

Dear Time-exhausted Friend,

I'll never forget meeting you last fall in Wichita. I was teaching a workshop on the illusion of time management, and you had us in tears.

"I'm a pastor," you started, "and I feel like I'm failing in every area of my life."

Your voice was shaky. "When I'm at work, I feel guilty about the family responsibilities I'm neglecting. When I'm at home, I think constantly about work. I'd gotten so far behind in ordinary life tasks that the bank called recently to tell me I was \$2500 overdrawn on my account. I was sure someone had stolen my identity! But then I realized the problem: I hadn't deposited any of my paychecks from the last two months."

We were nodding along with you. All of us have similar stories of **modern time-misery**.

I don't think I exaggerate to put it this way, that nearly everyone feels desperate to meet time's impossible demands. We are running breathlessly through life, hoping for a free Saturday, a free evening.

I think what all of us really want—as we engage the tips and tricks of time management—is the assurance that we are living our lives well, that we are fulfilling the purposes God has for us. And the good news is that we can be very intentional about those desires.

We can learn to write and keep a rule of life.

I've been working to write my own rule of life for the last three years. Saint Benedict, whose rule has been foundational for Christians throughout history, understood that everyone needs habits to help cultivate the capacity to listen to God. If he only knew how today, we are near-drunk on distraction, finding it difficult to attend anything longer than a Tik-Tok video.

I've begun to see that the rule of life acts like a rudder: it's an exercise of setting holy intention, or *direction*, to our lives. And as Benedict writes, it's certainly not an exercise of self-reliance. "Every time you begin a good work, you must pray to him most earnestly to bring it to perfection." A rule is a both-and practice: both the practice of receiving the grace of God and consenting to its ambitious work. A rule of life is a **yes to Christ**: a yes of repentance, faith, obedience, humility, worship, even joy.

I would love for you to join me and a small community of learners at one of the upcoming workshop dates I'm offering. Together, we'll engage a six-step process to help us discern what God is calling us to in this season of our lives and to commit to regular practices of faithfulness.

Don't worry. Heroes need not apply. Just humans, willing to take seriously the call of Christ to follow him in every square inch of life.

Hope to see you soon,
Jen

P.S. All the workshop details, including a link to register, can be found at www.jenpollockmichel.com/rule-of-life-intensive. And because you've taken time to read this letter, I'd love to offer you a 25% discount. Just use the coupon FRIENDS25.