

# Relationships in [a] Crisis

*A Godly Response to a Pandemic – Part 5*

## Series Overview

Proverbs 27:1 says, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth.” The COVID-19 outbreak certainly shows that this is true. When 2020 began, we had no idea we would face this new kind of challenge. Though it caught us by surprise, we know God was not surprised. He knew this would happen and will guide us through this challenging time.

This study guide is the second in a new Faith Baptist Bible study series called “A Godly Response to a Pandemic.” Each lesson will provide biblical teaching that enables us to think, feel, and live in a Christlike way throughout this pandemic experience.

Together, we’ll tackle topics like fear, anxiety, and loneliness. We’ll also examine our behavior as a church. Most importantly, we’ll learn about our loving, sovereign God who is all-knowing, almighty, always present, and trustworthy in every way.

## Series Guidelines

This series will continue throughout our period of “social isolation” in New York City. To participate, please take the following approach.

1. A new study guide will be provided each Saturday at Shepherd Thoughts. You can follow the guide online or download and print it as a PDF.
2. Use each guide for an in-home Bible study from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Sunday.
3. If you live with a Christian family, you can study together. If not, try studying together with another believer from Faith by phone or internet using a service like Facebook Video Chat, Google Hangouts, Skype, or Zoom.
4. For each study: (1) begin with prayer, (2) read the Scripture passage, (3) work through the study guide, then (4) end with prayer.
5. Then tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about the lesson. Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.
6. You can also leave comments on the blogsite at the end of the study guide page and Pastor Overmiller will respond by sometime Sunday.
7. As a bonus, memorize a verse or more from the passage and think about it throughout the week ahead.

## Lesson Introduction

Rahm Emmanuel, an American politician, says, “Never let a serious crisis go to waste. It's an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.” Regardless of his political views, whatever they may be, his perspective towards a crisis is brilliant. Rather

than view our current pandemic as an evil to endure, we should view it as an opportunity to explore how we can grow stronger together as a church.

Difficult circumstances can bring out the worst in us, but they can bring out the best in us, too, even in our relationships as Christians. Self-isolation tests our home relationships due to overexposure and increased contact. It also strains our church relationships outside the home due to underexposure and decreased contact with each other.

While these challenges are real, we don't have to capitulate to them. We should embrace our self-isolation as an opportunity to deepen and strengthen our relationships in ways we could not (or did not) do before. To help us seize this special opportunity, let's delve into some relationship guidance from God found in 1 Peter 3:8.

## **1 Peter 3:8**

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous.

## **Study Guide**

### **Consider the Background**

Guess who wrote 1 Peter. You're right if you said the Apostle Peter. Though technically he dictated the letter and a ministry partner named Silvanus wrote down what he said (1 Pet 1:1; 5:12).

To whom did Peter write (1 Pet 1:1)? Unlike many other NT letters, Peter didn't write this to a specific church or even to a specific person. He wrote to many Christians who were scattered abroad throughout the area we know as Northern Turkey today.

Why did Peter write this letter? Because the believers were going through a "fiery trial" of that was difficult to handle, widespread, and prolonged (1 Pet 4:12). In fact, "how to handle suffering" is a major theme of this book. The word *suffering* appears 17 times in 16 verses. Peter wanted to teach believers the value and place of suffering in the Christian life.

### **Ask Yourself Some Questions**

- How does our current situation resemble the situation of the believers to whom Peter wrote (1 Pet 1:1)?
- Can you find all 17 occurrences of the word *suffering* in 1 Peter?
- Select one or two of these occurrences and describe why they stand out to you. What does Peter say about our suffering that's important to understand?

### **Examine the Scripture**

Whenever we experience widespread, prolonged trials as Christians, we need to pay close attention to our relationships. As we have already noted, difficult trials can either bring out the best or the worst in us, especially in our relationships.

- In 1 Peter 2:13-17, we find guidance for what kinds of relationships?
- In 1 Peter 2:18-20 we find guidance for what kinds of relationships?
- In 1 Peter 2:13-17, we find guidance for what kinds of relationships?
- In 1 Peter 3:1-7, we find guidance for what kinds of relationships?

### **Ask Yourself Some Questions**

- How is our current trial challenging your attitude towards government?
- How is our current trial challenging your professional relationships?
- How is our current trial challenging your marriage and home relationships?

### **Examine the Scripture**

After giving biblical guidance for government, professional, and family relationships in hard times (1 Pet 2:18-3:7), Peter gave some general, overarching principles for all relationships, especially for our relationships with one another as “brothers” and sisters in Christ (1 Pet 3:8). He provides these principles as a list of five positive and proactive words that should describe the way we treat one another, especially in difficult times.

The first word is *one-minded*. It means to be “harmonious, like-minded, united in spirit, and sharing the same thoughts.”

### **Ask Yourself Some Questions**

- How does being scattered and isolated from one another challenge our harmony and united spirit as a church?
- What can you do to strengthen our harmony and like-mindedness during this difficult time?

### **Examine the Scripture**

The second word is *compassionate*. It means to be “sympathetic” as in feeling for yourself what another person is going through. This is an important concept to consider because we usually pay the most attention to how we feel about what we are going through as individuals, but we don’t often pay attention to how other people are feeling due to what they are going through.

### **Ask Yourself Some Questions**

- Why does social isolation make it difficult to be sympathetic to each other?
- Have you paused to consider what it must feel like to experience what some other people in our church are going through right now?
- Name a few members in the church who are facing some specific challenges. Imagine what it would be like to be “in their shoes” right now. Try to feel what they are feeling.
- Can you think of anyone in the church who you don’t know much about? How can you sympathize with them if you don’t know what they’re going through? What can you do to help yourself sympathize with them this week?

## Examine the Scripture

The third word is *brotherly love*. It means to view and treat your fellow believers with the kind of love and support that is normally reserved for biological siblings (see Prov 17:17).

### Ask Yourself Some Questions

- What does it mean to treat one another like biological siblings? What should biological siblings do for each other in hard times?
- What else can we learn from Peter about treating one another like brothers and sisters (1 Pet 2:17; 3:8; 5:9, 12)?

## Examine the Scripture

The fourth word is *tenderhearted*. It means to be “compassionate and have tender feelings” for one another. The opposite of this would be having negative, impatient, or harsh feelings about a fellow believer instead.

- Name some reasons why we might be tempted to have bad or negative feelings for one another right now.
- How can you increase your ability to have “tender” feelings for one another, especially those who may be more challenging to love?

## Examine the Scripture

The fifth word is *courteous*. It means to be “humble and lowly” in your attitude and approach towards others and to “think like a servant.” It’s interesting to know that non-believers in the first century viewed this concept in a negative light, but Peter taught Christians to embrace it instead.

### Ask Yourself Some Questions

- Why does a nonbeliever of this world look down on being humble and behaving like a servant towards others?
- Why should believers embrace this mindset and approach towards one another?
- Who in the church can you serve this week and how can you serve them?

## Conclusion

As we go through this extended COVID19 trial together, let’s embrace these five relationship principles to bring out the best in us, not the worst. Let’s follow the example of Christ and depend on him to enable us to treat one another the way that Peter taught. Let’s not let this serious crisis go to waste. Let’s seize it as an opportunity to strengthen our relationships more than ever before.

## Share Your Feedback

Now that you’ve finished this study, don’t forget to tune in early to the Faith Baptist Livestream on Facebook at 10:45 a.m. to post questions, feedback, and comments about

the lesson! Pastor Overmiller will respond to your feedback before the 11:00 a.m. service begins.