

Relationships are Circles of Sufficiency

In the **Kingdom of God**, relationships function as “**Circles of Sufficiency**”. This means that in a circle of relationships, any believer in that circle has a **Kingdom view** of his relationship with every other person in that circle whether that person is a believer or not. The believer’s goal is to **encourage others to feel sufficient** – in other words, to feel that they have **worth** and **value**, that they **matter**. And loving them with “**agape**” love, the



Greek word for the highest form of unconditional and self-sacrificing God-like love. (*Romans 15:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:24*)

A CIRCLE OF FOUR

The **smallest** “Circle of Sufficiency” a person can be in is a “**Circle of Four**”. The four in the circle are the **Father**, the **Son**, the **Spirit**, and **you**. Obviously, this is the **triune God** and **yourself**. Several truths rise to the surface when you think about this carefully. First, you are **never, never, never ever alone**. Driving in the car by yourself you are not alone. You are in a “Circle of Four” where the **truth** about you is **spoken**, and you are reminded of **who you really are** – your **true identity**. Second, **you are always outnumbered**. Any time you are tempted to put yourself down or begin moving through life in your false identity, Father, Son and Spirit will **come to your rescue and speak truth to you**. (*Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Isaiah 41:10*)

CONNECTING WITH EACH MEMBER OF THE TRINITY

Why call out the three members of the Trinity individually? **Because “Circles of Sufficiency” are about relationships**, and **we relate to each person of the Trinity differently**. We relate to a perfect, loving **Heavenly Father** from the prodigal son story as well as the symbolism of the shepherd. We connect with **Jesus, the Son** because he has been human like us and understands what that is like from experience. With regard to the **Spirit**, in Him we have an **advocate** who stands up for us and **abides in us**, always **convicting** and **coaching** us as to what is good and right, and what is in the Father’s will. These three **love you perfectly** and want an **interactive experience in life** with you. (*Luke 15:11-32; Hebrews 4:14-16, 13:5-6; John 14:26-27*)

SETTING ASIDE DEFENSIVENESS AND BEING LESS OFFENDABLE

It is in our “**Circle of Four**” that we find our **true identity**, our **worth** and **value**, and our **self-image**. We find ourselves **whole** and **complete** because our smallest circle **says it is so**. This has **powerful implications** for all our other circles. If I am whole and complete in my “Circle of Four”

then I am **not looking for worth and value** or an **identity** from any **other relationship**. I do not look to a **partner, parent,** or any other **person** for my **self-worth**. And it is only then that I can **set aside defensiveness** and be **less offendable**. (*Galatians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 2:3-4; Romans 12:17-19; Luke 6:27-31*)

LOVING PERFECTLY WITH AN UNSELFISH HEART

Without defensiveness, I can love others with “agape love” in a **deeper** and **more genuine** way from the heart. To love in this way is to simply **desire genuine good** for the people I am relating with. My **feelings may object** and even at times my **logical brain may protest**, but I know that as a believer **I am to love** in this way. (*John 13:34-35*)

BEING LOVED PERFECTLY FOR WHO I AM

I am able to love people with agape love **because that is how I am loved**. As I am **cared for**, I **care**. As I am **forgiven**, I **forgive**. As I am **valued**, I **value**. As **good is willed** for me, I **will good** for others. As I am **loved unconditionally**, I **love without condition**. As **sacrifices** have been made for me, I love others **sacrificially**. (*2 Corinthians 1:3-7*)

EXPERIENCING LARGER CIRCLES

As your “Circles of Sufficiency” **grow** you will experience more **peace, contentment, security** and **adventure** in your relationships. Peace and contentment come when you realize **you don’t require or earn anything** from your larger circles because you get that in your “Circle of Four”. Security comes when **your true identity is your operating identity**, even in a circle that does not feel sufficient. And you find adventure as you watch to see **what God is up to** in each circle you encounter throughout a day. Remember **He is always working in you, around you, and through you** in all your circles. (*Philippians 4:7, 11-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-8; Proverbs 3:26; Jeremiah 29:11-14*)

*Credit to Dallas Willard for concepts and phrases from **Renovation of the Heart***



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