

Being You Even When You Are Not Where You Should Be

Ruth Chapter 1

1. Read Ruth Chapter 1. What is your first thought on this story?

This is a very hard time for these women, and they obviously care deeply for one another.

2. Moab was a pagan nation, believing in many gods, not the one God. God had commanded his people not to marry among the pagan nations around them. How do you think a typical mother-in-law today would react if her child chose to marry someone outside of what they expected?

I think it would be difficult for me to be excited about my child marrying an atheist. I don't think I would be unkind, but I'm not sure if I would be as enthusiastic about pursuing a relationship with them. I should take lessons from Naomi!

3. What characteristics or qualities can you identify about Naomi?

Loving, confident in who she was, honest about how she was feeling, wanted what was best for her family and loved ones, she was willing to work and sacrifice (traveled long distances), loved by others

4. What do you think it was like for Naomi to live in this foreign land?

It was likely difficult to be in a different culture, away from your family and normal way of life. She may have been lonely, even before her husband died. She certainly was in very real danger of not being provided for, now that the men in her family were gone. I could imagine she might have felt fearful for her future.

5. It was quite a vow that Ruth made to Naomi in verses 16 and 17. What do you think motivated her to do this?

I think she saw that there was something more, something better that would come from this sacrifice and commitment. She seems drawn to Naomi, devoted to her. Usually you become devoted to people who have poured into you and loved you unconditionally.

Both Ruth and Orpah felt the same love toward Naomi, but they acted differently. We can settle for a feeling or act based on what God places on our hearts. "More like falling in love than something to believe in" comes to mind.

6. In verses 20-21 Naomi expresses some of her thoughts on her current situation. What is the significance of these statements? What message does it have for us?

One commentary I read said that to be a childless widow was to be among the lowest of the low, and left you totally dependent upon the kindness of others. Naomi had no family there with her, so this was quite the desperate situation for her.

Naomi spoke her feelings about her circumstances, but that did not stop her from following her heart and moving toward God and his people. Maybe we all can have a pity party at times. Life is sometimes awesome and sometimes hard. Perhaps this is encouragement to not get stuck in the pity party. Let others bring you out of your bitterness. Always let God rule your life and not your circumstances. It's ok

to be honest about your feelings, but it's not ok to let them determine your actions and turn you in a direction God didn't intend.