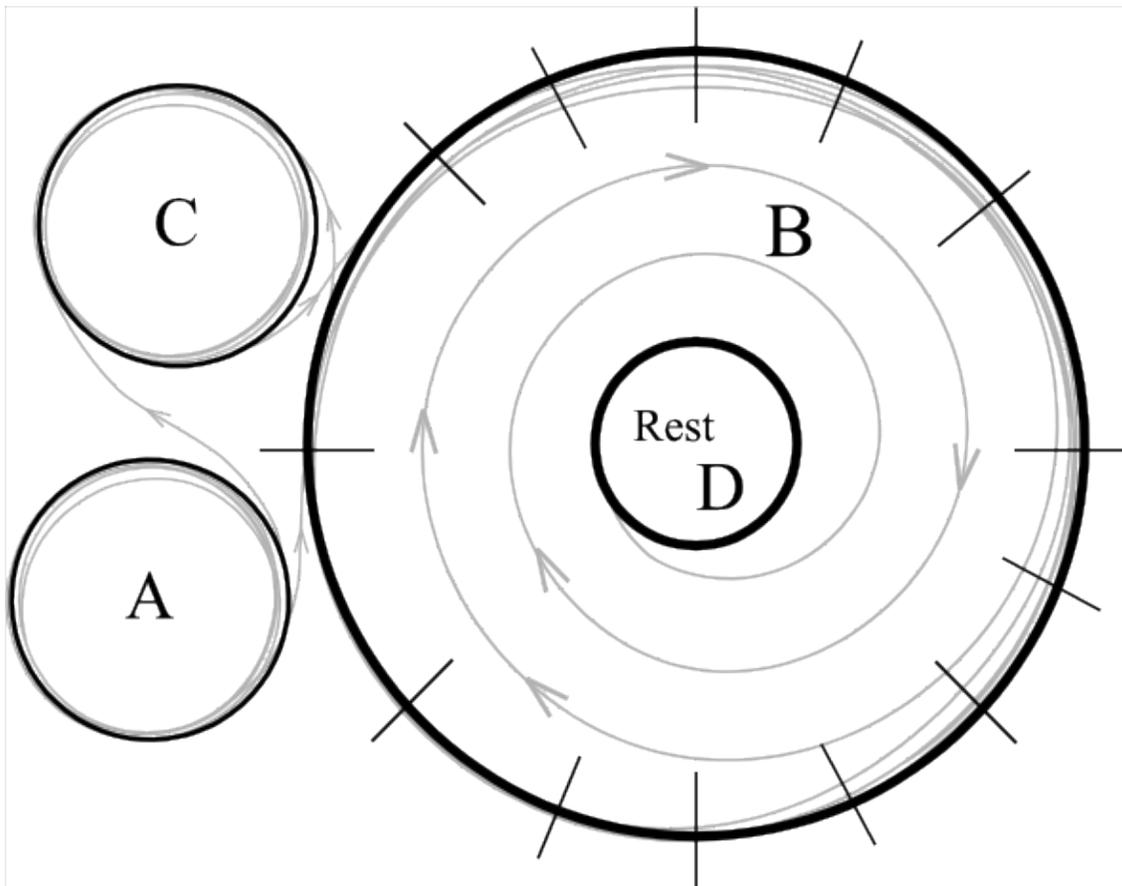


LAW OF THE CIRCLES

By Bob Warren

A diagram once popped into my mind that depicts the wide variety of doctrinal views permeating Christendom today. The diagram, containing four circles, Circles A, B, C, and D, describes (in graphic form) the four different types of believers that make up Christ's body. The diagram is titled, "Law of the Circles."



All believers start out in Circle A. Since Circle A is the beginning point, it is naturally shallow. Truths known by those in Circle A are: (1) They are saved (2) They will one day live with Christ in heaven (3) That God will supply their needs during their tenure on earth. Many believers are content with this knowledge and the joy of being saved. They are quite satisfied with the "milk of the word" (1Peter 2:2) and move on towards maturity (Eph./Heb). These believers go round and round in their small circle (Circle A), never graduating from the "milk" (1Peter 2:2) of the Word and fail to see the need for traveling into the larger circle, Circle B.

Some believers realize that more is available to the church saint than what Circle A offers.

They normally come to this place through growing weary of the shallowness of their understanding of the Scriptures, and in turn, God's heart or see something in the life of someone in Circle B or D that stirs them to action. When this weariness or desire for something deeper occurs, they venture into Circle B, not realizing what awaits them.

