

MINISTERIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SEMINAR III

Theme: “The Pentecostal Minister and Church Leadership”

Understanding Your Personal Journey and Life Story

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INTRODUCTION

The Bible is full of the stories of people; people like Moses, David, etc. The Bible is full of stories of faith, miracles, love, and examples of God’s faithfulness. Stories help us keep perspective on what God is doing in our lives and how we can best follow after the dreams and the visions we have for the future. It is helpful to think of life as a story, with us as the main characters and God as the Author of our stories. How has God authored your story?

The process of writing our life story is designed to bring perspective to our understanding of God’s personal involvement in the events of our lives.

We need to see that we are involved in a dynamic relationship with God, the Author of our story, who incorporates both His sovereign design and our personal responsibility into the creation of our stories and experiences.

God has given us the freedom to choose how we will respond to Him at all times. Sometimes we choose to disobey God’s word and sin against God’s principles of holiness. Even in our failures, God is at work to bring positive turning points into our lives. Mistakes that should have destroyed us become motivations for growth and progress in our journey.

I. Life Issues to Be Explored

Living in a secular world which promotes relativism and pragmatism, produces a despair of significance. It causes people to see themselves accidents or as desperate creatures seeking for enough pleasure and meaning to make life worth all the effort. We are told to think good thoughts and enjoy the moment as though that would have mystical power to protect us from pain or despair.

Some Christians even approach worship as a way to feel better and produce good thoughts of hope and peace. For many Christians, all pain is to be avoided and lamenting has no value.

The real issues of life and the experiences of suffering can bring in us growth or disappointment. The result is primarily determined by how we choose to look at and interpret our experiences.

We need to learn how to see the experiences of our lives as coming from God's hand, at the same time being able to see how our bad choices, self-defeating actions, and disobedience have produced in our lives undesirable experiences, which are not only painful for us but also hurtful for those closest to us.

The absence of spiritual growth can be traced to a lack of understanding or a failure to remember the implication of Christ's forgiveness. Following are some key that might impact your story?

A. Are you happy with yourself?

- ◆ Goal = to have a quiet sense of self-respect and a feeling of satisfaction with who we are
- ◆ Key = do not measure your self worth based on your performance but on the fact that you tried your best given the situation and opportunity.

B. What do you believe about yourself?

- ◆ Goal = to believe that you are loved and accepted by God
- ◆ Key = think and believe the truth of God's word not the false belief's of satan. Reject the belief that says:

Self-worth = performance + others' opinions

C. Was your family healthy or dysfunctional?

- ◆ Goal = to be honest and clear about our backgrounds, experiences, and hurts
- ◆ Key = Have hope and realistic expectations as you work through the process of dealing with the shame, anger, or the disappointment of your family life.

D. Are you doing the right things for the right reasons?

- ◆ Goal = to have peace with self and with God without believing our good deeds make us more acceptable to God

- ◆ Key = Understanding that we are made righteous in God's eyes through faith in Jesus Christ, we stand before God without fear of personal condemnation.

E. Am I motivated to obey God?

- ◆ Goal = to be obedient to God out of love and a sincere desire to stay within God's plan for our lives
- ◆ Key = Do not live in fear of God's anger but live in joyful obedience to His love. We will reap what we sow but obedience should not be based on God's rewarding us. Always check your motives in life but do not try to make deals with God.

There are many other issues which have impacted your life story and life history. Issues which you need to consider in clarifying your story and journey:

Issues such as:

- rejection
- bitterness
- unforgiveness
- conflicts
- habits
- compulsions
- negative attitudes
- extreme emotional responses

II. Putting Together Your Story

Writing your personal story is a process of discovery as you work through the many issues, memories, and life situations in your past. Remember that God seeks to use the best experiences and the worst experiences to accomplish His purpose.

