Understanding your circle of influence is key to evangelism. The word evangelism is a combination of three words:

- Ev (Good News)—the message
- Angel—the messenger
- Ism—the method

A good example of this and how it affects your circle of influence is found in 2 Corinthians 10:2-17:

“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing
themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men’s labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment. 17 But “he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.”

Notice how Paul uses the words measure and sphere. These words pertain to your circle or sphere of influence. In this passage, Paul points out some serious areas of concern.

1. “I” trouble will ruin your circle of influence

Verse 12 states: “For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise”

No one wants to listen to a “know-it-all”. The word measure is your circle or sphere of influence. When you measure your influence
over others by what you say, what you do and who you are, then Paul politely says—“You’re not wise”.

A good example of this is the self-proclaimed expert. What is an expert? _______________________________________

Why do many act this way? ________________________

What harm can it do to the influence of the church in the community and in the body of Christ? _______________________

2. We will be responsible for the circle of influence God gives us. (vs. 13-14)

We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;

This passage will remind you of the parable of the talents. Read Matthew 25:14-30.

What did God appoint each servant?

What did each one do?

Who and how did each expand their circle of influence._____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

What does God give each of us in our circle of influence? __
What can we do with it? ________________________________

How is this different from the self-righteous person? ______

Consider this song by Ruth Caruth:

“Softly we’re turning life’s daily pages, swiftly the hours are changing to years; how are we using God’s golden moments? Shall we reap glory? Shall we reap tears? Into our hands the gospel is given, into our hands is given the light, Haste, let us carry God’s precious message, guiding the erring back to the right.”

How do we expand our circle of influence? (vs. 15-18)

15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men’s labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment. 17 But “he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.”

What 3 things enlarge our circle of influence?

1.
2.
3.
CORE MEASURE #2
YOUR JUDGEMENT

“Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you”

1. Judgement is vital to your circle of influence
2. Everyone has to make judgements every day
3. What does Jesus mean by judgement?
   a. Human judgement--3 And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you
say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

What is Human Judgement?

What are human judgements?

b. Divine judgement--6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

What happens when you use divine judgment by human standards?

4. How do you obtain divine judgment?

a. Ask, and it will be given to you;__________________________

b. seek, and you will find;

__________________________

c. knock, and it will be opened unto you__________________________
d. "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

e. Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Learn to judge as_________________________________________

5. How does your judgment affect your circle of influence?
________________________________________________________

6. What does James 2:12-13 tell us about judgement?

I DREW MY CIRCLE

When I first became a member of the Lord’s church my circle was very big...for it included all, who like myself, believed and had been baptized. I was happy in this thought, that my Brethren were many... But!! Having
a keen and observant mind, I soon learned that many of my Brethren were erring. So I thought it not good, to tolerate any within my circle, except those, who like myself, were right on all points of Doctrine and Practice. Also some Brethren made mistakes and sinned.

What could I do? I had to do something! So I drew a circle around me and my true friends, ..and we left all others outside!!

My true friends that I had included in my new circle were all as righteous as ME....But!! To my great surprise, I soon observed that some of those within my circle were self righteous, proud, jealous, and unforgiving. So in righteous indignation, I drew another circle around myself, and I left all the sinners and publicans outside, including all those with liberal ideas about loving your Brother. My new circle now really did embrace only those as righteous, and as Christ-like, and as perfect, and as humble as me, toward all my fellows. But.!! I heard some very ugly rumors about some of my Brethren. I saw then, that some of them were very worldly minded. Their thoughts did seem constantly to be on things of a worldly nature. They drank coffee, when like me, they should only drink tea. So, duty bound, and to save my reputation, I had to draw a new
circle around myself. This time, only those who were as reputable and spiritual minded as me were left. Alas, I realized that only my family and I remained within my circle. I had a good family, but, to my surprise, eventually they argued with me, Why, they even called me legalistic. I have never been a factious man! But one must be steadfast. So, in strong determination, I did what every true Brother of Christ must do! I drew my circle again, which left....ONLY ME!
In Mark chapter 4, Jesus gave his disciples important instructions:

13 And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they
Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, 19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.” 21 Also He said to them, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? 22 For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” 24 Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25 For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

How is your Hearing?

