

THE PRAYER CLOSET

Encouraging & Equipping Believers in Prayer

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SPIRITUAL MAPPING

Jeremiah 29 is the account of a letter written by the prophet Jeremiah. This letter was addressed to the people who had been carried off into captivity in Babylon. In this letter, Jeremiah encourages the people to settle down and to make the best of their new life in Babylon.

At this time, there were false prophets who were telling the people that they would be immediately delivered from captivity and brought back to Jerusalem and Judah (**Jeremiah 29:8-9**). Jeremiah writes this letter to let them know that it would be 70 years before there would ever be any return to their homeland. Because of this, the people were to become active, influential citizens of their new home.

One of the startling instructions that the prophet gives the people is found in **Jeremiah 29:7**. The Word of God says, "And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace." God desired that the people pray for the city where He had placed them. They were to intercede for this place because God had put them there. God wanted them to exercise spiritual influence in their new home.

The same is true for you today. God desires that you pray for the city, the neighborhood, or the community that you live in. You don't live where you live by chance. God has placed you there. He has worked to put you in the place where you are that you might pray and exercise spiritual influence.

Acts 1:8 is the New Testament equivalent of **Jeremiah 29:7**. The Word of God says, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." When Jesus gave the disciples His plan for reaching the world, He told them to start in Jerusalem – their city – the place they lived. They were responsible for praying for and ministering to the place that they lived.

This applies to us today. God desires that we exercise spiritual influence in our area—whether it is our neighborhood, community, or city. He longs for you to intercede for the people and circumstances around you. He wants to transform your area through your intercession.

In order to pray powerfully for your area, you will need to practice spiritual mapping. Spiritual mapping is a tool that can help you

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pray specifically and powerfully for your area. It will provide you with insight to know how to seek the Lord in behalf of your neighborhood, community, or city.

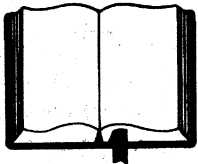
What Is Spiritual Mapping?



Spiritual mapping is looking and examining where you live with spiritual lenses. It is determining the spiritual climate around you that you might know how to intercede. It is discerning the needs of the people around you that you might pray for them.

How can you have a powerful impact on your area if you are not aware of the spiritual climate of the area? How can you pray powerfully for others if you don't know what their needs are and where they stand in relation to Christ? Spiritual mapping is a way of discovering the spiritual climate and needs of your area that you might pray for and minister to your area.

Spiritual mapping can assist you in moving beyond generic prayer for your area. God longs for you to pour your heart out to Him for the place you live – its people and their needs. It can guide you into specific and effective intercession for the real people and the real problems around you. It can help build your faith because your praying is focused and specific.



The Biblical Basis For Spiritual Mapping

Whenever I have taught on this subject, the question that I'm most frequently asked is, "Where does the Bible teach spiritual mapping?" There is no particular text that teaches this specific concept. You will not find it written in the Bible, "You shall practice spiritual mapping."

However, the practice of spiritual mapping is built on the foundation of biblical

principles. Spiritual mapping is the implication of some basic biblical truths. Certain biblical truths call for this practice.

The Eyes Of Jesus

The Word of God reveals that Jesus was often moved with compassion when He saw the crowds, "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (**Matthew 9:36**). This characterized the life of Jesus (**Matthew 14:14, Mark 6:34, Mark 10:21**). Jesus looked beyond the physical to the spiritual needs of people. He didn't just see bodies; He saw real people with spiritual problems and an eternal destiny.

As a follower of Jesus, you are called to follow His example – to become like Him. Becoming like Jesus means having His eyes – seeing what He sees. He doesn't want you to see your neighbors, friends, coworkers, and acquaintances as you always have. He desires that you look beyond the outward appearance to the spiritual needs in peoples' lives. He longs for you to see your area with spiritual eyes. He desires that you view your area with an eye to the problems and spiritual needs that exist.

This is the reason for spiritual mapping. It is the intentional act of looking at your area, as Jesus desires. It is no longer looking at the people around you and the place you live as you always have. It is looking beyond the outward appearance of things and seeing the real people and the real needs of your area that you might pray with power.

The Command To Watchfulness

In **Colossians 4:2**, the Word of God calls on believers to watch and pray, "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving." The phrase "continue earnestly in prayer" means that we are to be devoted to prayer. It is telling us that prayer should characterize our lifestyle. We are to have continual communication with God.

Yet, the Word adds that we are to be vigilant in it. The word "vigilant" means watchful. It is paying attention to what is happening around you. According to God's

Word, praying and watching should characterize every believer's life.

Why does the Word combine these commands? It is because watching fuels and enriches your praying. Watching should lead to praying. As you watch, you will see what is going on around you. You will see peoples' lives—their needs, their burdens, and their ups and downs. You will see the trends and developments in your city or community. This will then guide your praying to specific issues and needs. You will be able to pray powerfully and effectively because you are praying about what is happening at the moment.

