

7 Life Circles That Need Your Daily Intercession

Lord, I cry out to You because I need a renewed passion for those closest to me. I want You to empower me to make disciples in my closest relationships as well as in those I have yet to meet. Help me to ever be reaching out with the life of Christ that You have placed within me.

In the early days of the church, the gospel of Jesus Christ spread through authentic and meaningful relationships. It wasn't through campaigns or creative marketing, advertising or going door to door. The gospel moved in waves of concentric circles, just like the waves created from a rock that's thrown into a pond move out in all directions, rippling further and further out. The gospel is most effective when it begins within our own heart and has its way in our marriage, family, friends and community—in that order.

If you read through the New Testament, you will see the centrality of relationship. It is nothing profound, but it is just as natural as anything can possibly be. If something is genuine in my life and your life, the natural thing to want to do is to share it with those we know. Relationship: It's the most important word in the English language.

Think of this pattern: Seven concentric circles on a whiteboard. These circles are like a target with a bull's-eye in the center, concentric circles. The circles represent the different relationships of our lives: Circle 1: Self Circle, 2: Family Circle, 3: Relatives Circle, 4: Friends Circle, 5: Neighbors and Associates Circle, 6: Acquaintances and Circle 7: Person X. The gospel moves on these contiguous lines—on lines of relationship.

I believe that God holds us responsible for everyone he brings into our sphere of influence. Unfortunately, though, many of us who study evangelism seem to go from Circle 1 out to Circle 7 in order to salve our consciences because there are ruptured relationships in Circles 2 through 6 that we prefer to skip over.

When we have ruptured relationships horizontally with people, we also have a ruptured relationship vertically with God. It is not that we do not know the Lord. It is just that He is not really Lord of our lives. We are not willing to let Him be Lord of everything. We are not willing to accept, love and forgive people on His conditions.

With Person X, our lifestyles do not have to be consistent. We can talk to Person X and then be on our way. There is nothing wrong with telling Person X about Jesus. We are supposed to do that. God will bring many strangers into our lives. However, if we cannot tell people in Circles 2 through 6 about the Lord, we are hypocritical. We are play acting. We are unreal people. If our relationship with the Lord is genuine, we will want to share the Good News of Christ with those closest to us.

God holds you responsible for every person who comes into your spheres of influence—into your concentric circles. There are people in all of your circles whom you touch every day, and you do not even see them. Some of them are cantankerous; some of them you do not like; and some of them you really do not want to love. But they are there in relationship to you. They are there for you to love—to meet their needs—so the Father can draw them to His Son Jesus.

Love Others in Community

Do you, at times, feel inconvenienced or even irritated because people in your inner circles actually need you? Take an honest assessment: “When

_____ needs _____, I may sometimes feel inconvenienced, interrupted and irritated.”

Consider what the people in your circles might really need. Could they need God’s support shared through you? God’s care shared through you? God’s kindness shared through you? Or any of His glorious riches listed above? Take a moment to be still before the Lord. Listen to His Spirit as you reflect on the relationships in your circles. Ask Him to reveal the changes that are needed.

Holy Spirit, show me the riches that You have given to me, that are needed in the lives of others. Who needs Your kindness, Your support, Your care or Your encouragement demonstrated through me today? Speak, Lord, for I am listening.

*Excerpt from Cry Out to the Lord. Click [HERE TO PURCHASE](#). W. **Oscar Thompson Jr.** was a professor Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth Texas (Thompson, 5) who dearly loved the Lord, his family and his students. Often throughout the pages of his book, he makes mention of his daughter, Damaris, and his love for her is evident. Before publishing his book, *Concentric Circles of Concern: Seven Stages for Making Disciples*, Thompson got cancer and died. His wife, Carolyn, saw that his work made it to publication in 1980, and Claude V. King, a great admirer of Thompson’s book and method, got permission to revise and expand the book in 1999.*