



# RUTH

## Naomi Widowed

**I**n the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and the names of his two sons were Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. <sup>2</sup>But Moabite wives, the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years. <sup>3</sup>And both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

## Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi

<sup>4</sup>Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people, and given them food. <sup>5</sup>So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. <sup>6</sup>But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. <sup>7</sup>The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>8</sup>And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." <sup>9</sup>But Naomi said, "Turn back my daughters: why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? <sup>10</sup>Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, <sup>11</sup>would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me." <sup>12</sup>Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

## Naomi and Ruth Return

<sup>13</sup>And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods, return after your sister-in-law." <sup>14</sup>But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. You people shall be my people, and your God my God. <sup>15</sup>Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." <sup>16</sup>And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

<sup>17</sup>So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

## Ruth Meets Boaz

**2** Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. <sup>2</sup> And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." <sup>3</sup> So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. <sup>4</sup> And he beheld, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered, "The Lord bless you." <sup>5</sup> Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" <sup>6</sup> And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab." <sup>7</sup> She said, "Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers." <sup>8</sup> So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest." <sup>9</sup> Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. <sup>10</sup> Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." <sup>11</sup> Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" <sup>12</sup> But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before." <sup>13</sup> The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" <sup>14</sup> Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

<sup>15</sup> And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." <sup>16</sup> So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. <sup>17</sup> When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her." <sup>18</sup> And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her." <sup>19</sup> So she gleaned in the field until evening. <sup>20</sup> And it was about an ephah of barley. <sup>21</sup> Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. <sup>22</sup> And she took it up and went to her mother-in-law. <sup>23</sup> And she said to her, "Where did you glean, for you have gathered more than I?" <sup>24</sup> And she said, "I gleaned in the field of Boaz, who is of the clan of Elimelech."

5 Day Devotion on

# Ruth

for military wives  
struggling with loneliness

# *Introduction to Ruth: For Military Wives Struggling with Loneliness*

As a military wife, it sometimes feels like I'm in it for the ride as I follow my husband around the country and the world. It's as if I'm sitting in the passenger seat next to my husband as we're being towed by Uncle Sam. Where the military pulls him, so they pull me. I don't get to choose where we go and I know you don't either.

Why else would you be living in the middle of the desert in California? Or braving the snow on the East Coast when you're from the South? Or living halfway across the world away from everything and everyone you know?

Because of this constant change, this constant moving from place to place, loneliness lurks in the shadows. You may be feeling lonely because the only person you feel connected to is your husband. You may feel lonely because you're struggling to find friends or find a sense of settlement. Or you may be feeling lonely because, even though you've done pretty good at making friends and building a community, your husband's job has caused him to be distant and different.

How are you supposed to escape the loneliness and conquer the burden it brings?

I want to walk you through the life of Ruth in this devotion because if anyone has experienced the kind of loneliness military wives deal with, Ruth has. Ruth endured similar situations that a military wife goes through that can easily cause anyone to feel lonely. I want to reveal the parallel lifestyles while also looking at what she did to conquer her loneliness. As you read the passages and these devotions, I want you to keep in mind everything you've learned about who Jesus is: His character, His actions, and His sacrifice (this will make more sense towards the end).

Even if you're not a military wife, there are great principles and applications to anyone who may be struggling with loneliness.

I pray this devotional will help you see that you are not alone, that God is with you, that you are not the first to endure loneliness, and that God provides a way out of this season. Praise the Lord for His Word that gives us hope and encouragement!

You will receive Day One in your inbox in about an hour (I'm so sorry it's delayed...technical issues). So check your inbox later today to get started on this devotional! And if you have any questions or simply want to chat, feel free to email me at any time.

We're in this together!