Spiritual mapping is the practical and intentional application of **Colossians 4:2**. It is looking for distinct and specific ways that you can pray for your city, community, or area. In spiritual mapping, you are intentionally watching that you might pray. You are observing and studying what is going on around you that you might have a powerful and righteous influence. Spiritual mapping is a practical way to obey **Colossians 4:2**.

The Reality of Unseen Warfare

There is more going on in your neighborhood or city than you can see with physical eyes. The Word of God reminds us that there is a spiritual war being waged that we cannot discern with physical eyes, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (**Ephesians 6:12**).

The Bible teaches that Satan and his demons are active in this world. You can apply this to your area – Satan and his demons are working in your area. He is seeking to do as much damage as possible in peoples' lives and the churches of your area. He is filled with malicious intentions for your area – leading the lost to hell, trapping and wounding Christians, hindering and dividing churches, destroying relationships and lives.

Spiritual mapping is taking **Ephesians 6:12** seriously. It is acknowledging that there is an unseen warfare going on where you live. It is agreeing with the Word that there is more going on than just what you see in the physical

realm. It is paying attention to the fact that there are powers behind the flesh and blood of your area. It is looking at your area as a battleground – a battleground where the souls and lives of people are at stake. And because of this, you watch and pray.

Spiritual mapping is looking at your city or area in light of this unseen warfare. You examine what is happening in order to see what forces are at work around you. As you observe and discern the strategies and attacks of the enemy, you pray for their hindrance and destruction. At the same time, you are to cry out to God for the invasion of His power and righteousness into your city or area. You ask that the wickedness and demonic strongholds of your area would be removed and replaced with righteousness.

The Call To Be Salt And Light

The Word of God is clear and direct. You are to exercise a righteous influence where you are. The Word says, "You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (**Matthew 5:13-16**).

Jesus uses the images of salt and light to speak about your influence. Both salt and light make a tangible difference. When you put salt on food, you can taste it. When you turn the lights on in a room, you can see the light. In the same way, your faith in Christ should make a tangible impression on those around you and the places that you are.

God has placed you where you are to be salt and light. Your life is not governed by chance or fate. You just don't happen to work where you work, live where you live, or go where you go. God has appointed these things and He has put you there to exercise spiritual influence.

Spiritual mapping is an intentional way to be salt and light where God has placed you. It is interceding for people and situations where you are that you might exercise spiritual influence. By praying, you can have enormous

impact on people and situations. Spiritual mapping is a tangible way that you can be the salt and light that Jesus desires.



How Do I Put A Spiritual Map Together?

You may be wondering, "How do I put a spiritual map together for my area?" There

are some basic steps that you will need to consider in putting together a spiritual map for your praying.

- *Pray that God would give you discernment concerning your area.* Ask God to help you discern the spiritual climate of your area. Call on Him to grant you the understanding that you need to pray.
- *Plead that God would open your eyes to the people of your area.* Pray that you would no longer see the people around you as you always have. Ask that you will see them as God does.
- *Observe what is going on around you.* Throughout your daily routine, watch what is happening around you. Take notice of and listen to people throughout your day. As you watch and listen, you will receive much insight on how to pray for your area and the people around you.
- *Keep up with the local news.* The local news can provide you with a great deal of insight on how you can pray for your city or community.
- *Interview people.* When I say, "interview," I don't necessarily mean a formal interview. What I mean is talk to people about their lives, particularly their spiritual needs. Ask others what you can pray about for them. Survey people to see what the greatest needs of the area are.
- *Confer with other believers.* Ask other believers about their understanding and sense of the spiritual climate of your area. Talk with them about what they are praying about for your area.
- *Do research.* Study the history of your area. Find out about the roots of

Christianity in your area. Discover the other religions or cults around you.

- *Join with other believers to pray about these things.* You might consider getting together with other believers for this purpose. You could have each believer share about what they are seeing and how they are praying. As you do this, you could come up with a comprehensive spiritual map of your area.



The Basic Ingredients For A Spiritual Map

As you begin the process of putting together a spiritual map, there are some basic ingredients that you will need. These things are essential to knowing and praying about the spiritual climate around you. These basic ingredients are:

Area Churches And Pastors

The churches and pastors in your area have significant impact on the spiritual climate of your area. It is crucial that you prepare a list of the churches and pastors in your area. Do not limit your list to the churches of your denomination. Seek to discover all the churches around you and the names of their pastors.

Institutions And Businesses

The institutions and businesses in your area will have a definite impact on your area. You have to keep in mind that there is an intimate connection between the economy of your area and the spiritual and emotional life of your city or community. They are intertwined. Your intercession can have significant impact on all aspects of life where you live.

Area Schools

The schools in your area need your intercession. The hearts and lives of the youth are shaped and molded in the schools. It is also a battleground for the enemy who wants control of their hearts and lives. Record the names of the schools in your area along with that of their administration.