Jesus speaks of the importance of what you hear as it relates to your circle of influence and what influences you.

The word for hearing in the Greek is where we get our English word “acoustics”. One definition of our English word is that it defines the quality of a room or building that determine how sound is transmitted. If you cannot understand what is being said, then you don’t really hear. If the sound is muffled, or if you are distracted, then you can’t listen to the words being spoken. But the word also implies a richness of sound and a distinctness of wording so that the hearer is clear about
the message. Or as Paul said in Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom”

In the Hebrew, the word for hear is Shema. The translation is: “to hear is to obey.” So “hearing” also means “obeying.” Therefore when Jesus made the reference to “having ears to hear”, he is basically saying the same thing written in James: 1 21-25:

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”

So when Jesus said take heed to what you hear, he puts a premium on what goes into your heart.

The first example he uses is the parable of the sower.

1. What is the key word in verse 13?
2. Who and what is a “wayside” hearer?
3. Who and what is a “stony ground” hearer?
4. Who and what is a “thorny” hearer?
5. Who and what is a “good ground” hearer?
The second part to this teaching is in verse 21-23:

“Also He said to them, “Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? 22 For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”

In the context, why does he use the example of the lamp?

Why does he conclude with his oft quoted statement in verse 23?

The final section of this teaching is in verses 24 and 25:

24 Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25 For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

The phrase “take heed” is of special importance. It comes from a single word that means “see, look at, understand, and to carefully look at.” Metaphorically, it means to see with the mind’s eye, or to understand – discern mentally, or perceive. This word is used 136 times from Matthew through Revelation. It is never to be used in reference to something casual or indifferent. Sometimes it accents understanding what is going on. Other times it places the stress on comprehending dangerous things to be avoided. Still other times it is seeing beneath the surface – perceiving or discerning. (taken from wotruth.com/COMMENTARIES)

And this is what you are to do with your hearing. It DOES make a difference what you hear!

To what do you listen each day?

What does the word measure mean?

How is it used hear?

What does verse 25 imply?
How will this teaching change our circle of influence.

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There was once a man named Nicholas who was an elder of the church. He lived in the fourth century in a place called Myra in Asia Minor (now called Turkey). He was a very rich man because his parents died when he was young and left him a lot of money. He was also a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it.

In the town, there was a poor man who had three daughters. He was so poor, he did not have enough money for a dowry, so his daughters couldn't get married. (A dowry is a sum of money paid to the bridegroom by the bride’s parents on the wedding day. This still happens in some countries, even today.) One night, Nicholas secretly dropped a bag of gold down the chimney and into the house (This meant that the oldest daughter was then able to be married.). The bag fell into a stocking that had been hung by the fire to dry! This was repeated later with the second daughter. Finally, determined to discover the person who had given him the money, the father secretly hid by the fire every evening until he caught Nicholas dropping in a bag of gold. Nicholas begged the man to not tell anyone what he had done, because he did not want to bring attention
to himself. But soon the news got out and when anyone received a secret gift, it was thought that maybe it was from Nicholas. Thus began the Legend of Santa Clause.

**Does it feel good to give?**

**What if you had the time and money where you spent your entire life giving?**

In Luke 6:38, Jesus tells us:

>“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

The word give is not a single act of kindness or a once a week occasion. It implies a constant habit; a lifestyle. Giving is life. Greed is death.

What is the reward for this kind of lifestyle?

This phrase is used for those who measure dry things, such as wheat, etc. By wanting the most for their money, they heap it into a measuring container, shake it together, press it and put it into a pile. Then they carry it home in the fold of the upper garment, bound together with their belt, and thus forming a pouch. A good example of this is in the book of Ruth.