*Brittany*





# Day One: Cling to God First, Hold Fast to Who You're Following Second

READ RUTH 1:1-18

Ruth the Moabite, along with Naomi, deals with tremendous loss. Naomi loses her husband and both her sons, while Ruth loses her husband, father-in-law, and brother-in-law. Orpah, Naomi's other daughter-in-law, also deals with tremendous loss, but ultimately decides to go back to her old life, customs, culture, family, and gods. Ruth, however, chooses to stay with Naomi despite having the freedom to return to her family.

What is Ruth giving up as she chooses to follow Naomi back to Israel from Moab? She's giving up comfort, certainty, and familiar companionship. The same things that you as a military wife gave up when you said, "I do." Because of your love for your husband, the man you desired to follow, you chose to give up your comfort and certainty of living in an area you knew with family and friends close by.

Even in the midst of knowing the cost of following Naomi, she understands what she will gain. Verse 14 says that "Ruth clung to her [Naomi]." But Ruth is not only clinging to Naomi. She is clinging first and foremost to God. Ruth understands that the God Naomi worships is the one true God. Ruth understands that if she went back to her family and old life, she would be choosing her cultures' gods over God Himself. Ruth wants to follow Naomi because she wants to follow God, regardless of the cost.

As Ruth ventures into Israel with Naomi, she's entering a culture and people that are told by God not to intermarry and involve themselves with Moabites and Canaanites. Ruth isn't just a foreigner, she's a detested and unclean outsider. But God never excludes those who want to come to Him. Ruth is undeniably lonely. She has no friends, no family besides Naomi, and she is unlike everyone else.

## Cling to God

Have you felt that as you move from place to place? Have you felt the weight of not having any friends, any community, any family other than your husband and possibly kids? Even in America, I have noticed the different "cultures" in every place we've lived. But we can learn from Ruth in how she handles the loneliness that comes from moving and living in different cultures.

Remember how Ruth clung to Naomi? Maybe you've clung to your husband as you move to another unknown place. I definitely have! It's easy to cling to the one you physically follow. But do you also remember who Ruth clung to first as she clung to Naomi? She clung to God! She didn't half heartedly follow Him. She didn't say "yes" to God, but keep Him at a distance just in case. No, she CLUNG to Him. She wrapped her arms around Him and held on tight.

That's what you need to do. As you deal with the loneliness from moving to a new everything, cling to God first as you cling to the man you're physically following. Run to Jesus with your heartache, with your desires, with your questions. Dive into His Word. Pray continually. Cling to Him. Because "He will never leave you or forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5b) and "He is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

### Action Step

Do a Bible word study on the word "cling" ("abide" is a great one too). Use this Bible Word Study Worksheet (also available in the Resources tab) to gain a better understanding of what it looks like to cling to God. Not sure what a Bible word study is? This post will give you a better understanding.

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## Day 2: Naomi Became Bitter, Ruth Didn't, And You Don't Have To Either

READ RUTH 1:19-22

After Naomi returned to Bethlehem among her friends, bitterness overwhelmed her as she realized what she had lost. It got to the point that she felt the Lord was against her and that she needed to change her name to reflect that. Though Naomi had faith in the Lord, she was mistaken to think that the Lord was against her.

Ruth, on the other hand, didn't allow such a harsh emotion to overcome her. We don't see her dwelling on the hurt from her loss to the point of becoming deeply bitter. As we saw yesterday, Ruth chose to cling to God who will protect her and provide for her. Therefore, she made no room for bitterness.

*make no room for bitterness*

Bitterness is not a light matter. It is not a feeling or emotion that's here one minute and gone the next. Bitterness, the longer you allow it to be a part of your life, roots deeper and stronger in your heart. Bitterness says that God got it wrong. Verse 21 reveals how Naomi thinks God messed up by letting her leave with a husband and two sons, and return with nothing. But just as she is busy thinking about such things, her bitterness is blinding her to the reality of what God is doing and how He is working. Naomi believes she came back to Israel "empty." But she came back with a prized possession that God is using greatly in His plan for the world's redemption.

