

Title: THE CIRCLES OF THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

Text: John 15:19

Intro: The world population is now about 6.8 billion and still growing. Of these not even 10% are saved, Bible-believing Christians. Of the millions of true Christians there are degrees of closeness to the Lord Jesus. The degrees of Christian zeal, faithfulness, service, and love for Jesus are best studied and illustrated by circles. Today we are going to look at five circles of the Christian life and learn to which circle you belong –

1. THE CIRCLE OF FAITH – The Five Hundred (I Cor. 15:3-6). The term “**five hundred brethren**” denotes that these were all believers. These were individuals with faith and were saved. This circle is the greater company of souls saved by grace through faith in Christ. Sadly, the majority is content to be just plain believers and is not serving God zealously. Yet they are still believers of Christ. Do you belong to this circle?

2. THE CIRCLE OF SERVICE – The Seventy (Luke 10:1-2). They were sent in complimentary pairs. They were fully instructed as to where to go, what to say, and what to do (**Luke 10:17**). Most likely these 70 men were chosen from the 500 for service. Note that 70/500 was only fit for work. In every church there is only a small number from membership which have servant's heart. Let's learn a lesson from Gideon's army (**Judg. 7:1-8**). There is often weakness in big numbers. The sources of weakness come from the fearful and hesitant within the assembly. Only those with faith and courage are worthy of service. It is good to be in the circle of faith but better to be in the circle of service. Are you in God's service?

3. THE CIRCLE OF FELLOWSHIP – The Twelve (Matt. 10:2-4). Jesus experienced sadness (**Isa. 53:3a**). As a man, Jesus was at times lonely. He had no wife and children and as such He desired fellowship. That is why He chose 12 closest friends. Jesus needed companions not only for fellowship but also for the ministry where they will be sent out. Doubtless, these 12 men were chosen not from the 500 but from the 70. Here we see the formula: **Faith + Service = Fellowship!**

In every church there are those even numerically smaller but nonetheless more spiritually mature believers who unselfishly and zealously labor for Christ in and out of the local church.

4. THE CIRCLE OF PRIVILEGE – The Three (Peter, James and John). Of course, Peter, James and John were chosen from among the 12. Why Jesus preferred these 3 men was perhaps due to their special fitness and closeness to Him. It was necessary that Jesus' Deity was clear and unquestioned by the 3. That is why he took them on very critical occasions, among them: (a) At the House of Jairus (**Mark 5:22-24, 35-37**) where His resurrection power proved His Deity; (b) At the Mount of Transfiguration (**Mark 9:2-4**) where He evidently demonstrated greater glory than Moses and Elijah; (c) At the Garden of Gethsemane (**Mark 14:32-34**) where He prayed & sorrowed of His coming crucifixion as the Saviour of mankind.

5. THE CIRCLE OF LOVE – The Beloved Disciple (John) [John 15:13]. John never spoke that he loved Jesus but that he humbly spoke of himself as “**the disciple whom Jesus loved**” (**John 21:20**). John uses “**love**” 60X in all his three Epistles and Gospel. Observe that a person in love will brave any danger for his beloved one (**Mark 14:50; John 18:15; 19:26-27**). Notice that at the Lord's Supper, Gethsemane arrest, the trial, and crucifixion of Jesus – John the disciple whom Jesus loved was there! No wonder he was singled out from the inner Circle of Privilege with Peter & James! John not only believed, served, fellowshiped, and was so near Jesus in His crucial moments, but he truly loved Jesus to the very end!

Conclusion: So the five circles of the believer's life are the circles of – FAITH, SERVICE, FELLOWSHIP, PRIVILEGE, & LOVE. Friend, to be honest, to which of these circles do you belong? Maybe deep down in your heart you have a desire to know, serve, fellowship, and love the Lord Jesus. But friend, all of your good intentions now will not begin and become a reality if your relationship with the Lord is not truly right. That is, the issue is not yet serving, fellowshiping or loving Jesus but first personally trusting Him as your Lord and Saviour.