



WEEK 1:

Growth Group Opener:

**Have you ever stepped into a situation that was a complete unknown?
What did that feel like? How did you handle it?**

Read: Ruth 1-4 (on your own) & Ruth 1:1-22 as a group

As we read the first 7 verses of ch.1, what seems to be guiding the decisions of Elimelek and his family, and subsequently, Naomi?

Even though they are Jews, what does not seem to guide their decision making?

Though her words appear selfless, what might have also driven Naomi to try to send her daughters-in-law back to Moab and its false gods, so she could return alone to her hometown of Bethlehem?

What do v.16-18 tell us about Ruth's faith? How does it compare with what we see from Naomi?



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How does Naomi's perception at the beginning of v. 21 contrast with the reason they left Bethlehem in the first place?

Naomi, whose name means "pleasant," tells the people in Bethlehem to now call her "Mara," which means bitter. What does this tell us about her emotional and spiritual state?

Have you ever been so defeated that you, like Naomi, perhaps felt like you lost your identity and essentially became the emotion you were feeling? Share the circumstances with your group, if you feel comfortable.

When times are hard, do you tend to respond more like Naomi and push others away, or do you draw near to those you love, like Ruth? What shapes your response in those moments?

What can we learn about God from these passages?

Is there anything you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you to look at more closely?

Prayer:

Father, thank you for the hope and faithfulness that we see embodied in Ruth. Help us to cling to you like she clung to Naomi in uncertain and difficult times. Help us to trust that you will provide what we need in spite of how bad our circumstances may get, and that you are present with us through every moment.
In the name of Jesus, amen.

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