

# The Common Rule

— habits of purpose for an age of distraction —

[www.thecommonrule.org](http://www.thecommonrule.org)

## THE COMMON RULE HABIT PLANNER

A tool for turning big vision into daily habits.

“Change is the great dream of the human heart,” wrote John O’Donahue. It has such a truth to it. Much of our daydreaming is imagining who we could be, how things might be otherwise, or how we could quit doing the things we know that we need to quit doing. The excitement of a new planner, a new year, or a new job is always the excitement that maybe you could be someone new this time.

This is resonant with our fundamental problem and our fundamental hope. The fundamental problem is that we are broken, sin-bent people, and we can’t help it. So we really do need to change, but we can’t change ourselves. But our fundamental hope is bigger than the problem, Christ is our life now - and that’s a new life. *We are* being made new.

These are the two truths that our life is spent between: We need to be made new. *We are* being made new.

For this reason, I believe the practical disciplines of turning vision into habits is an urgent matter for Christians. Re-imagining your life in light of Christ, and then turning those imaginations into realities is the heart of sanctification and bearing out the good deeds that are planned for us.

The chart in this PDF is a tool to help you do that. It tries to get you to think through who you are, who you want to be, and then how you might get there. I hope it helps you. It has helped me and some of those close to me.

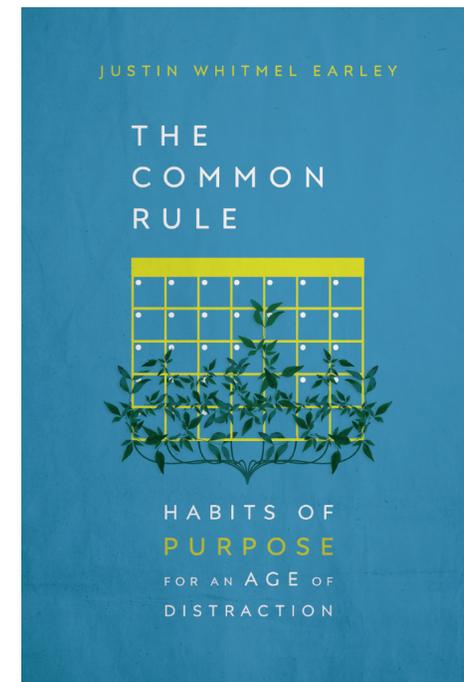
As always, *don’t do it alone*. Do it with someone else. If you’re interested in more, check out [www.thecommonrule.org](http://www.thecommonrule.org) for a set of daily and weekly communal habits designed for formation in the love of God and neighbor.

Best,



Justin Whitmel Earley

**THE COMMON RULE** is a set of daily and weekly habits designed for formation in the love of God and neighbor. While this PDF is a template for general habit planning, you can explore the specific daily and weekly habits of The Common Rule on the website, and get the book for a more in depth look.



[www.thecommonrule.org](http://www.thecommonrule.org)

Buy book on Amazon

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## How to use The Common Rule Habit Planner:

On the next page is a chart for thinking through who you are, and who you (through your habits) are becoming. Simple instructions for going through it are below.

### 1 THINK THROUGH YOUR ROLES

We are not just our careers, our bodies, or our family relationships. Our whole life is a web of different roles that we play, and it's hard to change one without impacting others. List out the roles you exist in, and ideally set them in order of priority from top to bottom.

### 2 SET A VISION FOR EACH ROLE

In each of our roles, we have a dream or a vision. Some north star of who we long to become, or who we want to emulate. Try to articulate this in a broad sort of vision statement. This should be big, beautiful, and compelling. It may be impossible to achieve, but that's OK. That's the point.

### 3 LIST HABITS FOR EACH ROLE

Here is where vision meets reality. Our habits form us more than we form them. Starting listing out what kinds of rhythms or habits should be true of your daily or weekly life if you wanted to become that kind of person stated in your vision. This is far more important than goal setting. These should be almost mundane, achievable realities, that would - over time - be the guardrails guiding you towards your goal. Some should be "do not's" and some should be "do's." You don't need a habit for each timeframe. The goal isn't to fill everything out, but to flesh out the key habits that will form you.

### 4 REVIEW AND REVISE

Ideally, you should be doing this in community. If so, set a time each month to review with someone. My wife and I do this every few months, for example, and my friends and I talk about it semi-annually. Make edits and adjust. Check in on benchmark goals to see if after some time you are coming any closer, or if you think actually that they should be scrapped. Print it out and put it in your journal. Email it to yourself. Revise it, over and over and over.

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WHO AM I?		WHO AM I BECOMING?					
Roles	Vision	Habits					Milestones
		Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	
1. _____							
2. _____							
3. _____							
4. _____							
5. _____							

# The Common Rule

forming habits of love for a world of chaos

Here's a sample chart I did years ago as an example. I deleted the benchmark goals from my chart because I want to emphasize the focus on habits

WHO AM I?		WHO AM I BECOMING?					
Roles	Vision	Habits					Milestones
		Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	
<b>Disciple</b>	<i>To love God</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise this chart</li> <li>• One day of silence and reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fast twice</li> <li>• Memorize one verse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have two extended quiet times a week</li> <li>• Sabbath</li> </ul>	Morning / Noon / Night Kneeling Prayer	
<b>Husband</b>	<i>To be best friends with Lauren</i>	One getaway just us	Saturday of deep house cleaning reset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One fun date night</li> <li>• One conversation date night</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only 1 weeknight per Sun-Thurs of social activity out of house</li> <li>• Evening of downtime with Lauren</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pray with Lauren before bed</li> <li>• Keep phone off from 6-8PM</li> </ul>	
<b>Father</b>	<i>My sons know they are loved</i>	Write a letter to each child	Parenting review with Lauren	One blank weekend in town with no prior commitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every Saturday morning with just the boys and give Lauren break</li> <li>• One family night of prayer and bible reading</li> </ul>	Stop work at 6PM even if I have to work after bedtime	
<b>Friend, Brother &amp; Son</b>	<i>Friends like family, family like friends</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Cast Weekend</li> <li>• One family vacation</li> </ul>	One weekend at Smith Mountain Lake with immediate family	At least two intentional one on one conversations with a friend	Sunday family dinner		
<b>Worker</b>	<i>Build excellent institutions</i>	Tithe 5% of hours to pro bono / volunteer	Clean office & reconsider health of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two networking lunches</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 minutes of prayer/meditation midday</li> <li>• One time of checking news at 3:30PM, no others</li> </ul>	
<b>Creator &amp; Catalyst</b>	<i>To help myself &amp; others see</i>			Spend extended 90 minutes engaged in hobby	Journal at least one page	Record daily activities in iCal	
<b>Steward</b>	<i>To multiply talents</i>		Quit one thing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit alcohol to no more than 2X per week</li> <li>• Two active/exercise times per week</li> <li>• Review budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink 2 liters of water per day</li> <li>• Eat light lunch</li> <li>• Vitamins</li> </ul>	