

# Personal Rule of Life – David Daire

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WHY MAKE PERSONAL RULES WHICH I MAY FOLLOW (OR NOT)? From Psalm 32 I read: *“Do not be like a horse or a mule, without understanding, whose temper must be curbed with bit and bridle, else it will not stay near you.”* The short answer as I understand it is this: “If I won’t accept my own direction, why should I accept anyone else’s? Either I will guide myself or I will be guided by somebody else. Depending upon my own resistance, a bit and bridle may be required!

What follows is what I do (or don’t do.) May God guide you to establish the self-rule that He has hoped for you. May He strengthen and encourage you to follow it. May He always welcome your return when you have strayed. Amen

## Daily

1. **Prayer:** I will pray the following prayer of Morning Resolve at the beginning of the day and open a journal entry to record the Holy Spirits leading. As morning time permits, this prayer can be continued and followed by Morning Prayer and the Daily Readings. Consciously strive to be “in an attitude of prayer” all day.

I will try this day to live a simple, sincere and serene life, repelling promptly every thought of discontent, anxiety, discouragement, impurity, and self-seeking; cultivating cheerfulness, magnanimity, charity, and the habit of holy silence; exercising economy in expenditure, generosity in giving, carefulness in conversation, diligence in appointed service, fidelity to every trust, and a childlike faith in God. In particular I will try to be faithful in those habits of prayer, work, study, physical exercise, eating, and sleep which I believe the Holy Spirit has shown me to be right. And as I cannot in my own strength do this, nor even with a hope of success attempt it, I look to thee, O Lord God my Father, in Jesus my Savior, and ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Prayer from Forward Movement)

2. **Evening Self Examination Prayer:** The Ignatian Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us. Journal entries may be reviewed and updated. A process to follow is summarized below.

1. Give thanks for blessings and joys experienced in the day thus far.
2. Beg to see the day with the eyes of God, the good, bad and ugly. Where do I see Him most clearly? Where did I turn my face from Him?
3. Pay attention to your emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Ask what God is saying through these feelings.
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may be a vivid moment or something that seems insignificant.
5. Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges.

Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this

in the spirit of gratitude.

(Format for examen from Loyola Press)

3. **Human Relationships:** Throughout the course of the day, favor the people over the rest. Be aware that it is this time, this place and in particular with these people that God has sent me to. In each moment ask: “Who did God send me to? What would God have me be in this moment with them? In particular, have significant daily conversations with my spouse, and weekly conversations with my children and siblings through voice or letters. Never substitute “stuff” for people. Never put myself first.
4. **Physical and Mental Well-being:** Schedule time for eating a sit-down meal and exercise each day. Get out of bed with prayer each day before 7:00am. Each night, go to bed with the lights and computer off no later than 11:00pm. Eat healthily, consuming a diet to get to and keep my weight at 175 or less. Keep an exercise and food log to help regularize these habits.

### Weekly

1. **Solitude:** Schedule a few hours each week just to be with me. That is when God will be heard most clearly. (NO LIBRARY or COMPUTER).
2. **Personal Project:** Schedule a few hours to work on personal projects. Work to develop a ministry that lives beyond my own life.
3. **Relaxation and Enjoyment:** Take 8 consecutive hours off for fun every week!
4. **Corporate Worship / Study:** participate in worship experiences each week. Participate in Christian mentoring/ accountability work, bible study or faith development class with others each week.

### Monthly

1. **Service / Stewardship:** Schedule time to be given to a worthy cause that is not part of my regular ministry.
2. **Review:** On the last day of the month, practice an “examen” using the format above. After prayer, read the month’s journal entries. Look at my calendar to see how the time was used. Make a plan for the next month.

### Yearly

1. **Vacation:** Schedule and take a one-week vacation with family twice yearly.
2. **Annual Celebration / Review** – Conduct a corporate New Years Thanksgiving Service and conduct an annual examen. Give thanks for all of the blessings of the year. Be sober of all of the failings I have had. Be hopeful for the future year and make such resolutions as should be made to see this hope realized.

