

Perichoretic 'Hesed: *Covenant Keeping*

(See more at The Virtual Abbess, <http://abisomeone.blogspot.com>)

Perichoresis is that wonderful dance of mutual interpenetration without loss of distinct individuality, where the Father and Son are in one another through the power of the Spirit. It is into this Great Dance that we (all of the cosmos, actually) have been drawn by the finished work of Jesus, the Father's Eternal Son. Everything is now "In Christ"—who holds all things together. This is true whether we know it or not...whether we accept it or not. It is Reality. [Thanks to C. Baxter Kruger for the sharing the basic definition.]

cHesed is the attitudes and actions of perichoresis. It is the very steps of the dance. We learn them by dancing with Father, Son and Spirit. Their attitudes toward each other and us are revealed as we partner with them, as they lead us in the dance, as we relax and follow their lead. These attitudes of cHesed are gracious loving-kindness toward one another and manifest in specific actions: deliberate affection (love that submits), unmerited favor (grace that serves), and kindness mutually owed (mercy that leads). To follow Jesus' lead and dance the steps of gracious loving-kindness with him and the Father in the Spirit is to be "Like Christ". [Thanks to the late Mont Smith for his foundational work on cHesed!]

Perichoretic cHesed is the Great Dance in its fullness...the dance of covenant keeping. It is a covenant dance where everything depends on the very nature and character of God as Father, Son and Spirit. They dance the covenant faithfully with each other -- submitting, serving and leading according to the best interest of the Other--and have done so for Eternity...from before Creation. And by creating the Cosmos, they widened the scope of the dance so that we may join them. This is what it means to be "With Christ"—to know the love, grace and mercy of Father, Son and Spirit intimately and to dance the steps of submission, service and leading in step with them. When we are "With Christ", his faithful covenant keeping becomes ours. We cannot do it on our own, we do it with him. It's a gift we share, not a skill we hone. It is not about us...it is all about Jesus Christ and his relationship with the Father in the Spirit...and our amazing, miraculous inclusion in that relationship.

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Perichoretic 'Hesed, the motivations and actions of covenant keeping, is summarized below. [Thanks to Gary Chapman for the Five Love Languages!]

Motivated by **Love/Agape**, or *Deliberate Affection*

Perichoretic cHesed

Responds with ***Submission***:
Restraining my want to meet their need

Employing **all** the Love Languages:

Words of Affirmation
Affirm their EQUALITY

Quality Time
Consistently prioritize meaningful interactions

Acts of Service
Show them how to BE like Christ: Present

Gift Giving
Creatively supply their need for affection

Physical Touch
Touch that warms their heart

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Motivated by **Grace/Charis**, or *Unmerited Favor*

Responds with ***Service***:
Working for their best interest

Employing **all** the Love Languages:

Words of Affirmation
Affirm their WORTH

Quality Time
Consistently value meaningful interactions

Acts of Service
Show them how to DO what Christ would do: Help

Gift Giving
Creatively supply their need for attention

Physical Touch
Touch that heals their hurts

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Motivated by **Mercy/Eleos**, or *Kindness Mutually Owed*

Responds with ***Leading***:
Initiative that helps them succeed

Employing **all** the Love Languages:

Words of Affirmation
Affirm their ABILITY

Quality Time
Consistently initiate meaningful interactions

Acts of Service
*Show them how to OBEY like Christ did:
Do and say what you see and hear the Father doing and
saying—in and through the Spirit!*

Gift Giving
Creatively supply their need for support

Physical Touch
Touch that imparts courage to move out in faith