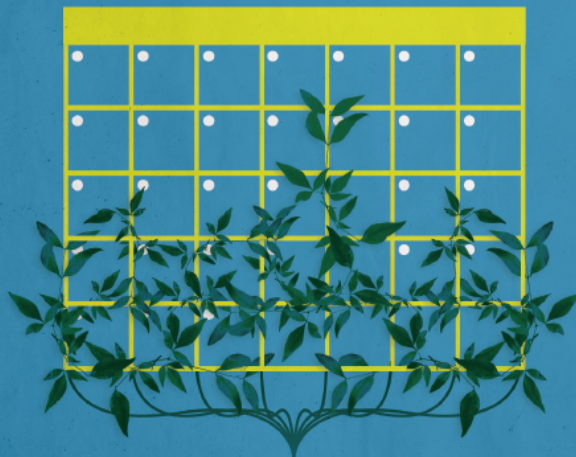


JUSTIN WHITMEL EARLEY

THE
COMMON
RULE



HABITS OF
PURPOSE
FOR AN AGE OF
DISTRACTION

THE COMMON RULE FOR GROUPS
A RESOURCE PACKAGE

www.thecommonrule.org

WHY THE COMMON RULE? The Common Rule tries to do two things. First, wake you up to the idea that you already have a default pattern of everyday habits that are forming enormous parts of your spiritual life. Second, the Common Rule offers a path forward. The four daily and four weekly habits are a way to guide your ordinary life into a new kind of formation – formation in the love of God and neighbor. It’s not enough to know about Jesus, we long to become like him. In the big and little things.

WHY A GROUP? Meaningful change never happens alone, it *always* happens in community. Trying the Common Rule as a group – whether just for a week or for a month – is a way to learn together, fail together, and practice being vulnerable and accountable together. This is where the good life is – in community.

HOW TO START?

STEP 1: Get your Group Together

This might be a small group, a friend group, or an entire congregation. Whichever it is, meet up with them and watch [this video](#) to get an introduction to the Common Rule.

STEP 2: Review the Habits

The best way to do this is by reading [a copy of The Common Rule](#). (If you are buying in bulk for a group, contact [IVP](#) for a bulk discount.) You can also review the habits on the website, at www.thecommonrule.org. Make sure everyone subscribes to the mailing list on the website, as I occasionally send out meditations and other resources.

STEP 3: Visualize the Days and the Weeks

It’s really helpful for everyone to see how the Common Rule will alter their days and weeks. Below is a sample daily and monthly template so your group members can see how they’ll be arranging their days. Use these templates and customize it if that helps.

STEP 4: Embrace Community and Failure

Two of the main lessons of the Common Rule is that the good life is the communal life, and that anything worth trying is hard and involves failure. This includes following Jesus. As for community, ideally your group should be meeting every week to share experiences and pray. As for failure, you should remind each other that the goal is not to check off some habits, but to fail together, experience grace, learn and become formed more in the Gospel of Jesus.

I’m so glad you’re reading about and trying the Common Rule habits. I hope it helps you lean into a life full of the love of God and neighbor.

With much hope,
Justin Whitmel Earley

TRYING A WEEK OF THE COMMON RULE

Below is a template for reading and trying each of the habits in the Common Rule in one week. There's no need to try all the habits at once. Just read a chapter a day, they each take about fifteen minutes, and experiment with that habit.

This plan assumes you will try this in a group. If you don't have a group, I strongly suggest finding at least one other person. It's hard to make new habits alone.

Day	Read	Habits to try
1 (Pick the day your group meets.)	Morning: Read the introduction and Daily Habit 1.	Try kneeling prayer today.
	Evening: Meet with your group to discuss the idea of the Common Rule.	
2	Read Daily Habit 2.	Try having an intentional, communal meal today.
3	Read Daily Habit 3.	Pick one hour to turn your phone off.
4	Read Daily Habit 4.	Before you use your phone today, read Scripture.
5	Read Weekly Habit 1.	Have an intentional one-on-one conversation with someone.
6	Read Weekly Habit 2.	Estimate the number of media hours you've watched this week. If it's already more than four, try not watching anything.
7	Read Weekly Habit 3.	Fast from something today.
8	Morning: Read Weekly Habit 4 and Epilogue.	Make today a sabbath or write out some ideas to plan your next sabbath.
	Evening: Meet with your group to discuss how the week went.	

TRYING A MONTH OF THE COMMON RULE

When trying out a month of the Common Rule with a group, it's really helpful for all to see how the month is going to go. Below is a sample month and a daily template, so group members can see how they can arrange their days. Use this template so each person can customize to the month you're doing it in.

DAILY HABITS

- Kneeling prayer at morning, midday, and bedtime.
- Pick Scripture readings: Psalms 1-30, Mathew 1-28, Romans; half of a chapter daily.
- The common meal will be from _____ with _____.
- Phone-off hour will be from _____ to _____.

WEEKLY HABITS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Kick off month with an evening of discussion together.	3	4 Start the fast at 6 p.m. by skipping dinner.	5 Break the fast with a friend and have your weekly hour of conversation.	6	7 Count your media hours. (Don't beat yourself up. Just count to know.)
Sabbath 8	9 Meet to check in and discuss failures and realizations. Pray.	10	11 Start the fast at 6 p.m. by skipping dinner.	12 Break the fast with a friend and have your weekly hour of conversation.	13	14 Count your media hours.
Sabbath 15	16 Meet to check in and discuss failures and realizations. Pray.	17	18 Start the fast at 6 p.m. by skipping dinner.	19 Break the fast with a friend and have your weekly hour of conversation.	20	21 Count your media hours.
Sabbath 22	23 Meet to check in and discuss failures and realizations. Pray.	24	25 Start the fast at 6 p.m. by skipping dinner.	26 Break the fast with a friend and have your weekly hour of conversation.	27	28 Count your media hours.
Sabbath 29	30 Meet over a feast! Discuss what you learned.	31				