

Read the first chapter of Ruth. The opening of Ruth shines like a candle into the darkness of the days of the Judges. While much of Israel was marked by rebellion and spiritual chaos, Ruth reminds us that God was still at work through ordinary people making everyday choices. A famine drove Elimelech and Naomi from Bethlehem into the foreign land of Moab, a decision that brought hardship, loss, and grief. What may have begun as a temporary move slowly became a settled life away from the land of promise. How often that same pattern unfolds in our own lives. In a season of hurt, disappointment, or struggle we move slowly away from the people of God and from wholehearted trust in Him. What begins as a temporary drift can become spiritual distance if we are not careful.

Yet even in the painful consequences of human choices, the providence of God quietly moves. Naomi lost her husband. Her sons married outside the faith and later died as well, leaving three widows facing an uncertain future. Naomi returned to Bethlehem carrying deep sorrow, even bitterness, believing the hand of the Lord had gone out against her. And still, beneath her grief, God was preparing redemption. Sometimes we cannot see the Lord's purpose while walking through suffering. Like Naomi, we may feel empty rather than full. But the first chapter of Ruth reminds us that God is often working most powerfully in seasons when His presence feels hardest to trace.

The turning point of the chapter comes through Ruth's courageous decision of faith. While Orpah returned to her people and her gods, Ruth clung to Naomi and declared, "Your people are my people, and your God, my God." This was more than loyalty to a mother-in-law; it was a wholehearted surrender to the One True God! Ruth left behind familiarity, false security, and deceptive beliefs to walk by faith into an unknown future. Her decision reminds us that following God is courageous! Faith means trusting God before we know how the story will end. Ruth could not see the blessings ahead, but she chose the Lord anyway, and choosing God is never the wrong choice.

As we reflect on this chapter, we are reminded that our decisions matter. Our choices can either draw us closer to the Lord or move us away from Him. Yet God's providence remains active, and His goodness pursues us, weaving His grace through human weakness and pain. In Ruth we are encouraged not only to trust God in uncertain seasons, but to commit ourselves fully to Him, even when the road ahead is unclear. The adventure of faith begins when we cling to God more tightly than we cling to the familiar, fear, or worldly wisdom.

Prayerfully consider the following this week: Are there areas in my life where discouragement or disappointment have slowly drawn me away from wholehearted trust in God? What comforts, fears, or familiar patterns might God be calling me to leave behind in order to follow Him more faithfully? How can I demonstrate the kind of loyal, courageous faith that Ruth showed in her commitment to God and to others?

Weekly Memory Verse:

"Then she arose to return from the land of Moab, because she had heard that the Lord had visited His people by giving them food."

Ruth 1:6

Weekly Affirmation:

**CHOOSING GOD IS
CHOOSING COURAGE!**

MAY 2026 GROWTH GOALS

- Read the Book of Ruth
- Watch the Bible Project video on Ruth (available on the website).
- Memorize one of the weekly memory verses.
- Consider a fast of any duration (8-24 hours). Replace your meal with prayer and Bible reading (see Daniel with questions).