

TOPIC 2

Building Compassion and Community

Providential Relationships

1 Peter 1:6

In all this, you greatly rejoice, though now, for a little while, you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

Peter writes to Christians throughout the Roman Empire to comfort and encourage them. In his first letter, He assures them that their suffering was not God's judgment on them; they had done nothing wrong.

Not only did Peter try to explain or contextualize their suffering, but he also gave them something to do while they navigated the suffering that comes with simply following Jesus.

These were his instructions: while you're suffering, being mistreated, and being misunderstood, there's something you should do in the meantime, and there's something you should not do.

Don't circle the wagons.

While you're suffering and navigating the complexities of this, priority number one is to love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sins. Peter heard this from Jesus' lips.

Your response to suffering is a tool that God can use to draw others to Him.

In other words, there are others out there going through what you are, and you need to serve as a providential relationship for them.

As we follow Jesus on this new journey, let's not forget to offer hospitality to those who are not as far along the trail as we are.

You should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

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

How can we draw others who are grieving over what this might mean for their child's future to us, helping them know we can be trusted?