

Life Mapping Project Instructions

Purpose of Life Mapping: Life mapping is a way to grow in our knowledge of ourselves and our knowledge of God. Many people are surprisingly unaware of who they are and why they act as they do. Nor do they have clear spiritual goals. They tend to be only vaguely aware of the forces, both good and bad, that have shaped their lives. Life mapping helps us to confront painful experiences so as not to be held captive by past failures, sins, and bad behaviors and, instead, open our eyes to the grace of God and His guiding presence in every part of our lives. Life mapping also stimulates resolve as we gain a clearer idea of God's call for us and deepen our aspiration to be like Christ.

Nine Steps of Life Mapping:

1. *Realize that the whole process is a kind of prayer.* You are about to enter into deep reflection on your life, and your life is a holy story of redemption. This meditation will be successful only to the degree that you open yourself honestly before God, asking Him to guide you into places that might be blocked out or painful. Pray against demonic pressure, which is intent on keeping things in the shadows. Pray that Christ will open your soul to His light.
2. *Pray that God will lead you to a godly and wise mentor* with whom you feel absolutely free to open your soul. This mentor should be of your same gender and in most cases older than you. Ideally, your mentor should be willing to write up his/her life map with you. This will create a bond of trust that God can use in this mentoring relationship.
3. *Choose what format you will use to write out your map.* Options are as follows: Print several copies (you will need several pages to complete your entire Life Map) of the Life Map template provided in the course, fill it out by hand, scan it into your computer, and upload it to the "Upload Your Life Map" assignment in Week 4. Or, simply type your Life Map in a Word document, using the Life Map template as a guide. Once finished, upload the Word document to the "Upload Your Life Map" assignment in Week 4.
4. *Think over the major divisions and epochs in your life.* Often these divisions easily suggest themselves by locations, such as places you have lived, schools you have attended, places of employment, or churches attended. Sometimes the divisions have to do with spiritual states of your soul. In some ways, our lives are very similar in that they follow the natural flow of growth, marriage, having families, and aging. However, every life is different and this will be reflected in your mapping as you prayerfully meditate on where to make these divisions.
5. *Within each division consider everything that had an influence upon you,* both for good and bad. Here are some categories: people and relationships, social environments, books read, movies seen, decisions made, events, spiritual encounters, etc.
6. *Consider moral influences.* Can you see where certain habits and attitudes or besetting sins began? How and when did they take hold?
7. *Once you have filled out your map, take a step back and get a sense of the whole.* Pray for enlightenment so that God will reveal to you the tapestry of your life. Where and how has He been evident in your life? What is He asking of you? What does He want you to see?

8. *From this tapestry, ask God to give you a sense of the trajectory of your life into the future.* For what has God uniquely suited you? What does He want you to do and be? What does it look like for you to be a radical disciple of Christ? A sense of direction is critical for, as we discuss in Lecture 5 of this course, all Christians are called to perfection, and perfection is defined as an aspiration, a radical orientation toward living our lives out like Christ lived His.
9. *Consider your life map as a work in process.* You will want to revisit this map again and again both to add to it as your life unfolds and to insert details from your past as you remember them. This ongoing project will help keep you on your ascent to God. As time goes on, God will reveal more to you as the tapestry takes on more definite shape.

Project Write-Up

After you complete your Life Map, compose a brief (approximately 500 words) project write-up describing the project and the mentoring experience, and the benefits you sense you gained from both. You will turn this in with your Life Map in Lesson 4 of the course.

Life Mapping Questions

Consider using some or all of the questions below to guide you as you create your Life Map.

Early Family Life

- What do you remember about your grandparents and their influence on you emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually?
- What are some of your earliest memories about your mother? Your father? Your siblings?
- What emotions do you associate with each of these memories?
- Who were important role models for you in the earliest years of your life?
- How do you think these early events and relationships helped to shape who you became as a teenager? As a young adult?

Middle and High School Years

- What specific incidents can you recall from your middle and high school years?
- How did you fit in (or not fit in) with other students during these years?
- Who were your best friends? What drew you together?
- What spiritual events or influences were in your life at this time?
- How did you relate to your parents and siblings throughout adolescence?

College or Early Career Years

- What new areas of study or training piqued your interest during this time? Why?
- Who were primary influencers of your thinking? Of your spiritual development?
- What were pitfalls that you faced during these young adult years?
- Did you ever have problems with depression in your early life? How did you deal with it? How has it affected you spiritually?

Thirtysomething Years

- Describe the trajectory of your career at this point.
- What kinds of books did you read during this period? How was your thinking influenced?

- How important was the Bible to you during this time?
- Describe significant relationships: Spouse? Children? Parents? Friends? Pastors? Teachers?
- What was your relationship with God like during this time?

Maturity to Present

- What events in recent years have been formative to you emotionally, relationally, and/or spiritually?
- Describe your family relationships today.
- Where is God evidencing Himself most in your life right now?
- What are your spiritual desires?