Both Naomi and Ruth experienced tremendous loneliness. Naomi decided to allow her loneliness and her loss to harbor bitterness in her heart. However, there is no indication that Ruth harbored the same bitterness. Who are you going to choose to be like? Naomi, the one who chose to wallow in her loneliness and her emptiness, choosing to let bitterness sink in? Or Ruth, an outsider that trusts in the Lord and in His plan, and doesn't allow her heart to be ransacked by bitterness?

Whether Ruth made the conscious decision or not to keep bitterness from her heart, you have every opportunity to choose to trust God rather than blind and deceive yourself that bitterness is the better option, that God got it wrong. Allow your loneliness to drive you to cling to and rely on God. He has not messed up by allowing you to move to wherever you are with your husband. He is there with you, just as He was with Ruth and Naomi.

### Action Step

If you've been harboring bitterness in your heart, bring it to the feet of Jesus! Go into your room, close the door, and pray that God would remove the bitterness in your heart. Defeat bitterness with thanksgiving. Thank the Lord for all He has done for you. Write down 3 things you're thankful for each day.





# Day Three: Despite Your Loneliness, Push Fear Aside and Be Active: Part 1

## READ RUTH 2

Naomi and Ruth return during a very prosperous season for the nation. The barley harvest season had begun, meaning Ruth had means to provide for Naomi and herself. In Israeli law, God created protection for women like Ruth - a foreigner, a widow, and fatherless - by allowing them to glean from the fields after the harvesters had gone through (Deut. 24:19). Instead of Ruth choosing to dwell in sorrow, she put her fear aside to take advantage of this opportunity so that she and Naomi could have something to eat.

What could Ruth possibly fear? It seems as though she had nothing to fear, considering what God wrote into law for people like her. However, she put herself in situations where she could be harmed. She was a foreigner, a woman, and alone. Three things that made her incredibly vulnerable. Despite all this, she trusted in the God who brought her this far, knowing He would provide. But she also took action as she trusted; she put her foot through the open doors God provided. Naomi was too old for heavy labor, and they wouldn't receive free food without working for it.

*boldly walk through the open doors*

Are there fears that are holding you back from trusting in God's provision, even as you're struggling with loneliness, uncertainty, and new everything? I encourage you to lay those fears at the feet of Jesus, knowing that just as He wrote into law protection and provision back then, He will surely provide protection and provision for you now.

As a military wife, you will have to go out there, amidst all the new, all the uncertainty, and lack of knowing anyone, in order to receive the blessings God has for you. Just as He had the blessings in abundance of food for Ruth from Boaz, He will bless you as you actively take steps through the doors He has opened. It will look different for each military wife. Some may take a job. Some may find ways to get involved on base.

Don't allow your loneliness to keep you within the walls of your house and keep you from the blessings God has for you out there. Let Ruth be an encouragement to you to put aside whatever fears you may have and actively do things as you trust that God will provide for you and your family.

### Action Step

If you're not currently in a small group or Bible study, get involved in one! I have met so many wonderful Christian women who helped me in each duty station. If you don't have a small group, check the church you're attending to see if they have any. For Bible studies, I suggest either Bible Study Fellowship or PWOC (PWOC is an on base women's Bible study group - check to see if your location has a Facebook page).

# Day Four: Despite Your Loneliness, Push Fear Aside and Be Active: Part 2

## READ RUTH 3

At this point in Ruth's journey, she has dealt with loss, heartache, grief, loneliness, and fear. But as if she hasn't dealt with enough, she is confronted with more fear and more risk. The man whose fields she had been gleaning from took notice of her. It was more of an honorable notice than a romantic notice. Boaz learned about Ruth's situation, how she was actively providing for her mother-in-law (how many of us would actually do that???), and how she left everything she knew to come to Israel.

At the beginning of chapter 3, Naomi asked something of Ruth that would cause any of us to panic. She asked Ruth to propose to Boaz in the middle of the night. Naomi knew that Boaz could be their kinsmen redeemer.

