

As each of us attempt to compose, update, (or perhaps discern for the very first time), our own rule of life, we would be wise to consider the many misconceptions surrounding the subject. In *Christian Proficiency*, Thornton attempts to bring clarity to our minds concerning this subject so that we may become “regular” Christians ourselves. He does this by making the following statements and then explaining them in greater detail.

- 1. Rule is ‘embraced’ not ‘promised’
- 2. Rule is wholly opposed to legalism
- 3. Rule is neither artificial nor a burden, but the principle of civilized life
- 4. Breach of rule is not sin
- 5. Rule is, and must always remain variable

In his expanded explanation of the above statements (which can be found in Chapter 5 of *Christian Proficiency*), Thornton makes it clear that having a rule of life is not something legalistic or rigid. Rather, Thornton illustrates how having a rule of life is something that is freeing and helpful for the Christian who wants to be more than just “a draftee.”

A rule is meant to order a Christian’s life rightly before God; it’s purpose is not to be an end in itself, but rather, the means by which we grow towards reaching our proper end as human beings, which is to be in perfect communion with God and neighbor.

If you currently do not have a rule of life, consider composing one for yourself. If you already have a rule of life, consider revising it to make sure that it currently fits your life. If you would like guidance and counsel concerning this matter, I would be more than happy to be of assistance to you in this process. As Thornton states, “It is most desirable that a private rule should be made in consultation with a spiritual director. Rule is of essentially corporate significance, and I very much doubt if, according to Catholic tradition, a person who lived to his own rule alone and without anyone else knowing anything about it would really be entitled to the designation ‘regular.’”

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