

Personal Rules of Life;

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THE CHAIN OF THREE RINGS

In *Soul Feast*, Marjorie J. Thompson quotes John Wesley concerning the part of that book about Developing a Rule of Life. The most important for me was that John Wesley addressed these words to a real person, John Trembath, in his letter. Here it is:

O begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may require the taste for which you have not: What is tedious at first will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or no, read and pray daily. It is for your life: there is no other way: else you will be a trifler all your days.... Do justice to your own soul: give it time and means to grow. Do not starve yourself any longer. Take up your cross and be a Christian together. Then will the children of God rejoice."

If we think about any personal rule of life I am sure we should accept his words as a letter to us and begin anytime to practice it, even today, to do justice to our own soul.

I found additional information about 'rules of life.'

There is another book *Companions in Christ: The Way of Blessedness (Participant's Book) A Small-Group Experience in Spiritual Formation* by Marjorie J. Thompson and Stephen D. Bryant, there is another example of a way to develop a Rule of Life based on a Bible quotation from *Micah 6:8*;

He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

And we have many another sources and examples which show us many ways to practice personal rules of life. I have asked myself, What are my rules of my spiritual life? I was scared that I do not have rules which look like a constitution of spiritual life, in comparison to what those sources showed. I was fascinated by them and then I discovered that I have practiced rules in my daily spiritual life over 25 years. This is what I named

THE CHAIN OF THREE RINGS.

RING OF PRAYER

RING OF BIBLE READING

RING OF COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

The connection all of them, one with another, makes a long and strong chain of spiritual life if the rings are filled in by their practice.

RING OF PRAYER

- A prayer is one of the most unique things in our life, so I try to find time that works best for me. My (our) soul needs a daily relationship with God from early morning.
- I pray about my spiritual formation every day.
- A prayer has to help me better understand the Word of God, God's promises and God's Commandments.
- I express my joy, my happiness and my thanksgiving, or when these are lacking, my (our) prayer becomes a

petition about them, that give me (us) guidance and comfort about them.

- My prayer concerns also include those who belong to my community.
- I don't count time for daily morning or evening prayers everyday. But for me personally, I would like to spend no less time for my prayer than how much time I need for an average daily meal.

RING OF BIBLE READING

- Daily scripture reading is another important thing in our life to correct and improve our life.
- Find time for silence and for spiritual reading and meditation. ***Remember the Bible is not your daily newspaper! This is The Word of God!***
- Let us think, What does the Word of God say to me today, and then affirm to God the Word as His Word.
- The Bible reading disciplines me and reminds me about sin, expiation, reconciliation with God, and about salvation. The Bible is a wonderful source of social and community rules. The Bible reading is a source of knowledge as to who we are, and who our God is.
- Christian duties are to develop us in our spiritual life.
- We should spend no less time for our Bible reading than how much time we would spend for reading a new book.

¹He said to me, O mortal, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. ²So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. ³He said to me, Mortal, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it. Then I ate it; and in my mouth it was as sweet as honey. ⁴He said to me: Mortal, go to the house of Israel and speak my very words to them. (Ezekiel 3:1-4)

RING OF COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

- **Remember!** We should belong to a Christian community because of God's commandment. If we are not one among others, this ring is a broken ring. We are not alone in this world. God's commandment from the Book of Genesis, says: *²⁷So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ²⁸God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' ²⁹God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with*

seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. ³¹God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:27-31)

- Participating regularly in the activities of our Christian community is our duty.

²⁴And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

- By our participation we can support others in our public prayers and public Bible readings, and interpretations of these Bible passages. We can see how God's grace changes every single person, every sinner, everyone. We can show and express to our community our spiritual formation and our engagement for Christian community.
- Remember! Christian meetings hold the message of God in every age and circumstance.
- Spend no less time for our Christian community than how much time you need to spend for average relaxing time and doing nothing. This is our challenge in fact.

Remember!

The Chain of Three Rings will be useful and very helpful, **if:** every separate ring is used. Practicing every one of these makes our spiritual life stronger and contributes to our spiritual community by our knowledge about God. Then we will have a good balance among all things. We shall be led toward God, and be led away from evil.

*Do no harm by any word or deed;
Do good wherever there is need.
Remain attentive to God's word.
Stay in love with God, Stay in love with God.*

Adapted from John Wesley