

## BE A BRINGER

*“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”*  
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

## PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

*“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....”* I Samuel 12:23a

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# Ruth

Loss, Love and Legacy

GROWTH GUIDE

Handout: 05/13/18

Study: 05/20/18

## When Bad Things Happen To God’s People

Every woman in the ancient Middle East was under the guardianship of a man as his daughter, his wife, or his mother. But not Naomi. She is one of the few most unfortunate widows to be left without a single male guardian in her family. Her father is never mentioned—her age indicates that he had probably died long ago. Her husband dies in a foreign land, and her only two sons follow him to the grave in their prime of life. She is destitute. And, because of her age, she has no hope of acquiring a guardian in the form of a husband and then a male heir—assuming, of course, that neither of her foreign daughters-in-law decides to remain with her.

What difference would that unlikely turn of events make? An adoptive daughter would be able to get a husband and bear a son, and that would restore her firmly back in a patriarchal family, with inheritance and legacy intact. But what are the odds of that? Slim . . . virtually nonexistent . . . hopeless. Especially when the hopes are riding on non-Jewish daughters of Moab.

When a woman married, she literally transferred her sense of identity to her husband’s family. She became a citizen of a different “clan” or tribe. Naomi tries to absolve her daughters-in-law of that responsibility—she was the only close family member left—because the law for providing them an heir cannot be fulfilled. Even if Naomi could have other sons through a second marriage—a most unlikely prospect at her age—Ruth and Orpah would have to wait about twenty years before bearing their children through levirate law. Elimelech’s line seems to be completely cut off. The only hope Ruth and Orpah have for descendants, according to Naomi, is to return to their original family.

Orpah agrees with this logic, but Ruth doesn’t. Or, if she does, she counts Naomi’s welfare as more important than her own sense of fulfillment. She has developed some level of affinity for Israel’s God and a remarkable level of devotion for her mother-in-law. In one of Scripture’s most beautiful statements of loyalty, she pledges to leave everything behind and remain a member of the family she married into. In effect, she renounces her Moabite ancestry and identifies herself with God’s chosen people.

Ruth and Orpah are pictures of the choices we all have to face: the familiar versus the unknown, security versus adventure, loving someone versus loving and being committed to someone. Or, to put it in terms of the gospel, simply admiring the family of God or choosing to stick with the family of God through thick and thin. And Ruth is held up as the nobler picture. Did she fear the wrath of Moab’s gods by choosing Israel’s God? Did she fear the discrimination and discomfort she might face in a foreign land? Was she tempted to seek a Moabite man so she could marry again? All we know is that she clung to Naomi— and her radical decision— and wouldn’t let go.

The testimony of the book of Ruth, and of the Bible as a whole, is that God is a master of impossible situations. No matter how hopeless any season of our life gets, redemption and restoration are held before us for our faith to embrace. God gives promises for the destitute. He is with the brokenhearted. He protects and delivers the widows—even those in impossible situations.

Source: A Walk Thru The Book of Ruth: Loyalty and Love

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## KEY VERSE

Ruth 1:16b

*“For wherever you go, I will go;  
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;  
Your people shall be my people,  
And your God, my God..” NKJV*

## WEEKLY READINGS

**Monday: Ruth 1:6-22**

### Introduction

1. What situation did Naomi and her daughters-in-law face?
2. Of the three women in this passage (Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth) who do you most relate to? Why?

**Tuesday: Ruth 1:6-10; Isaiah 40:25-31**

### Naomi's Appeal

3. What caused Naomi to return to Bethlehem (vs. 6)? How is this evidence of God at work in the midst of tragic circumstances?
4. Why do you think that Naomi asked her daughter-in-laws to return to their homes?

**Wednesday: Ruth 1:11-14; Proverbs 3:5-6**

### Orpah's Decision

5. Why do you think Orpah decided to take Naomi's advice and leave her?
6. Describe a time in your life where the logical choice may not have necessarily been the correct choice.

**Thursday: Ruth 1:15-18; Romans 12:9-16**

### Ruth's Commitment

7. What words or phrases in Ruth's response to Naomi stand out to you?
8. What did Ruth give up to go with Naomi to Bethlehem?
9. How would you describe your current commitment to your family? to God's people? to God?

**Friday: Ruth 1:19-22; Psalm 5:11-12**

### Naomi's Return

10. How was Naomi feeling as she returned home?
11. Why should times of struggle be times we turn to God instead of away from Him?
12. What is one area of your life where you need to trust God to provide?