

## Personal Rule of Life Statements

**Your personal rule of life is a holistic description of the Spirit-empowered rhythms and relationships that create, redeem, sustain and transform the life of God invites you to humbly fulfill for Christ's glory.**

**In order to begin to frame your rule of life (the focus of the first five chapters), the authors covered five very important issues: roles, gifts, desires, vision and mission. Each of these areas needs to be clarified as best as possible so that the general overview of your life is clearly understood and articulated as you move forward in crafting a personal rule of life. Before moving on part two, summarize your thoughts here. How is the Lord leading you in all five of these overarching areas of your personal life? Record your thoughts below:**

### **My Roles:**

**"Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed within the context of your primary relationships and your spiritual community, and lived out in service to others" (p.21)**

Reading "Crafting a Rule of Life: An invitation to the Well-Ordered Way" by Stephen A. Macchia, made me feel curious, encouraged, and uncomfortable. It is not every day that I sit down and contemplate my life and where it is heading. Sure, I have goals and dreams, don't most people? But I suppose there was a part of me that was afraid to explore the how's and why's of my hopes, dreams, and experiences. Some days it feels like I'm just trying to survive the day so I can go home and forget the hardships and hope for a better tomorrow. This way of coping is not the most productive form but, in my eyes, it got the job done. At least, until I read this book. After reading through the second chapter, this book began to pry my eyes open to God's true will for my life. I soon realized that to live a full and spirit led life my old forms of coping would be detrimental to the process.

The verse written by King David in Psalm 51:10 reads, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me". The verse rings true to the depths of my soul. This is one of my deepest desires in order to speak and give life through my several relational roles. Macchia uses King David as an example of someone who was relational, imperfect, and God's chosen. King David was truly a man after God's own heart because he valued the Lord, people, and responsibilities around him. He is someone who showed great growth as well as humility.

Within the last the few years the Lord has shown me the importance of developing and pouring into a few selected relationships. Previously, I had many acquaintances, but never truly felt understood. Despite being greeted in multiple settings I found myself desiring richer relationships that poured words and experiences of life into one another.

At this point in time my roles consist of a Latina woman, daughter, sister, friend, and co-worker. Through these roles I have experienced some of my greatest joys and blessings. These relationships have lasted several years and have shown me the love of Christ countless times. Because of my relationship with Christ I have learned to be a better daughter in honoring my father and mother. As I've aged I see the ways in which my parents sacrificed to provide a home, good education, safety, and Christian environment for my brother and I. Seeing the selfless love they showed challenges me to show them the same kind of love and support as they enter their golden years. Growing up, my parents reiterated the importance of family. Having that mentality also prepared my role as a sister come the age of three years old. Despite normal sibling quarreling my brother and I have grown up to support and love each other. As a friend I have grown quite a bit. There is one friend, my best friend who has challenged yet reassured me in ways that helped me grow. When I think of David's friendship with Jonathan I think of she and I. We have been through so much and I know from the bottom of my heart we only want to see each other succeed in life and our walk with Christ. For these relationships I am eternally grateful to the Lord for the people He has placed in my life.

## **My Gifts:**

**“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed through the discovery of your spiritual gifts, natural talents and temperament” (p.32)**

Macchia states in chapter 2, “We must stop trying to become something else, or to develop or cultivate some trait that we fundamentally lack, and. Instead start being who we already are by identifying our giftedness and living it out. Our gifts and talents all come from the almighty God”.

For many years I did not think that my gifts were valid because they were subtle did not involve a beautiful voice or gift of public speaking. However, I learned that we are all part of the body of Christ and every we suffer and rejoice together. With that being said, my spiritual gifts consist of serving, giving, active listening, encouraging, and teaching youth. After graduating from college and returning back to my home church in Queens, I began volunteering as a youth leader for preteens and teens. Every Friday night the youth pastor and youth leaders would present lessons that explained the what it means to be a Christian every day at home, school and

church. It was something that I looked forward to and the experience fostered gifts such as giving and teaching. As time went on I realized that I enjoy serving those I love and anyone in need. Serving can be as small as helping a coworker organize their files, translating for Spanish speaking clients, filling up the gas tank of my brother's car, and making sure my mom takes her arthritis medication on time, just to name a few.

