



RULE OF LIFE



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I know that God is calling me to do Kingdom work. I knew the mindset I had was not going to get me to where I need to be in God. You see, I felt like I have been in a perpetual state of stagnation. My negative perception about who I am has hindered my social, physical, spiritual and emotional growth. I recognized I needed to change and I needed help. I needed see myself like how God sees me. This requires some intentionality on my part. I had to get out of this cycle that is undermining my God given purpose and start walking in my true identity. To experience the victory God intended for me to do some serious self-reflection. The change I need to experience begins with me. I recognized that I needed to address some internal issues that have been hindering my growth both personally, emotionally and spiritually. My current state is a result of the sum total of the choices that I have made. I had to get out of this cycle of constantly blaming people for every bad situation that happen to me. For too long these self-sabotaging and negative thought patterns have derailed my dreams and abort my purpose. I realized that I did not want to leave this earth not accomplishing the assignment God has given me. So, I needed to change and me. I also understand that this is a process and that the desired outcome will take some time. To be the visible change that I want to see in others I had to first change. I had to deal with the underline issues that cause me to attract negativity in my life. I had to get to a place where I was not pointing the finger at others and get to the place wholeness so I become who God is calling me to be. Reading the Gift of Being yourself has helped me to take responsibility for my actions. To walk authentically in who God is calling me to be requires me to deal with the identity issues. I get rid of the masks of pride and perfectionism. I no longer have to pretend to me strong even when I feel weak. It is ok to be vulnerable. I will not let shame and condemnation cause me to be silent.

I took this course with the intention on not leaving the same way I came in. I decided not only to gain information on soul care. I wanted to apply knowledge gained consistently.

My current spiritual practices entail daily morning devotions. I normally start out with worship songs and scripture reading. I sometimes use the Vineyard Church Ann Arbor -Divine Hours. I was introduced to this in the Worship Arts Course. I love the fact that hours include morning, midday, vespers in evening and compline used before retiring to bed. I have done the morning more than the others because the morning set the stage for the rest of my day. I use it as a form of meditation. I am a part of a women's small group. We pray and fast together. We keep each other accountable. We pray every Tuesday and Thursday from 11:30 pm. On most Wednesday we fast from 6am and close out at 2:00pm. I normally spend the time in solitude and meditate on the Word of God during this period. I also, fast according to the leading of the Holy Spirit or when I need an answer to a problem or decision that I need to make. In addition, I fast to build up my inner man. I travel to work two days out of the week by train to work. I use time of my commute which is an hour and a half to listen to the scripture or listen to worship songs. My family has a fast once a month. I participate in a twenty-one days Daniel's fast at the beginning of the year each. This has been a challenge for me. I sometimes mess up but, I am that religious to be hard on myself. I just continue the fast.

Since taking this course, I realized that there are more I can do to grow in deeper intimacy with God. After careful evaluation and honest assessment of my routine I realize that I needed to revamp my strategy to be more effective. Despite me doing all this I still had issues with identity. I had to learn to cast my cares on the Lord. I had to surrender fully to God. I was making what I was going through too much about me. Without being religious I decided to consistently incorporate the spiritual disciplines as part of my daily weekly routine. Replacing

the enemy's lies with God's truth requires me to know the Word of God. In order to know the word requires me to study and meditate on the scriptures on a daily basis. I wanted to understand the scripture and know how to apply it to situations as they arise. I decided to continue with the daily office and my regular morning routine of worship and meditation. Meditation has always been a challenge for me. One of the struggles for me is quieting my mind. I use worship songs to help me to get into the presence of the Lord. After my daily devotions in the morning, I set aside about fifteen minutes or longer depending on the day's schedule for my time of meditation. In order to do this, I set my alarm for 5:00am now. To help me with my studying of the scripture, I start to follow Mike Plunkett on Face Book. He has a podcast every morning at 9:00am. I see this as a supplement to this class. He has help me with issues with my identity and praying. I don't feel comfortable praying aloud. I was not confident even standing before the public to speak. I listen to Rob Reimer saying that he reads the scripture aloud every day. I started to do this, not only with the bible but with my text books. I have seen remarkable improvement in my reading. I am no so nervous anymore. This I will definitely continue to do on a daily basis.

Fasting is the dying to self. It confirms our utter dependence upon God. Fasting reveals the areas in my life that controls me. Areas that are detrimental to my faith that I need to surrender to God so I can have total healing. I fast so that God can show me the areas I need to work on. Fasting keeps me in a closer relationship with God. I get clarity on how to handle certain situations through fasting. I normally integrate fasting with prayer and meditation. I am a part of a women's group. We fast every Wednesdays. We also fast every fast for a week or three weeks using different methods. On a personal level I fast as led by the Spirit of God or if I need a break through in certain issues that are going on my life.

The women's group that I am a part of holds an empowering conference annually. One of the things I want to do is to have a time of solitude in one of our breakout sessions. I know the benefit of this because I did this on a retreat in my Spiritual Formation class. One of my challenge is as mentioned earlier is to quiet my mind. I get distracted easily and this sometimes is so discouraging. As my professor said, don't give up just start the process again. Praying is our connection with the Father. I realize that I do spend a lot of time in prayer but I have not been listening at all. I decided that I will spend more time listening than talking.

The small group has been very helpful to me. I am not one who really like to share. This is as a result of past experiences with people. However, this group of ladies are different. It was a safe place to be in. I got to experience something I have never had before with a group of women. I became vulnerable. I got so much wisdom from these women and they felt the same way about me. I truly believe this was a divine connection. Because of this experience, we decided to remain in contact. Not only that, I will be using this format in our women's group. I now have an accountability partner that I pray with. This person is not afraid to tell me where I am going wrong and I am in a place where I am receptive to the correction. I don't take things that personal anymore. I don't want to make it out to be too much about me.

I have taken care of my spiritual, now I decided to incorporate changes to improve my physical body. I am making healthier choices in my eating habits. I have added more fruits and vegetable to my diet. To get rid of the Covid pounds I have acquired during the pandemic I am now exercising more. I start to walk from the train station instead of taking the bus. I also, start to walk to my doctor's appointments. I am more focus now because of this.

I will continue to do daily reflection and self-examination. I will also continue to read books that will edify and enhance by thinking. I have another year in seminary so I know definitely that the classes will expand my horizon. In life you have to stay abreast with what is happening around us.

In closing the essence of who you are, are tied in the experiences and challenges you faced. Do you see these challenges as stumbling blocks or stepping stones, detours or divine delays? It is how you view them as well as, the decisions and choices you make that will determine whether you succeed or fail. I am embarking on a new chapter in my life that will require discipline, dedication and determination. The path you choose is also very important. It has to be in alignment with the will of God. Obedience is always the key even when you feel inadequate. I had to learn this. God does not call the equipped. He equips those He call. Another version states that He does not call the qualified but He qualifies the call. As I make this transition into what God has called me to do, I realized that my faith in Him is what will sustain me. I have to look at things through the spiritual lenses of God and not through my natural eyes. My goal is to continue on this new found path with the understanding that this a journey and that we will hit bumps in the road called challenges. I recognized that everything I have gone through was necessary to shape me into who I am today. Challenges are a part of the process. It is how we deal with these life challenges will determine if you will walk in your divine authority. The question is will we become scared and fearful and revert to the negative mindset or will we shake ourselves off and begin the process again. I am intentional about staying to course so on that day I can hear well done my good and faithful servant