

SECTION 3

Choosing Our Focus

Private Disciplines

Matthew 7:3

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

We are the church. The church is not a place where everybody agrees on everything.

The church is a gathering of diverse, very imperfect people.

But there is one thing on which we all can agree.

We agree that God sent His Son into the world to forgive us of our sins and help us get beyond ourselves. In doing this, He has given us something so incredible that we are now responsible for giving it to one another: grace.

Not just grace but a transformative grace that can change lives.

Transformative grace is like oil in a machine; it enables people who are different to work together, be patient and understanding, and forgive each other.

Transformative grace allows people who aren't like each other to like each other.

Transformative grace is invisible. It is not even a thing until it is experienced, and it is only experienced within the context of relationships.

Extending grace to others presents us with the greatest opportunity to experience transformation in our relationships.

But extending this kind of grace to others is not easy, especially when we feel wounded or see a loved one being hurt.

Perhaps the analogy of removing the plank from your own eye is about transformative grace.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Do you understand why God chooses to extend transformative grace to you despite your shortcomings? Because He loves you with a love like no other. He loves your child, and He loves "them" with this same kind of love.

You will never get this right unless you remove the plank from your eye.

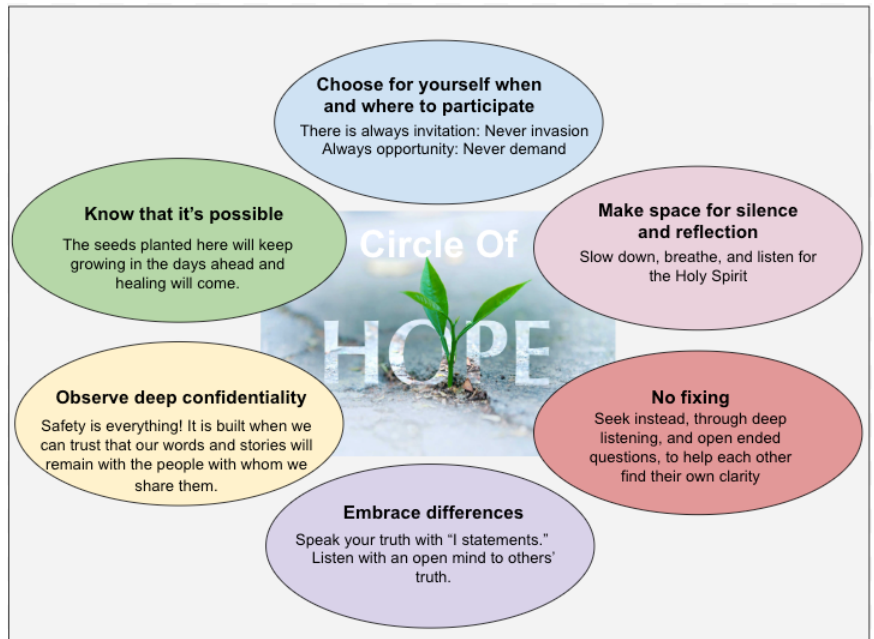
Choose to focus on the transformative grace that has been extended to you. Only then will you see clearly enough to know how to extend transformative grace to others who need it.

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

What would you choose to focus on if you were completely confident in God's transformative grace for your child?