

## TOPIC 1

### Creating a Safe Place for Inquiry

#### Practical Teaching

James 1:2

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

What do we do when we find ourselves in a situation where there's nothing we can do?

You may not like what's happening right now and feel alone. However, you can go on social media or to church; everybody else is fine.

For you, it's like your entire world is crumbling.

Then, along comes James, Jesus's brother, with advice.

Honestly, it is insensitive. James doesn't know what's happening in my life and wants to give advice without hearing my story.

Regardless of how much we don't like what James says, we would be unwise not to take his instructions seriously.

Here is why.

This is James, Jesus' brother and the church leader in Jerusalem for about 30 years during the first century.

Things were not going well for the believers, who felt trapped between the powerful Temple and the dominant Roman Empire.

James was surrounded by and responsible for a community in crisis.

With all that going on, he tells them to consider it joy, and he tells us to consider it joy.

How can he say this without knowing the circumstances of my life? Trials and pure joy... give me a break!

When you pause and remember your relationship with Jesus, this testing of your faith determines its authenticity and helps you persevere.

You are discovering something about yourself that you could not discover any other way.

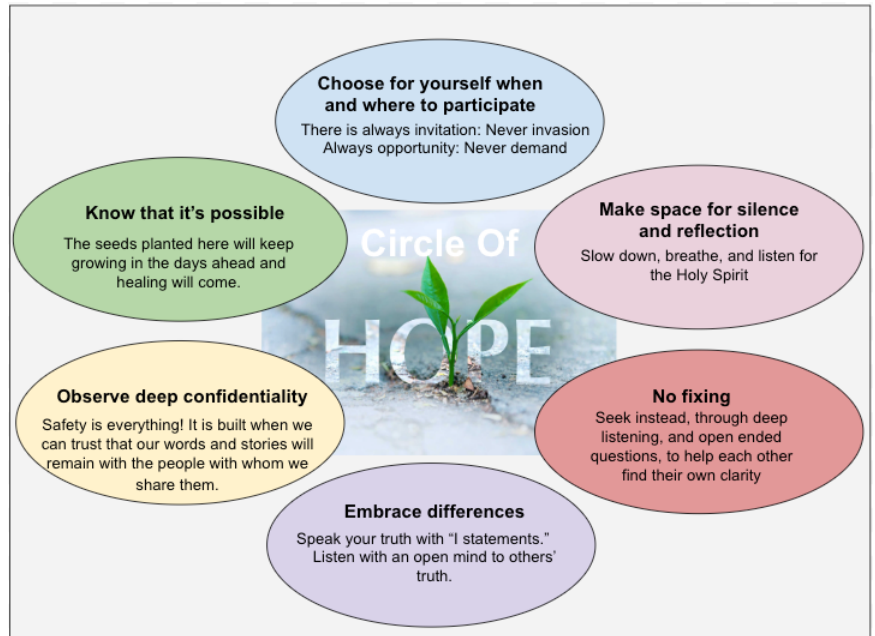
You're discovering something about your complex relationships with God and your children that you could not have discovered otherwise.

### Reinforcing the Boundaries and Guiding Principles

Before we begin our Circles of Hope discussion, it's important for everyone to review the following guiding principles and boundaries. These are essential for creating a safe and restorative space for those dealing with spiritual trauma.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Play the "long game" and trust God with the outcome.
- Use love to build bridges to Jesus; don't lose the relationship.
- You can love well without losing your convictions of faith.



### CIRCLE OF HOPE TOPIC

Are you struggling to find a safe place to start your journey of learning who to trust, what to believe, and how to navigate your relationship with God and your child's changing needs?