

Circle of Faith – Week 6: The Divine Blueprint

I. Introduction: The Myth of the Mountain

We often treat spiritual growth like climbing a mountain. We imagine new believers at the bottom and "mature" Christians sitting at the top, looking down on everyone else. But religion builds ladders; Jesus built an ecosystem.

In the Kingdom of God, discipleship is not a ladder—it is a circle. Everything points to the beginning, and the beginning points to the end. It is a living lifecycle where nobody gets to settle into passive consumerism, nobody gets to hide in holy huddles, and nobody gets to perform for applause.

Today, we look at the complete lifecycle of faith—the caterpillar, the cocoon, and the butterfly—to see how Win, Equip, Deploy and Reach Out, Lift Up, Connect work together as one active, moving engine.

But I want you to hear me clearly: this lifecycle is not just a cute biological illustration, and it is not human philosophy. Long before caterpillars spun cocoons, God etched this exact lifecycle of redemptive motion into the earth, into biology, and into the sacred design of the Tabernacle itself. From the Old Covenant shadows to the person of Jesus Christ, God has always operated in a constant, unbroken arc of growth, transformation, and life-producing motion.

II. The Outer Court & The Caterpillar: WIN → REACH OUT

1. The Divine Blueprint: The Outer Court of Hunger and Sacrifice

When God gave Moses the plans for the Tabernacle, He started at the perimeter—the Outer Court.

The Outer Court was defined by two massive physical objects: the Brazen Altar where blood sacrifices were made, and the Laver of Water where ceremonial washings took place. It was the entry point of salvation. It was noisy, active, and accessible. It was where a person arrived aware of their spiritual need, seeking mercy, and hungry for cleansing.

This is the divine blueprint of WIN / REACH OUT.

In nature, God mirrored this in the caterpillar. A newly hatched caterpillar enters the world with one defining characteristic: an insatiable, biological hunger. It is born to consume.

In the Kingdom, a brand-new believer arrives in the "Outer Court" with that same holy appetite. They have been born again by the Spirit of God (*John 3:3*) and crave the pure milk of the Word—"as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (*1 Peter 2:2*).

They are hungry for truth, hungry for grace, hungry for life, and encountering their High Priest. A church that is Missionally Minded (Reach Out) is constantly maintaining an Outer Court—a place where spiritual seekers can arrive, feast on the Word, and encounter the sacrifice of Jesus.

2. The Warning: The Trap of the Outer Court

Under the Old Covenant, the law kept the common worshiper limited to the Outer Court. They could bring their sacrifice to the altar, but they could never step inside the tent. They were completely dependent on the high priest to go deeper for them.

The tragedy of modern discipleship is that millions of Christians choose to live their entire lives trapped in the Outer Court. They stay stuck in "feeding mode" for decades, relying on pastors to carry their spiritual relationship with God rather than going past the entrance of the Outer Court.

As the writer of Hebrews warns:

Hebrews 5:12–14 *"For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food..."*

3. The Toxic Caterpillar

If a believer stays comfortable in perpetual consumption, ungodly traits grow instead of faith.

In nature, certain caterpillars that consume endlessly without ever spinning a cocoon carry sharp spines, toxins, and venom. Spiritually, a Christian who spends years in the Outer Court consuming sermons without ever surrendering to deep inner transformation becomes toxic. They carry bitterness, offense, gossip, and unforgiveness. Instead of drawing people to Jesus, their un-sanctified attitude pushes people away. They destroy what is meant to feed them.

God never designed us to camp out in the Outer Court. The Outer Court is where life begins, not where it settles. We've been invited deeper into the presence and relationship with Jesus.

III. The Inner Court & The Cocoon: EQUIP → LIFT UP

1. Moving Inside: We Are the Tent

To move from consumer to Kingdom servant, you must step past the veil of the Outer Court and enter the Holy Place—the Inner Court. It is the uncomfortable middle where old things die.

This is where the transition from Old Covenant shadow to New Covenant reality explodes. In the Old Testament, only consecrated priests could step into the Holy Place to trim the lamps on the Golden Lampstand, burn incense at the Golden Altar, and arrange the Showbread. The sacrifice was brought inside the tent to be processed. **Under the New Covenant, you are the tent now.**

The cocoon is the biological manifestation of the Inner Court—the sacred, hidden place of sanctification where old habits, toxic character traits, and selfish ambitions come to die. Inside the chrysalis, a caterpillar doesn't just put on wings; it completely liquefies. **(Galatians 2:20)**

Everything it used to be dissolves in the dark. It dies to self so it can be made into what God created it to be. It is set apart for divine purpose. So it is with us in the Holy Place/Inner Court.

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

This is EQUIP / LIFT UP. Through intentional compassion, we walk with disciples into the quiet, uncomfortable spaces of heart-renewal. In the Inner Court, the Holy Spirit dissolves our old nature and forms Christ in us. Once that liquefying work of grace happens in your heart, you can never go back to being satisfied crawling on the ground.

2. The Warning: Don't Camp at the Altar

However, the Inner Court carries a sharp warning: sanctification is a process of preparation, not a permanent hiding place.

If a caterpillar stays in the chrysalis forever, it doesn't stay safe—it rots. The cocoon becomes a tomb instead of a womb. We must not camp at the altar just because we love the comfort of God's presence. Sanctification sets us apart for Kingdom assignment. **Be willing to emerge.**

3. The Pattern of Jesus at Cana

Look at Jesus in John 2. He went to a wedding at Cana after emerging from 40 days in the wilderness—His own secret place of fasting, testing, and alignment with the Father (*Matthew 4:1-11*).

