

Stewardship of Relationships

We can view the world through two sets of lenses.



One lens is the people with whom you interact on a regular basis – coworkers, neighbors, classmates, family, friends. These are people you could get a hold of if you want to.

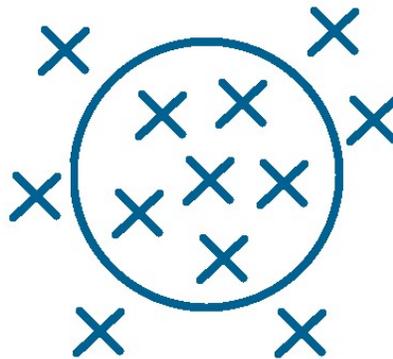


The other lens is every people, tongue, tribe, and nation. You do not interact with these people on a regular basis and maybe you don't have anything in common with them.

Here we will focus on the people you interact with on a regular basis.

Stewardship of Relationships

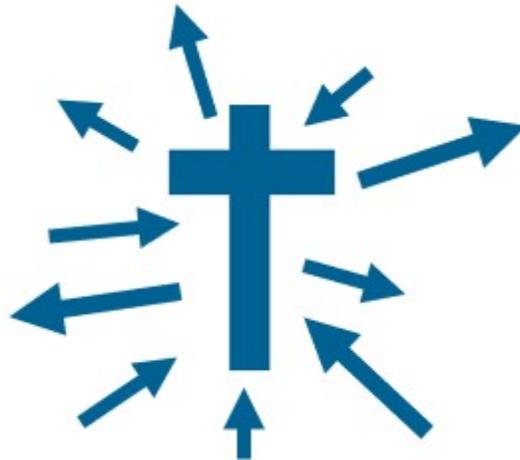
There are different ways we could view those in our relationship circles. One way is to think of them as divided into two groups: those inside the kingdom (believers) and those outside the kingdom (unbelievers). This could be called a bounded set, with the circle representing the kingdom:



Bounded Set

This is a helpful way to view reality, because it emphasizes those who are lost, and it prioritizes those outside the kingdom. Jesus told the story of the shepherd who left the 99 sheep in the fold and went looking for the one lost sheep. Saving the lost is important to God.

It is helpful, though, to supplement that view with a centered set. These are not points but vectors, or rays. Some are pointed toward the center and some are pointed away from the center.



Centered Set

Those arrows pointed towards the center are in the kingdom, those pointed away are not in the kingdom. Being in the kingdom means you are pointed towards Christ. He is your Lord and the most important thing in your life. He is the one you are living for. That determines if you are in the kingdom or not.

The direction determines if you are in the set. The magnitude determines the passion with which you are either pursuing Christ or pursuing something else.

Jesus said those who are forgiven much love much. We are all familiar with people who had a terrible background then God saves them. They are passionate for loving and pursuing God. This person would have a long ray. There are other people who follow Christ, but they don't seem passionate, they almost seem lukewarm. They would have a very short ray representing their lives.

You could have a ray that is close to the cross but pointed away from it. They may think they are saved because they are in the church. They are pursuing other things, not Christ.

This helps in thinking about our relationships. We should work both with those not in the kingdom **and** with those who are in the kingdom. If people are pointed away from him, we want to turn them towards Christ. If they are pointed towards Christ, we want to help increase their passion for Christ and increase the

magnitude of their vector. Every time we come in contact with someone, the question is, are we spurring them on to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). Are we encouraging them in their faith and drawing them closer to God?

Even if someone is far more mature than I am, spiritually, they still need my encouragement. No one loves God with all of their heart, soul, and strength all of the time, every day.

We need to not only be concerned with drawing people to Christ, but also with helping them to follow him more completely. This is especially a factor with people we relate to on a regular basis.

List of 100

Jesus told a story of a selfish rich man - arrogant in life and now being punished. The rich man begged.

Read Luke 16:19-31

Question: As the rich man was in torment, what were his top concerns?

Read John 1:37-42

Question: What was Andrew's first response after finding Christ?

This pattern is throughout the New Testament – people respond to Jesus by telling the people they know. The people we know are placed in our lives because God loves us and wants us to love them. We need to be good stewards of those relationships with love and patience and persistence.

These are our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and more - people we've known all our lives, people we've just met. This is the way God's Story travels FASTEST. We love and care about these people because we know them already. It's natural.

Being faithful with the people God has already put in our lives is a great first step in multiplying disciples. And it can start with the simple step of making a list.

Here's how - Write a list of 100 people you already know. Break that list into 3 categories:

- Those who follow Jesus.
- Those who don't follow Jesus.
- Those who you're not sure whether they follow or not.

For the followers - you can equip and encourage them to be more fruitful and faithful.

For the non-followers - you can learn how to share and introduce them to a loving God.

For those who you're not sure - you can learn to invest your time and learn more.

Once you have created a list, you can refer back to the list to be intentional about making opportunities with the people on the list and being a good steward of the relationships that God has put into your life.

Make it a habit to pray daily or weekly for these people. Ask God to save them or give them a passion to make disciples that make disciples and join the movement. You'll find that as you pray God will begin to open doors for you to speak to them and to others. God will bring these people to your mind as you pray to Him in the third 3rd each week in your group. This list will also be helpful to you in your CHAT group.