The lesson? **You can’t out give God!**

But there is another lesson even more important.

>“For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”

So, how big is your measure? What is the core that determines your circle of influence? If you are as generous as Nicholas of Myra, then how large will your circle of influence be--Hundreds...Thousands...Millions...Billions?

And is your measure all about money?
Jesus expanded on this idea before he concluded with our text (Luke 6:27-36):

27 “But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. 28 To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also. And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask them back. 31 And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

32 “But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. 36 Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

So, how do you live to give according to Jesus?

1. What do you give your enemies (vs 28-29)?

2. What do you give to the oppressor (vs 29)?

3. What do you give to the undeserving (vs 30-31)?

4. By what measure do you use to give to others (32-35)?
a. Love
b. Doing good
c. lending
d. expectation

5. What do you give the ungrateful (vs 25-36)?
How do those in your circle of influence look at you now?
What do outsiders see in a generous, forgiving person? Life or death
How can this change the way outsiders view this church?
Can you really give to everyone who asks of you?
What is the reward for this kind of lifestyle?
CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

LESSON # 5

MINISTERS OF GRACE

We have been studying the use of the word measure as it pertains to your circle of influence. You have been building your core to be a magnet for Christ. Already some around you are seeing a change. Now it’s time to learn about true ministry.

In Ephesians 4: 7-16, Paul says:

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. 8 Therefore He says:

“When He ascended on high,
He led captivity captive,
And gave gifts to men.”

9 (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.)
And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Notice how he begins this section of teaching:

7 But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

Grace is a gift. It is not only to be received but to be given. Grace is an important part of your measure or circle of influence. This grace however is not limited to your circle of influence. This is not your grace but Christ’s. His circle of influence is much greater. And it is important to expand your thinking accordingly.

8 Therefore He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men.” 9 (Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all
come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

How does this describe the measure Christ’s of circle of influence?

Whom does he “give” to equip us in our individual circle of influence?

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.

So, who are the ministers of the church of Christ?

How do these gifts solidify the church?

1.  
2.  
3.  
4.  
5.

When does this grace expand our circle of influence (vs 13)?

What does this mean? (Example: college graduate verses CEO)

How will this affect the outreach of each individual?

“but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies,
according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love."

How does the grace of Christ help each one of us to "grow up"?
What comes only from grace?
How does this change the church?
The phrase: "every part does its share" is better translated
"according to the effective working of the measure of every part"
How important is the influence of every individual to the church?
Something that Jesus once said has puzzled many for centuries. In Matthew 17:20, He told his disciples:
“...for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”
Why did he tell this to his disciples when he could have done it for them? Because they needed to grow in ________. They needed to see the invisible and believe the impossible (Hebrews chapter 11).

In Romans 12:3-8, Paul tells us:
3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought
to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

The lead statement is in verse 3, where “God has dealt to each one a measure of faith”. When Jesus told his disciples to cast out demons, he was giving them a measure or circle of influence (those possessed by demons) with the ability to exercise that power. All they needed was faith. It was an important lesson for them to learn. Jesus gives us our circle or measure in which to exercise our faith. The ability to exercise these “gifts” comes from grace through faith. And that faith is expanded through the continued study and practice of the word of God (Romans 10:17).

Once we understand this great responsibility and privilege, it should cause us to be humbled and not to: __________________________________( vs 3)

What is another example of this? (Numbers 13)

______________________________________________________________________________

How does this apply today?

______________________________________________________________________________

Do we all have the same function in the church? (vs. 4)_____Why?

(vs.5)_________________________________________________________________________

What are some of the gifts given to individuals?

______________________________________________________________________________

How do we receive these gifts?

______________________________________________________________________________
What does the phrase “in proportion to our faith “have to do with all these gifts?

Can a person be gifted with more than one of these? How?

List the gifts and where faith can take them