He was equipped in secret so that when a real-world need arose at the wedding, He was ready to release His power (*John 2:1-11*). Sanctification in the wilderness was His preparation for deployment. We don't hide in the cocoon; we let God equip us so we are ready when the call comes.

4. The Boy & The Butterfly: Strength in the Struggle

The spiritual strength required to step into your assignment is developed entirely in the struggle of the Inner Court.

Think of the young boy who found a caterpillar, watched it spin a cocoon, and saw it struggling to squeeze out. Feeling sorry for it, he used scissors to snip the opening of the cocoon to make it easy. Two days later, the butterfly died. His father explained:

"Son, compassion without wisdom can be fatal. The butterfly needed to struggle and fight its way out of that dark cocoon to push fluid into its wings and gain the strength required to survive. Without the struggle, there is no strength."

We must endure the struggle of surrender, repentance, and mind-renewal. That struggle in the Inner Court builds the spiritual muscle needed to carry Kingdom authority out into the world. We need to take the necessary time to let God cleanse our temple of all that doesn't belong and sanctify us to be set apart for His sacred use in the kingdom and effective witnesses in the world.

IV. The Holy of Holies & The Butterfly: DEPLOY → CONNECT

1. The Ark of the Covenant: Shadows Fulfilled in Jesus

When the butterfly breaks free from the cocoon, it steps into a completely new dimension of existence: total freedom, mobility, height, and purpose.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*

This is the Most Holy Place—the Holy of Holies—the innermost sanctuary of God's glory.

Under the Old Covenant, the Holy of Holies was dark, silent, and separated by a massive, thick veil. Inside sat a single object: the Ark of the Covenant, covered by the Mercy Seat.

Look closely at what God placed inside that Ark, because every piece was a divine blueprint proving that God's plan has always been a constant, living cycle pointing directly to Jesus:

- **The Golden Pot of Manna:** This was God's divine provision to sustain Israel in the desert, but it pointed to Jesus as the Bread of Life come down from heaven who satisfies our deepest eternal hunger. He is the Living Water flowing from the rock—and whoever eats of this Bread and drinks of this Water will never hunger or thirst again.
- **Aaron's Rod That Budded:** A dead, dry wooden stick that supernaturally sprouted, blossomed, and produced ripe almonds overnight pointed directly to the death and resurrection of Jesus. He was cut off from the land of the living and assigned a grave with the wicked, yet He rose from the dead by His own power and remains alive forevermore.
- **The Mercy Seat & The Law:** Under the Law, an earthly priest sprinkled blood on the mercy seat once a year to *atone*—to cover and bury sin for a time. But our Great High Priest, Jesus, took His shed blood to the everlasting Mercy Seat in heaven. He didn't just cover our sin; He redeemed us, removing our sin as if it never existed. And under this New Covenant, that blood is applied directly to our hearts, turning our very lives into the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

2. The Torn Veil and the Royal Priesthood

When Jesus breathed His last on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The presence was released to all who believe—not limited to certain people or place.

He satisfied the Law, finished the work, paid the ransom, and made every single one of us a Royal Priesthood (1 Peter 2:9).

The priest did not carry the physical artifacts out of the Tabernacle—they remained in the holy presence of God behind the veil. But when the priest stepped out, he carried the *effect* of God's presence and blood atonement back to the people.

Today, we don't carry Old Testament shadows; **we carry redemption—we carry Jesus.**

This is DEPLOY / CONNECT.

This completely closes the Kingdom Loop:

- **WIN:** Reaching out to the lost and hungry caterpillars in the Outer Court.
- **EQUIP:** Lifting up the disciple through the transformational dark of the Inner Court. Sanctification sets them apart for the sacred use of God in the His kingdom.
- **DEPLOY:** Connecting the butterfly back to the world as a Royal Priesthood carrying Jesus, planting seeds of the Word (*Luke 8:11*) to hatch the next generation.

3. Mission Over Performance: "As You Are Going"

The butterfly carries a warning: do not use spiritual gifts for personal platform or vanity. Butterflies are beautiful, but they do not exist for applause.

A butterfly does not emerge from the cocoon to put on a show or show off its beauty. In nature, a butterfly's singular biological mandate is reproduction and seed-dispersal. It carries pollen, plants life, and lays eggs in intentional environments where the next generation of life can hatch, be fed, and grow.

Spiritually, when you step out into the world, you carry Jesus Himself—His presence, His salvation, His healing, His deliverance, and His hope into your job, your family, your neighborhood, and your community so that He alone gets the glory.

In the Great Commission (*Matthew 28:19*), the command "Go" literally reads: "*As you are going...*"

The butterfly isn't flying aimlessly asking people to admire it. As it flies, it is on a mission—pollinating, multiplying, and releasing life everywhere it goes in everyday life.

V. Conclusion: The Ecosystem in Motion

This is not a mountain with steps to the top. It is a living, breathing circle of faith—a lifecycle of the kingdom.

- **Win, Equip, Deploy is not a three-step class you graduate from.**
- **Reach Out, Lift Up, Connect is not a temporary campaign.**

It is the permanent, redemptive ecosystem of the kingdom. It is the blueprint for the church.

No matter where you are in the circle of faith, just keep moving. We have all been made a royal priesthood because of Jesus. Together, we are all in constant motion in pursuit of our Great High Priest. Take what you have been given, wherever you are in the process, and take it into the world, giving away what you have received as a witness of the goodness of God. Amen.