

Finding a Good Map

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What is a map?

Our friends at Wikipedia define a map as “a visual representation of an area—a symbolic depiction highlighting relationships between elements of that space such as objects, regions, and themes.” Whatever... I think we all know what a map is, and all travelers should appreciate the detailed work of those unnamed cartographers.

Kinds of maps

Road maps are the most common maps today, but there are maps for navigational (air and sea), hiking and bicycling maps, railroad network maps, and municipal surveys, carried out by municipalities, utilities, tax assessors, emergency services providers, and other local agencies. But a map can be any document giving information as to where or what something is.

What makes a good map?

For a successful road trip, there are five essentials of a good map.

1. **Accuracy:** No use having a sloppy map that only approximates routes and locations, not when you're depending on it to show you the way. Try to find maps that include highway exits, and distances between stops. Enlargements of metropolitan areas is also a big help.
2. **Readability:** Especially if you're travelling alone (and are reaching that age when arm's length is the best place for viewing things), you want a map you can read without squinting. Better to pull over at a safe spot than be driving while engrossed in a map. Fortunately some atlas companies are now producing large print editions—not everything is large print, but at least the main places.
3. **Portability:** Have you ever tried to use a map that is slightly larger than the interior of your car? Constant folding and refolding to access the area you need is constant frustration. But so is a travel atlas where everywhere you want to go seems lost in the fold!
4. **Durability:** Ever have a map that ends in strips before the journey's over? All that folding and refolding can wreak havoc. There are some laminated models that work well (if you don't mind the cost and can avoid the glare). But if you're going on a long trip, you might want to bring a spare, if you're using paper maps.
5. **Comprehensiveness:** A useful map needs three things: it tells you where you are, where you want to go, and how to get there. What good is a map of North Carolina if you're travelling in Saskatchewan? The sponsors of this site highly recommend the Bible as the ultimate map for the road trip of life. If you don't know where you're going on life's final trip, check out the following statements from God's Word.

Read on to hear about "FINDING OUR WAY"

Finding our way

It's pretty obvious our world is in a bad way. It isn't the way that God designed it. God designed us to have wills to choose because he wanted real people, not machines or toys. But we thought we knew better than God and chose to ignore his way, and take our own way. “So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth” (Genesis 6:12).

You may agree that the world is in bad shape, but think the choices you have made are better than average. Do you know what God says about that? "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12). The Bible states that the penalty for our sin is death (Romans 3:23).

You may think you're on the right road because you attend church, or do good things for others, but the Bible says, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). In other words, it's no use telling a police officer you cut your neighbour's lawn if he stopped you for speeding. No law court in the land trades good deeds for bad ones.

You know what that means. Some people won't stop and ask for directions even if they're lost. That's why we read: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but the one who listens to counsel is wise" (Proverbs 12:15). And you know what "lost" means—someone who doesn't know for sure where they are going.

Who should we ask for help? Here's a clue: "As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him" (Ps 18:30). Isn't that what we need? Someone who knows the perfect way; someone who can prove it to us; and someone who provides security for us forever. Is that possible?

What is the right way? And how do we get on it? That was a question asked by Thomas, an honest seeker in the days when Jesus was on earth: "How can we know the way? Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:5-6).

Some people object to the idea that Jesus said he was the only way. But that isn't true. The Bible says there are many ways. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). But that's just the problem. The many ways we have taken never lead to certainty about the future, or a release from the burden of guilt in the present.

Jesus was saying that there was only one way to come back to God; there was only one way to be sure. We must make a U-turn on the road of life, turning from our sin and to God's Son who died at Calvary to pay the penalty of our sin. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

Sources for good maps

1. Bing Maps : Explore the Earth with interactive maps, directions and traffic, satellite and aerial images, bird's eye view, 3D maps and 3D cities.
2. MapQuest : Get maps for towns and cities worldwide, Also get directions, current gas prices and a business directory.
3. Google Maps : Provides directions, interactive maps, satellite/aerial imagery and street view. Can also search by keyword such as type of business.
4. Yahoo! Maps : Also provides driving directions, satellite views, and traffic reports.
5. AccuWeather.com : This site provides weather satellite maps with a current satellite image of many North American locations. Enhanced infrared satellite images.
6. Maps.com : Billed as the world's largest map store, this site offers wall maps, travel maps, atlases, digital maps and more for sale.

7. National Geographic : Good for overseas travel, you can find world maps, satellite Maps, atlases, and other print maps of nearly any place on Earth. Also search and print historical, weather, and population maps, and more with their dynamic atlas.

8. Rand McNally : Get online driving directions, download maps, add multiple stops, check real-time traffic updates, avoid road construction, etc. Also a travel store.