A kinsmen redeemer is a man, a relative of the deceased husband, who would take the childless widow as well as the deceased husband's land, in order to father a son who would carry on the deceased husband's lineage and inheritance. In other words, he would redeem the family of their inheritance. Does this sound familiar? You and I have our own kinsmen redeemer - Jesus Christ!

*seek out friendships*

Ruth risked rejection, more heart ache, and any kind of reputation she had built to that point. But she didn't allow that to stop her from seeking out companionship that would be an answer to both her prayers and Naomi's.

Though you differ from Ruth in that you're not seeking out a husband (because you've already reeled one in), you are seeking out companionship in the form of friends. The same fears and risks apply here too. Fear of being rejected by other women in the military community, in the church community, in the work-place, etc. There's always a risk to actively going out and seeking friends. But if Ruth could lay aside her fears, her loneliness, and the risks for companionship, you can do the same. I'm not saying it's easy or fast, but in order for you to resolve this loneliness you're experiencing as a military wife, you have to actively seek companionship. The barley harvest lasted about 3 months. And it took Ruth those 3 months before she came to the point of proposing to Boaz. It will take time to find friends.

### Action Step

I encourage you to pray about where you should seek friends. Pray that God would bring you godly women right when you need them, and that you'd have the patience to wait. As great as it would be to just rely on your husband and your kids for companionship, they can't provide everything you need. You need godly women as friends as well. God will open the doors for you to find the exact friend He has for you, you just have to have the courage and the strength to lay aside your fears, your bitterness, and your loneliness to walk through those doors.

# Day Five: Your Kinsmen Redeemer at Your Side

## READ RUTH 4

God provides! For Ruth. For Naomi. For you. Ruth patiently waited for companionship, for a kinsmen redeemer. She was active as she waited, stepping through the open doors God provided her. Naomi's bitterness healed as she too waited for the Lord and realized the blessing He had in store for them. Good things were happening.

Boaz, in his integrity, accepts Ruth's proposal but tells her there is one closer relative who has first claim. Boaz didn't rest until the matter was resolved, as Naomi says at the end of chapter 3. This reveals Boaz's character in that he cared for Ruth and Naomi, he cared for those in need, and he had the integrity and the reliability to make sure they were cared for as soon as possible.

The other relative, not named in this passage, gave up his right to be kinsmen redeemer as he viewed the stakes were too high. He was ready to acquire Elimelek's land for his own. But as soon as he found out that he would also acquire Ruth - a Moabite - to extend Elimelek's inheritance and lineage, he thought only of himself and gave it up.

Again, Boaz didn't wait for anything! He had the elders of the land witness him become kinsmen redeemer for Naomi and Ruth, married Ruth, and they had a son. Ruth, once identified as a detested foreigner, an outsider, and a widow was now brought into a family - a family whose lineage led to Jesus Christ.

## *find healing in Christ*

Ruth obtained an earthly kinsmen redeemer that changed her life. We have obtained a heavenly kinsmen redeemer that has changed our life. God, through Boaz, healed Ruth and Naomi of their loneliness, their grief, and their destitution. In the same way, God, through Jesus Christ, has healed you! You were once apart from God, but now you've been redeemed.

Though you are struggling with loneliness as you maneuver your way through the military wife life, you have a kinsmen redeemer at your side to fill that longing for friends, for certainty, and for a sense of belonging. With Jesus, you will never actually be lonely. He is always there for you. As an added blessing, we have the ability to run to Him as we struggle to find friends and as we struggle to diminish our loneliness.

He will guide you. He will open doors for you. He will not turn away from you, just as Boaz didn't turn away from Ruth. He will love you, give you hope, and a lasting inheritance.

### Action Step

You have the Kings of kings as your kinsmen redeemer! Dwell on that. Act on that (as He opens doors). Wait on that (as He brings you answers).