

## Study Questions

### Pt 1: RUTH – A Story of Redemption

#### Ruth 1

1. The backdrop to the story of Ruth is the period of the judges, which is recorded in the book of Judges right before Ruth. Read the last verse of Judges and reflect on what a society is like where “everyone did what was right in their own eyes.”
2. Look on a map (perhaps in the back of your Bible) at the relative locations of Judah and Moab. What was involved in traveling from one country to the other? Why might there have been food in a country that so closely borders Judah, and they were without?
3. They stayed in Moab ‘ten years’ (v. 4). It’s difficult to imagine a famine lasting that long. Think of the reasons they might have stayed so long in a foreign land.
4. One of the great questions in Ruth 1 is whether Elimelech and his family were acting in direct disobedience to God by leaving the country. Is it possible his death and the deaths of his sons were divine discipline on the family? Why or why not?
5. Naomi describes herself as ‘bitter’ in 1:20-21. She sees God as her enemy. Is there a time when you have felt that way? Why would she choose to view her losses in that way?
6. Why would Naomi have so strongly urged her daughters-in-law to go back? Think through the possible reasons for so strongly encouraging them to return.
7. Think through a time when you have had to decide if you were going to return to a place you had been, but were doing so empty-handed. Can you empathize with Naomi’s response?
8. It says in v. 18, *And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.* What kind of silence was it? Acceptance, unease, annoyance, irritation, frustration, resentment? Think about it.
9. What accounts for Ruth’s determined response in v. 16-17? How was it that Orpah, facing exactly the same circumstances and the same counsel, made an exactly opposite decision?
10. God’s ‘providence’ is sometimes defined as the way God directs the circumstances of the world, and of individual people in it. Note the ways God’s providence is beginning to be displayed in this first chapter.