The transition to Circle B is fulfilled as they become exposed to the host of theological issues available (justification; the three types of sanctification; glorification; predestination; election; God's sovereignty; literal or allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures; eternal security; the identity of the believer; is the believer single or dual natured; what is the function of the Holy Spirit; has the church replaced the Jewish nation as God's chosen people; is the Rapture Biblical or the invention of man; will there be a literal one-thousand year reign of Christ on the earth, with the church reigning with Him; and the deity of Christ to name a few). This bombardment of varied doctrinal opinions is a rude awakening, especially after thinking upon the things which Circle A folks dwell. As a result of the challenges presented by Circle B, its occupants sometimes "feel" like giving up and moving from Circle B to Circle C (a circle described in more detail shortly). Why would Circle C be their only option after having traveled so few revolutions around Circle B? The "law of the circles" is such that Circle B folks can never return to Circle A due to their experiences in Circle B. After all, to forget that to which we have been exposed, even though many times we would like to, is impossible.

What keeps some of the Circle B folks from becoming weary and migrating into Circle C is the realization that Circle D, "*Sabbath rest*" (Hebrews 4:9-10), awaits those who stay the course (note that "*Rest*," Circle D, is at the center of Circle B). In other words, Circle D folks realize that the ultimate experience is living by God's very life—never again attempting to imitate God through rules and regulations as Circle A and Circle C folks normally do. They are passionate

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about God's heart and will settle for nothing less than the "*rest*" Jesus demonstrated as He trained the twelve and bore the cross. Therefore, Circle D should be the ultimate goal for every New Testament believer, not staying in Circle A or living marginally in Circle B, and for sure not traveling into Circle C. Those who continue their relentless pursuit of truth will eventually reach Circle D.

What is so debilitating about Circle C? Circle A is bad enough, but Circle C folks live in a very hazardous place—having tasted just enough of Circle B to be dangerous. Their few revolutions around Circle B cause them to incorrectly conclude that the theological issues addressed by Circle B folks can't be understood. Thus, they give up on basing their theology on the full counsel of God's Word and flee for the hills, the hills being Circle C. This incorrect thinking also causes them to perceive Circle B and Circle D folks as wasting their time—as pursuing that which can be understood by God alone. In fact, some inhabitants of Circle C classify many of the theological truths that interest Circle B and Circle D folks as the "*secret things*" (Deuteronomy 29:29) of God (things that only God can understand)—when in essence they are "*things*" that God reveals (Deuteronomy 29:29) to the passionate heart. Consequently, Circle C folks improperly classify many of Circle B and Circle D folks' interests as "mystery" and, therefore, cease pursuing truth that could rectify their inappropriate perception of the sovereign God Who reigns.

Some in Circle C could be called marginal Christians due to their lack of zeal or passion for truth. Perhaps they have become disillusioned with inconsistencies seen in other Circle C believers and abandoned pursuit of anything deeper. Many are discouraged from pursuing life in Circle B and Circle D by the doctrinal positions conveyed by others in Circle C. Those whose faith is based upon religious performance, but lack abundant life or relationship with Jesus also find themselves in this circle.

Just as Circle A folks sometimes meet Circle B and Circle D folks, Circle A folks meet Circle

C folks as well. After all, these four circles (A, B, C, and D) inundate Christendom, making it impossible to avoid intersecting with folks from these circles. Many times Circle A folks, however, instead of listening intently to Circle B and Circle D folks, buy as truth the theology of Circle C folks and move there instead. The sad part is that they migrate in that direction without once setting foot in Circle B, because they accept as truth the belief system of the person (or persons) living in Circle C. An epidemic of this scenario is occurring this very day, which has resulted in a crisis within Christendom of appalling magnitude. Many, and I emphasize “many,” are content to get “saved” and stay in Circle A, viewing those who are in pursuit of the deeper things of God (Circle B and Circle D folks) as wasting their time. Thus, Circle C has become the more favorable option to those who inhabit Circle A, that is, if and when they desire to venture outside the shallowness of their circle.

My question is this: Do you desire to live in the big circle, Circle B, with the goal of someday being mature enough to enter Circle D, “*Sabbath rest*” (Hebrews 4:9-10), a “*rest*” that allows you to live by Christ’s very life? Or are you content with the little circle, Circle A? If so, Circle C may be lurking, the inhabitants of which have given up on understanding some of the greatest truths available to the hungry heart. You can migrate to Circle C, but in my opinion you will make the mistake of a lifetime. The choice is yours.

One final thought—a wonderful thought indeed; the “Law of the Circles” allows Circle C folks to reenter Circle B, and in turn, pursue Circle D. This normally occurs when Circle C folks become weary of the contradictions and unsettled doctrinal issues that inundate Circle C. It takes much courage to cut ties and make the transition, but again, the choice is yours.

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