These desires of compassion and service stemmed from my relationship with my grandmother. My grandmother moved to live with us from Puerto Rico after recovering from a hospitalization. She was unable to care for herself at the age of 89. She lived with us until her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and passed away later on that year. Over the years her health deteriorated, and she needed a home health aide during the day while the family worked. In the evenings and early mornings, it was up to my mother and I to help clean and dress my grandmother before the aide arrived. It wasn't always easy, but it was always worth it. My grandmother was a single mother to three boys. Even though she was unable to get an education and formal job, she managed to always get her boys food on the table and new clothes for school each year. God used these experiences to plant the seed of service into my heart for people of all ages. Despite my desire to be useful many may not know this about me because of my introverted nature. In new settings I can get especially reserved and second guess my words and actions, but I am praying that God helps me to be more confident through Him in order to deepen my understanding of the gifts He gave me.

## **My Desires:**

**“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed through the longings, yearnings and goals God has placed on your heart and mind that propel you forward with joy” (p.43)**

My desires consist of deepening my knowledge of Christ, having relationships that are Christ-centered, progression in my career as a social worker, financial independence, traveling, owning multiple properties. These desires are in order of priority. This list is different from my annual “New Year's Goals” which consist of tasks that should be done not that I necessarily will follow through on. The core values that guide this list include compassion, service, and responsibility. These core values were instilled in me as a child from a Christian Hispanic household. Being born to first generation immigrants showed me the importance of working hard and working together. Seeing how hard my parents and grandparents worked to live the “American Dream” as well as attending a loving church filled with Hispanic immigrants opened my eyes to the hardships they experience on a daily basis. Therefore, I believe my experience is linked with the immigrant experience. It put a desire in my heart to own property and provide some of the immigrant families with a place to live with reduced rent in order to save for their own property. Time after time I see how people come to the states but are unable to establish roots because the opportunities for work and school are not the same. The cost of living is also so high. It was by reading Macchia's book that this desire was placed in my heart. There have been

multiple times when my family housed friends who could not afford rent and were trying to get on their feet. Each person was grateful for the opportunity they were afforded to save for their future.

At first, I believed wanting financial prosperity was selfish of me. Yet, I realized that I would have my doors open to those in need, without hesitation. However, in order to achieve that desire, I must depend on Christ, graduate with my social work degree in order to lay the foundation of this desire become reality.

### **My Vision:**

**“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed within the holistic, long-term vision and passion God had planted in your heart” (p.54)**

According to Macchia, “Your unique vocational calling is like a thumbprint or snowflake: we all have similar characteristics but an individual design and purpose. The biblical story offers several illustrations of those who discovered their unique calling (some over time and others more spontaneously and miraculously) and others who unfortunately missed it along the way.” In the Bible there are multiple times when God reveals His will well into the life of His chosen. We use take Noah, Abraham, Moses, King David, and Jesus as examples. Even when God revealed his will it did not happen immediately but only after the Lord prepared each of them for His perfect timing. A small part of me fears that I will miss my calling but feel certain that reading this book has redirected my attention to what really matters in life.

It is difficult to say what vision God has for me since I am only recently awakening to this calling in my life. Based on my convictions I hope to contribute to the advocacy of equal rights and opportunities for immigrants in this country.

### **My Mission:**

**“Your personal rule of life is discerned and framed within the specific purpose(s) God invites you to fulfill in this season of life” (p.66)**

Macchia states in chapter 5, “discerning the will and mission of God is more challenging because it requires prayerful consideration, weighing options, and making choices. Often clarity

is attained through prayerful discernment between one or more options for the journey that lies ahead.”

As a social worker I am committed to helping the needy who are oppressed and living in poverty. This applies to multiple at-risk groups, but my mission will be to focus on immigrant families. Using my gifts of service, giving, compassion, active listening, and teaching in hopes to refer and provide services to immigrant families in need. I hope to be able to use the property I hope to acquire as a means of aid. In the words of Steven Sawalich, “Help the life of one person and you can help the community.” With this in mind I hope that even the smallest contribution to society can have an impact. While this is a passion that has been laid in my heart but I must continue to seek God’s will of that in my life.

## **Works Cited**

Macchia, S. A. (2012). *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*. Illinois: Inter Varsity Press.