



A Rule of Life

“A *rule of life* is a pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness. . . . It fosters gifts of the Spirit in personal life and human community, helping to form us into the persons God intends us to be.”

Marjorie Thompson, *Soul Feast*



The General Rule of Discipleship

To witness to Jesus Christ in the world and to follow His teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

[*The Book of Discipline of
The United Methodist Church—2008, ¶ 1118.2*]

Try us, O God, and search the ground
Of every sinful heart!
Whate'er of sin in us is found,
O bid it all depart!

When to the right or left we stray,
Leave us not comfortless,
But guide our feet into the way
Of everlasting peace.

Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear;
Let all thier friendly aid afford,
And feel each other's care.

Help us to build each other up,
Our little stock improve;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love.

Up into thee, our living Head,
Let us in all things grow,
Till thou hast made us free indeed,
And spotless here below.

~ a hymn by Charles Wesley ~



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The United Methodist *Rule of Life*



“To form the Savior in the soul.”





The General Rules of *The United Methodist Church*

... There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies: “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.” But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First:

By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced, such as:

The taking of the name of God in vain.

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness: buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

Slaveholding; buying or selling slaves.

Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.

The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.

The giving or taking things on usury—i.e., unlawful interest.

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us.

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:

The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God.

Softness and needless self-indulgence.

Laying up treasure upon earth.

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without probability of paying for them.

It is expected of all who continue in these societies that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly:

By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability which God gives, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine that “we are not to do good unless our hearts be free to it.”

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another, helping each other in business, and so much the more because the world will love its own and them only. By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

Thirdly:

By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are:

- The public worship of God.
- The ministry of the Word, either read or expounded.
- The Supper of the Lord.
- Family and private prayer.
- Searching the Scriptures.
- Fasting or abstinence.

These are the General Rules of our societies; all of which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written Word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. ...

[*The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church—2008,*
¶ 103]

