

## Spiritual Life Mapping

A Life Map is a way to reflect on your life story by identifying the moments and events that have shaped you. These experiences form our worldviews and have a strong influence on how we see ourselves and relate to others around us. A Spiritual Life Map goes one step beyond personal development, and seeks to understand how these milestones have shaped our spirituality.

Spirituality is the awareness that there is more to life than what our physical senses can observe. When we ask questions about meaning and truth, these are spiritual pursuits. Christianity is a spiritual pursuit, because it is about living in connection with God, who is spirit (John 4:24). The uniqueness of Christian spirituality is rather than an initiation, it is a response. We seek God, only because he sought us first (Luke 19:10).

Before we can begin talking about spiritual formation, we first need to understand our current spirituality. Spiritual Life Mapping is a way to evaluate the present, by exploring our past, so that we can think about the future. As you go through this exercise, know that there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is to help you understand your own spirituality, as a way to inform your future spiritual formation.

### How to Create a Spiritual Life Map:

- Take one piece of paper and place the longest sides on the top and bottom (landscape). Starting in the middle on the left side, draw a line across the entire paper. ***\*At the end of this document, there is a Spiritual Life Map template if you'd like to print that out instead.***
- On the left end of the line, put the year you were born; and on the right end, put the current year.
- Starting with the year were born, write down the major events and experiences of your life in chronological order. If the milestone was a positive experience, place it above the line; if it was negative, place it below the line. You do not need to record every experience, just those you think played a significant role in your development.
- Once you have recorded all of the milestones, draw a line that connects each one of them in chronological sequence. The result will most likely look like a trendline on a stock chart that sometimes goes up and other times down.
- As you look back on your life, do your best to break it down into separate divisions or eras. For example, you may have childhood, young adult, professional, etc. While there is no specific requirement, try to keep the number of divisions between three and eight. Define each division by drawing vertical lines down your map and labeling them.

- For each era of your life, try to identify the core convictions that you learned or developed during that time. Core convictions are the assumptions that guide our decision making (i.e. people are untrustworthy, money leads to security, church is unsafe, God is good, etc.). A core conviction can be developed during a season of happiness, but more frequently they are the result of pain. Record these core convictions in the corresponding era.
- Based on the core convictions you developed, try to determine a theme for each era of your life. Pay attention to patterns and notice how one era relates to the next.
- Finally, notice how your spirituality emerged and evolved over time, and how it has brought you to where you are now.

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