

## Week 1.

- What is a 'Rule of Life'?
- Why might a personal Rule be a help in our spiritual growth?
- Read Mark 1:9-15
- Where does Jesus find his personal identity?
- Why do you think he was sent into the wilderness after being baptised?
- What purposes do 'wilderness experiences' serve for us? How might they help us?
- Are there examples of a positive experience that you can share?
- There is an extra sheet available that can be used as a 'take home' exercise.  
[ Who I Am In Christ]
- What does 'Vocation' mean to you?
- What was Jesus' vocation?
- Do you know what gifts you have?
- You might like to reflect on the 'Discover Your Gifts' sheet - attached.
- How are you using them - to benefit others and grow the kingdom of God or are you neglecting them?
- Spend a few moments in silent prayer before closing with the Grace.



## A Personal Rule of Life

### Identity & Vocation.

*'Without an inner life, Without the effort of learning to know ourselves, Christian spiritual life is impossible, and so is prayer!'*

The process of learning to know ourselves begins when we respond to a *call* – the call that makes itself heard in us, for example, when we feel the need to spend some time alone to think, reflect, and 'take a step back' from our daily life that threatens to numb us with its repetitiveness or overwhelm us with its frantic pace. We sense a call to make an *exodus* in the direction of our interiority, a journey towards the centre of ourselves. We set out on this journey by *asking ourselves questions* (Who am I? Where am I coming from? Where am I going? What is the meaning of what I do? Who are other people for me? ...), and by reflecting, *thinking*, and working through our experiences. Only this process of interiorization allows us to become subjects in our own lives, instead of letting our life 'live itself'. Certainly, this journey into our interiority, this descent into our heart is laborious and painful. We usually refuse to undertake it for fear of what might emerge, what aspect of ourselves might come to light. Nietzsche spoke of the intense pain truth uses in revealing itself to a person.

[Enzio Bianchi : Words of Spirituality : SPCK : 1999 : p.93/94]



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## Discover your spiritual gifts...

*Which of these might describe you?*

*You could also ask the opinion of someone who knows you well.*

- The ability to understand what makes an organisation function, and the special ability to plan and execute procedures that accomplish the goals of the ministry. *(A gift of administration)*
- The ability to start and oversee the development of new churches or ministry structures. *(A gift of apostleship)*
- The ability to creatively design and/or construct items to be used for ministry. *(A gift of craftsmanship)*
- The ability to communicate God's truth through a variety of art forms. *(A gift of creative communication)*
- The ability to distinguish between truth and error. It is the ability to discern the spirits, differentiating between good and evil, right and wrong. *(A gift of discernment)*
- The ability to present truth so as to strengthen, comfort, or urge to action those who are discouraged or wavering in their faith. *(A gift of encouragement)*
- The ability to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship. *(A gift of evangelism)*
- The ability to act on God's promises with confidence and unwavering belief in God's ability to fulfil his purposes. *(A gift of faith)*
- The ability to contribute money and resources to the work of the Lord with cheerfulness and liberality. *(A gift of giving)*
- The ability to be God's means for restoring people to wholeness. *(A gift of healing)*
- The ability to attach spiritual value to the accomplishment of practical and necessary tasks that free up, support, and meet the needs of others. *(A gift of helps)*
- The ability to care for people by providing fellowship, food, and shelter. *(A gift of hospitality)*

- The ability to consistently pray on behalf of and for others, seeing frequent and specific results. *(A gift of intercession)*
- The ability to make known to the body of Christ the message of one who is speaking in tongues. *(A gift of interpretation)*
- The ability to bring truth to the body through a revelation or biblical insight. *(A gift of knowledge)*
- The ability to cast vision and to motivate and influence people to harmoniously accomplish the purposes of God. *(A gift of leadership)*
- The ability to cheerfully and practically help those who are suffering or are in need, having compassion that is moved to action. *(A gift of mercy)*
- The ability to authenticate the ministry and message of God through supernatural interventions that glorify him. *(A gift of miracles)*
- The ability to reveal truth and proclaim it in a timely and relevant manner for understanding, correction, repentance, or edification. *(A gift of prophecy)*
- The ability to nurture, care for, and guide people toward ongoing spiritual maturity and becoming like Christ. *(A gift of shepherding)*
- The ability to understand, clearly explain, and apply the Word of God, causing greater Christlikeness in the lives of listeners. *(A gift of teaching)*
- The ability to receive a spontaneous message from God in public worship and to speak it in an unknown language that is then made known to the church through the gift of interpretation. *(A gift of tongues)*
- The ability to effectively apply spiritual truth to meet a need in a specific situation. *(A gift of wisdom)*



based on 'Discover Your Spiritual Gifts the Network Way'  
by Bruce Bugbee, Willow Creek Community Church  
(Zondervan, 2005)