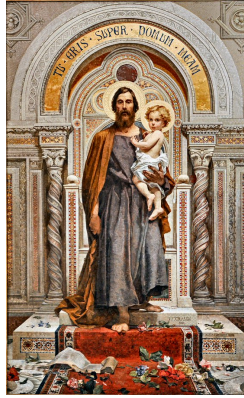


St. Joseph Society



Objective: A rule of life helps a person to start to build habits for holiness. The mission of the St. Joseph Society to help men “To Order All Things to Christ” by becoming strong in mind, body, and spirit. This summer, we will break down the rule of life by discussing what it means to be strong in body (June), mind (July), and spirit (August). This month, we will discuss why a man must become strong in mind in order to become a faithful disciple of our Lord in this day and age.

Podcast Schedule

- Episode #5 – Strong in Mind
- Episode #6 – The Theological Life
- Episode #7 – Fight the Good Fight
- Episode #8 – Knowledge of God and the Knowledge of Self

Leadership Checklist

- ✓ **Pre-Meeting:** Identify three men who will help keep the conversation going. Leading a discussion is very difficult, but you can make life a lot easier by identifying three men and asking them to come prepared to share their thoughts. Choose men who will contribute, but not dominate the discussion. You may consider sending them this sheet beforehand, so they are prepared.
- ✓ **Announcements:** You can do this at the end or the beginning, but you should reserve about 5-10 minutes to keep guys informed about things going in the group, parish, etc.
- ✓ **Opening Prayer:** Lead the men with an opening prayer. A reading from Scripture or a decade of the rosary works well to bring the guys together for discussion.
- ✓ **Prime the Pump:** You should have a brief 5-minute reflection prepared to open the discussion. Most men are not ready to talk right out of the gate, so you need to get them thinking. This reflection can be informal and simply rehash some of the points made in the podcasts that you want to discuss.
- ✓ **Discussion:** The outline below should help you identify some points that you would like to discuss with your group. These are not written to work through sequentially; rather, they are written so that you can easily and quickly identify talking points that will work well with your men. There is more here than a

group could possibly discuss in 30-45 minutes. Generally, 2-3 quotes and 2-3 open ended discussion prompts will carry the entire time together. Don't be afraid of a pregnant silence and lean on your inner circle of guys if the discussion reaches a lull. Once the guys get rolling, the discussion should flow rather easily.

- ✓ **Conclusion:** Finish with a prayer and some encouragement to continue to be faithful practicing the rule. Challenge the men to rise to the challenge of becoming disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ and remind them that you will be praying for them.

July Meeting: Strong in Mind

I. Introduction

1. This summer, we will break down the rule of life by discussing what it means to be strong in body (June), mind (July), and spirit (August). Last month, we discussed why a man must become strong in body. This month, we will discuss why a man must become strong in mind to become a faithful disciple of our Lord today.
2. Introduction – High/Low Discussion – Opening Questions
 - a. Highs: What were some highlights during July?
 - b. Lows: What were some things you found challenging?
 - c. Lessons Learned: What are some strategies you learned to help you keep the rule this month?

II. Episode #5 – Strong in Mind

1. Why does a Catholic man have to have a strong mind?
 - a. Reason Demands It – Socrates said that, “The unexamined life is not worth living,” and we should proclaim that, “The unexamined faith is not worth believing.”
 - b. God Commands It – “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God - what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).
2. Studiousness: The Virtue of the Intellectual Life
 - a. A.G. Sertillanges – “The virtue proper to the man of study is, clearly, studiousness” (*The Intellectual Life*, 25).
 - b. The Two Vices Opposed to Studiousness
 - i. Negligence
 - ii. Vain Curiosity

3. Questions for Reflection

- a. Do you agree with Socrates that “The unexamined life is not worth living?”
- b. Which of the vices to studiousness do you struggle with more: negligence or curiosity?

III. Episode #6 – Faith, Reason, and Theology

1. Pope St. John Paul II – “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth- in a word, to know himself- so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves” (*Fides et Ratio*, 1).
2. Theology is “the science of God” or “science of faith” (Ott, 1, 3).
3. Suggestions for Study
 - a. Go outside.
 - b. Exercise regularly.
 - c. Watch what you eat.
 - d. Simplify your life.
 - e. Practice solitude and silence.

4. Questions for Reflection

- a. If you had to describe an average Catholic's obligation to study his faith, how would you do so?
- b. What do you think of the five suggestions for study? Would you add any to the list? What are some unique challenges to simplifying your life and practicing solitude and silence?

IV. Episode #7 – Fight the Good Fight

1. Apologetics – The discipline that deals with a rational defense of Christian faith.
 - a. 1 Peter 3:15 – In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you.
 - b. Jude 3 – Contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.
 - c. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6 – For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

2. Questions for Reflection

- a. Are Catholic men obligated to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12)?
- b. What are some of the intellectual challenges to our faith today? Philosophical? Moral? Cultural?

V. Episode #8 – Knowledge of God and Knowledge of Self

1. Knowledge of God – We cannot love what we do not know.

- a. Adolphe Tanquerey – “Concerning God, we must know whatever can render Him admirable and lovable. We must learn of His existence, His nature, His attributes, His works, above all, His inner life and His relations with us. Nothing that concerns the Godhead is foreign to devotion” (433).
- b. Means of Acquiring Knowledge of God
 - i. The Devout Study of Theology
 - ii. Meditation or Mental Prayer
 - iii. Habit of Seeing God in all Things

2. Knowledge of Self

- a. Adolphe Tanquerey – “The knowledge of God leads us directly to love Him, since He is infinitely lovable. The knowledge of self helps us indirectly to love God by disclosing to us the absolute need we have of Him, in order to perfect the qualities with which He has endowed us and to heal our deep miseries” (447).
- b. Means of Acquiring Self-Knowledge
 - i. Assess Your Natural Gifts – Mind, Will, Character, and Habits
 - ii. Assess Your Supernatural Gifts – Whether grace disposes us to certain virtues, decisive moments in your spiritual life when God spoke clearly and divisively, and the various ways we have resisted grace.
 - iii. Examination of Conscience

3. Questions for Reflection

- a. In what ways do the rule of life address the means of acquiring knowledge of God? What are some strategies to faithfully use these means?
- b. What do you think about the means of acquiring self-knowledge? Can you think of any challenges to successfully doing so? What suggestions would you offer someone who wanted to do so?