The following four steps can help in working through the process of putting together your life story:

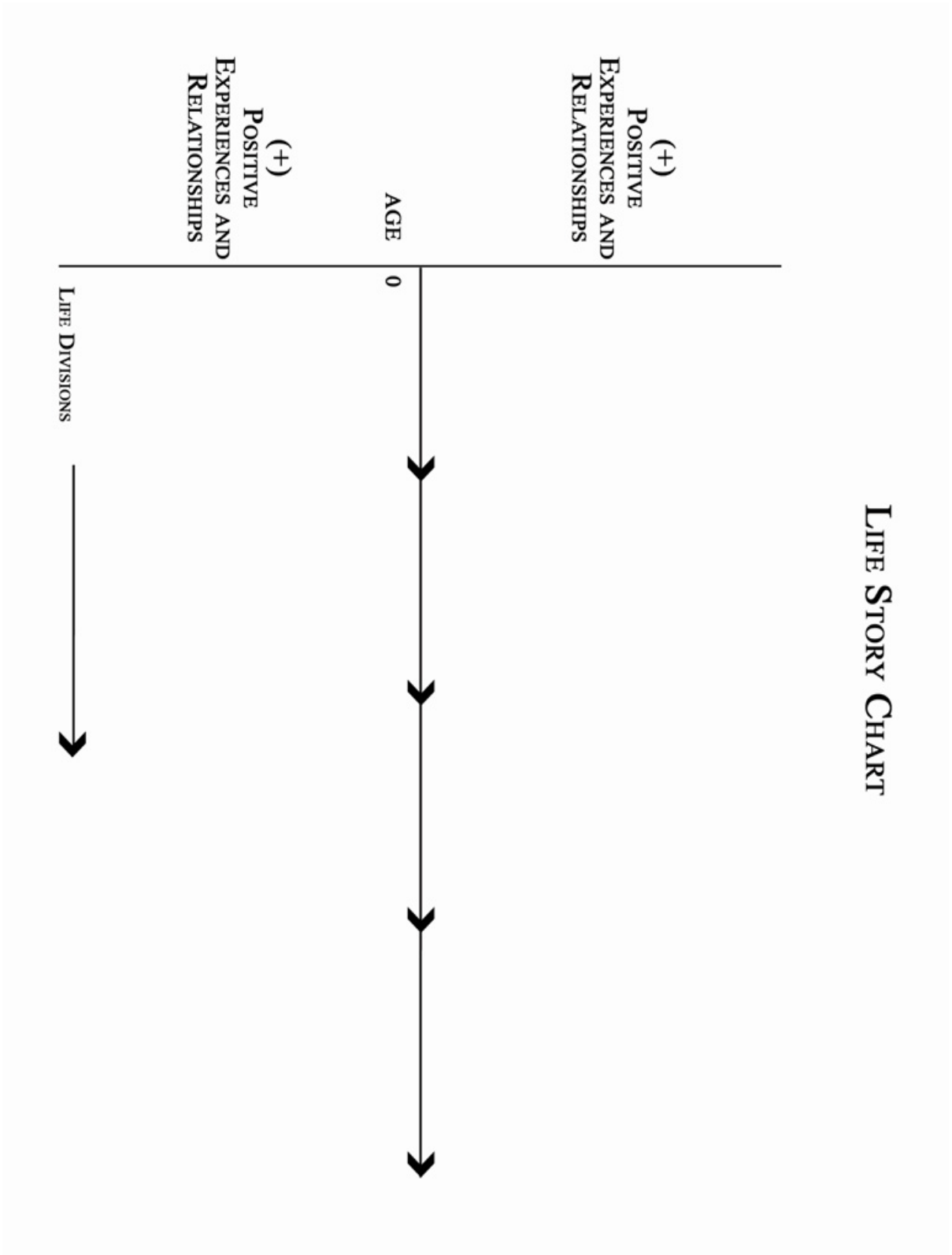
Step 1: Outline the details of your life story

Use the following chart to divide your life into logical time sequences from birth to present (noting where you lived, went to school, worked, etc.). Record these divisions along the horizontal line extending to the right from zero. The vertical line represents the range of positive (+) and negative (-) experiences.

Begin by writing brief notes about the positive and the negative relationships, events, and experiences. Make your chart as big as necessary.

Focus on:

- family relationships and experiences
- your greatest influencers
- most memorable people from your past
- where you grew up
- most difficult or painful experiences
- what was your relationship with God during these times
- your spiritual experiences
- identifying major decision points
- list life goals with achievements and failures



Step 2: Arrange the chapters of your life story

Now you need to create a worksheet dividing your life into chapters with a title for each segment or division of your life. Under the chapter titles, identify the most critical events or experiences for each chapter and division. Then also identify how to describe God at work in your life during these divisions/chapters.

