself, we're in trouble. We must remain spiritually alert and sober to recognize even when those we follow and admire have deviated from the original path in following Christ.

Do not plead with me to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you sleep, I will sleep. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.

Ruth 1:16 (NASB)

In 1 Kings 11, Solomon's love of his wives became stronger than the love of God; in the end, he built altars for the gods of his wives to satisfy them. There was power even in the words of Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi to say, "Where you go, I will go, where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." Whom we decide to follow and engage with online impacts us, whether it's a family member, a friend, a celebrity, a spiritual leader, or an inspiring account. Without knowing, we may be communicating, "Where you go, I will go. I will follow you, and I will move with you. Whomever you worship, I will worship with you." without the discernment and continued spiritual alertness to know the effect they are having on our spiritual walk with Christ. We consciously or unconsciously yoke ourselves to them and take on whatever their god is. We must be those who are sober and ready to draw the boundaries and resolve how far we can go in following others without compromising our relationship with the Faithful One.

“ Who we choose to follow and what we pattern our lives around may lead to Christlikeness or worldliness. ”



Jesus had gone about doing what He saw the Father do and talked about what was close to the heart of His Father. He lived according to the principles of the Kingdom from which He came. As faithful followers of Jesus, the principles and virtues that govern our lives offline and online are from Scripture only.

We may be tempted to believe the lie that examining our every social media move may be too severe and almost legalistic. Anything that has the potential to choke the seed of the Word of God is worth attending to. Everything that has the potential to distract us and cause us to veer off the narrow road is worth paying attention to. We live with the awareness that our actions bear eternal impact, and we will one day give an account for our online and offline lives. We are to live faithfully, soberly, wholeheartedly, with unwavering conviction and devotion.

Adapted from Faithful Follower // The Digitally Connected Follower

“
Everything that has the potential to distract us and cause us to veer off the narrow road is worth paying attention to.
”



Emotions Inventory

Reflect on your social media experience. What emotions or feelings do you experience the most during your time online or after being online? Tick the emotions most often experienced.

Positive

- Admiration
- Attraction
- Charity
- Confident
- Contentment
- Courage
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Excitement/Enthusiasm
- Friendliness
- Gratitude
- Happiness
- Hope
- Humility
- Inspiration
- Joy
- Love
- Peace
- Pride/Triumph
- Relief
- Satisfaction
- Surprise
- Sympathy
- Wonder

Negative

- Anger
- Annoyance/Irritation
- Anxiety
- Apathy
- Boredom
- Confusion
- Cynicism
- Depression
- Disappointment
- Discontentment
- Discouragement
- Disgust
- Dispirited
- Doubt
- Embarrassment
- Envy
- Fear
- Frustration
- Greed
- Grouchy/Grumpy
- Guilt
- Hate
- Helplessness/Powerlessness
- Homesickness
- Hurt
- Impatience
- Indifference
- Jealousy
- Loneliness
- Lust
- Outrage/Hostility
- Pride
- Regret
- Remorse
- Resentment
- Self-conscious
- Self-pity
- Shame
- Shock
- Sorrow
- Stress
- Vengefulness
- Worry

Were majority of the emotions experienced positive or negative? What is the root cause of these emotions? What actions can you take to intentionally address any negative emotions into more positive ones?



What are your *values*?

What are the top values you hold that govern your life? Your values will guide not just your life offline but your online life as well. The following is a list of personal/core values from James Clear. Your core values can help you develop an integrity report for your life and evaluate how you are living out your values. You can learn more about integrity reports [here](#).

- Authenticity
- Achievement
- Adventure
- Authority
- Autonomy
- Balance
- Beauty
- Boldness
- Compassion
- Challenge
- Citizenship
- Community
- Competency
- Contribution
- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Determination
- Fairness
- Faith
- Fame
- Friendships
- Fun
- Growth
- Happiness
- Honesty
- Humor
- Influence
- Inner Harmony
- Justice
- Kindness
- Knowledge
- Leadership
- Learning
- Love
- Loyalty
- Meaningful Work
- Openness
- Optimism
- Peace
- Pleasure
- Poise
- Popularity
- Recognition
- Religion
- Reputation
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Security
- Self-Respect
- Service
- Spirituality
- Stability
- Success
- Status
- Trustworthiness
- Wealth
- Wisdom
- Other: _____

Based on the values you selected, are there any of them that are currently being compromised by your social media life? How can you better align your life to live out your values better?

Core values list. James Clear. (2018, June 12). <https://jamesclear.com/core-values>



invite the Holy Spirit into the process of seeking the answers to these questions. Ask God what He desires of you, ask Him to show you any blind spots, repent for anything He may have convicted you about. Seek accountability within your community for any changes you desire to make.

What is the *vision* of my life? (What is my mission/purpose?)

What are my *values*? (What beliefs guide my life?)

Why do I have a social media account?

How much time do I *currently* spend online in a day? A week? A month? A year?

What *impact* does my social media content consumption have on my Christian spiritual formation (growth into Christlikeness)?



Is what I am *consuming* reflective of the life of a follower of Jesus?

Is what I am *creating/posting* reflective of the life of a follower of Christ?

**What are the *predominant emotions* I experience during my time online?
How do I feel about myself/my purpose/my online and offline neighbour
after I have spent time online?**

**What do I need to *change about my relationship* with social media to make
me more faithful to my call to love God, my neighbour and self while also
being faithful to my current assignment/season of life/purpose?**



RULE OF LIFE

What rhythms do you need to develop for your social media usage to help you follow Jesus more faithfully and be more faithful to who He has created you to be and the assignment He has given you on the earth?

This may include: How many hours a day you will spend online, what apps you will use to manage your time, what apps you will use or not use, how often will you take breaks, how often will you reevaluate the content you consume and the accounts will you follow/unfollow.

Daily
Weekly
Monthly
Quarterly
Annually

We know this place
Many are the nights we choose to stare
Mindlessly scrolling hoping to escape
Because the cup of life has become more than we can bear

Yes, we know this place
An unreal, virtual reality
4 by 4 squares we look to for inspo
And yet we leave colored green with envy

We left this space with lust in our hearts
Avatars and delusion have become our kin
Likes and hearts are our currency
Yet it doesn't pay or cure the hollowness within

But we don't leave this place
Our worth is now in the numbers and impressions
We've forgotten a Father whose light can fill every void
Because grids and tweets have become our daily obsession

We've forgotten this place
Where the Maker's ears remain keen
But we traded intimacy with Him
For a virtual applause because we've forgotten His face

We can access this place and His face
If we switch off the screens
Turn off the brightness and filters
To go to where we are truly seen

We can get to this place
See His Face
Leave the rat race
And live at His pace
By His grace

@poeticliberty



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