NOTE: Complete the “Life Division Worksheet: on the following page.

LIFE DIVISION WORKSHEET

LIFE DIVISIONS				
CHAPTER TITLES				
BRAIN-STORMING FORMATIVE EVENTS, HARD TIMES, GOOD TIMES, IMPACTING FAMILY EXPERIENCES, ETC.				
GOD'S AUTHORSHIP WHAT WAS GOD DOING IN THESE SITUATIONS? HOW WOULD HE USE THEM IN YOUR LIFE?				

Step 3: Perfecting your story and life testimony

As you complete and fill-in your worksheet charting your life story you will raise key questions, find real answers, and identify vital lessons you have learned on your journey. You will be able to see the hand of God at work in your life through critical events and special relationships. Pay close attention to how God has worked through the hardships and most painful experiences of your life

On a separate sheet of paper write as much as possible on the title “Who I am Today.” Divide the paper into headings such as:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| ➤ strengths | ➤ passions |
| ➤ weaknesses | ➤ goals |
| ➤ limitations | ➤ achievements |
| ➤ flaws | ➤ next steps for spiritual growth |

Write another brief paper on “*How I Know God has Called me to Leadership.*” Be sure to identify those weaknesses you will have to overcome in order to achieve your maximum potential.

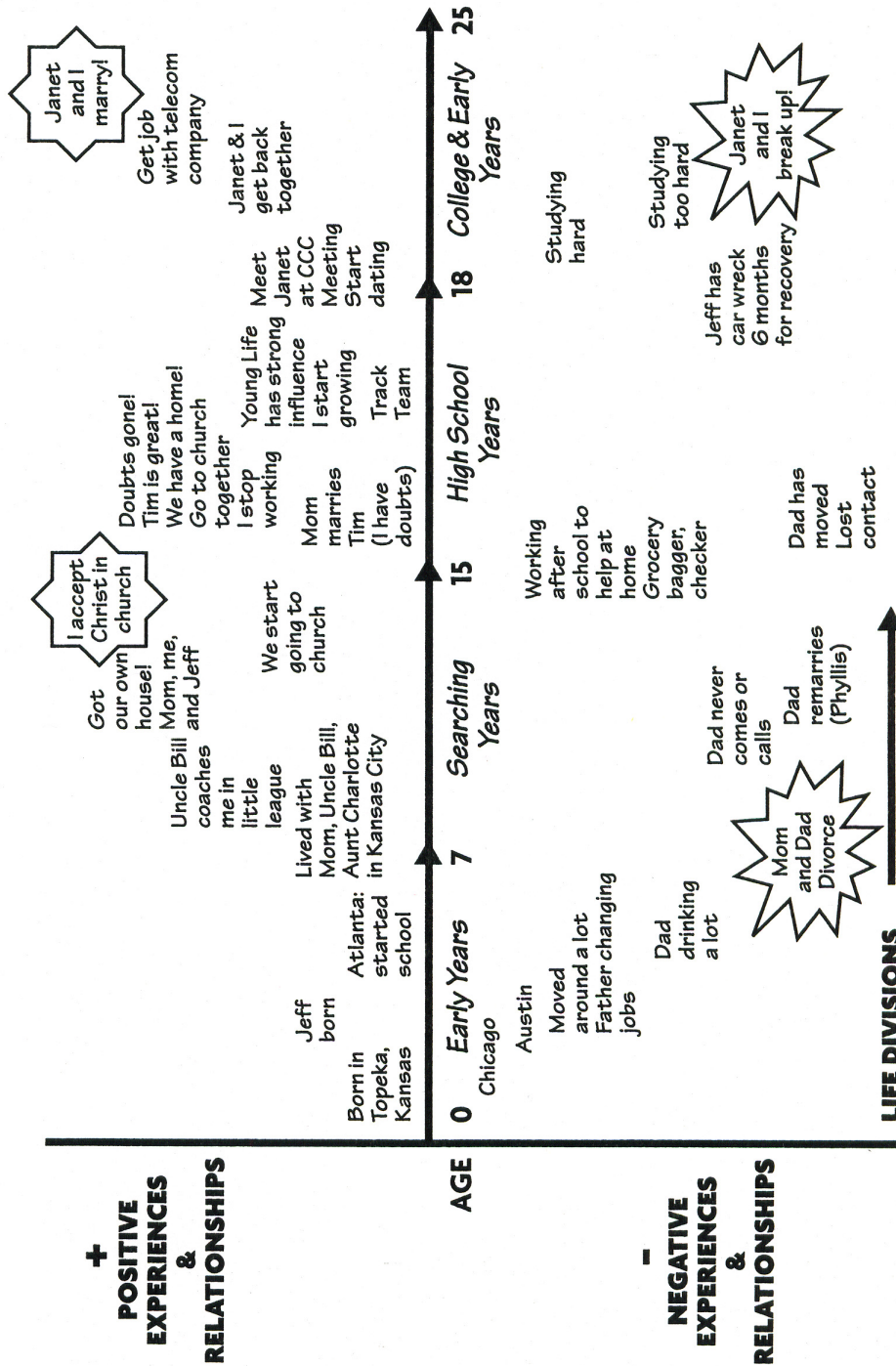
Step 4: Preparing to tell your life story

If you were going to tell your story to a small group of fellow believers, how should you best communicate or present your story? You could use photos, old videos, maps, timeline drawings, diagrams, music, poetry, etc. Be sure to clearly identify from your life story the most significant lessons you have learned on your journey. Also, describe how your life story influences your theology of ministry and your personal vision.

CHARTING A BOLD COURSE



SAMPLE LIFE STORY CHART



PREPARING YOUR LIFE STORY



A SAMPLE LIFE STORY WORKSHEET

LIFE DIVISIONS	Early Years 0	Searching Years 7	High School Years 15	College and First Job Years 18 25
CHAPTER TITLES	<i>Living with Instability</i>	<i>Searching for Stability</i>	<i>Finding a Sure Foundation</i>	<i>Launching Out</i>
BRAIN-STORMING <i>Formative Events, Hard Times, Good Times, Impacting Family Experiences, etc.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I was born in Topeka, Kansas, April 17, 1975 (first child) Father was in grad school We moved around a lot, Chicago, Austin, Atlanta Father was changing jobs Jeff born February 6, 1976 Dad started drinking ... a LOT; he argued with Mom I started school in Atlanta, teacher's pet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOM AND DAD DIVORCE! We moved in with Uncle Bill and Aunt Charlotte in Kansas City Uncle Bill was my best friend, he coached my Little League team, taught me to hit! We started going to church Mom got good job, we got our own house! She works a lot Dad NEVER calls or visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dad remarries (Phyllis) I ACCEPT CHRIST at church I work at grocery store to help Mom starts dating Tim, I have doubts about him. They marry, I discover he is a great guy, we go to church as a family! I can stop working, join track team at school In Young Life I begin to grow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At KU I met Janet at a Campus Crusade meeting, we started dating, break up, then get back together Lost track of Dad, no address Jeff has bad car wreck, takes 6 months to recover I make top grades but study too hard, too important to me JANET AND I MARRY Good job with telecom, Dallas
GOD'S AUTHORSHIP <i>What was God doing in these situations? How did He use them in your life?</i>	<p>It seemed like we were always moving so I never had any friends. I looked for ways to be accepted. I loved school, was the teacher's pet because I tried to do everything right. God was letting me experience the instability so that later I could appreciate stability in Him, not in anything else.</p>	<p>Dad's drinking, arguments with Mom and divorce were very painful. My Uncle Bill and Aunt Charlotte showed real love to us. God used this to show me what love can be like. Going to church for the first time, I began to hear about God's love and had an example to understand it. I saw the consequences of my dad's bad choice.</p>	<p>Through church ministry I accept Christ and find a sense of stability in His love and faithfulness. Young Life helps me grow. Time turns out to be another example of God's love to me. God's blessing allows me to stop working and enjoy school. I joined the track team and brought some guys to Young Life, one later accepted Christ.</p>	<p>Janet is God's gift to me. I almost "blow it" because I am too into getting max grades. I still struggle with getting my significance through my performance rather than from Christ. I am growing in this, but it shows up too often. God is so faithful to give me Janet. We grow together. I am asking God to help me be a stable, growing husband, and some day, father.</p>