







## **BIBLE EXPLORATION**

We're going to spend the next few minutes walking through a passage of Scripture together. You can use this model as a starting point for studying the Bible on your own. This method isn't the only way to read Scripture, but it is a helpful starting point if you're new to the Bible and a good refresher for those more familiar with Scripture.

**Leader:** *You can choose to go through the passage we've outlined below, or pick one yourself. The four-question model works on any passage of Scripture. You can even get creative with this time—pick several passages for the group to go through together, break everyone into small groups, and debrief as a large group. Do what best suits your group.*

We're going to use four questions to unpack the first chapter of the book of Ruth. The four questions are:

- What's happening in this passage?
- What about this passage was significant to the original audience?
- What does this passage teach us about the character of God and humans?
- How can we apply the timeless principles from this passage to our lives this week?

Before we get started, let's pray that God would speak to us through His Word during this time.

Let's begin by reading Ruth chapter 1. As we read, think about the first question, "What's happening in this passage?" Consider who the story is about, what events occur, where this takes place, and when.

**Leader:** *You can choose one person to read all twenty-two verses, or several readers. One format for four readers is: 1:1–5; 6–10; 11–18; 19–22.*

It's always a good idea to read the Bible in context, which is why we just read the entire first chapter. If we had just read one or two verses without knowing the rest of the story, we might have misunderstood what the passage is actually saying. **How did you feel about reading the entire first chapter? Was it difficult to follow? Surprisingly insightful? Why do you think that**

is?

The first question we answer is, “What’s happening in this passage?” This question involves simply observing what’s occurring in the verses.

**Who is this story about? What characters are introduced?** (Elimelek, Naomi, Mahlon, Kilion, Ruth, Orpah, God) **How are these characters related to each other?**

**What time period is this story set in?** (It’s set in the time of the judges.)

**Leader:** *For context on the time of the judges, read Judges 1–2 before meeting with your group. Take a moment to summarize what happened in the time of the judges. When they entered the Promised Land, the Israelites failed to completely conquer Canaan as God commanded and they fell to pagan gods. God judged them and the people cried out for help. God raised up judges to deliver Israel, but eventually Israel would fall again and the cycle continued.*

**What natural disaster happens at the beginning of the story?** (There’s a famine.) **What does Elimelek decide to do?** (He decides to move from Bethlehem to Moab.)

**What happens to all the men at the beginning of the story?** (They die.)

**Where are Ruth and Orpah from?** (They are from Moab.) **Where are the rest of the characters from?** (They are from Israel, specifically Bethlehem in Judah.)

**What does God do in verse 6? What does Naomi decide to do after hearing what God had done?**

**Who left Naomi? Why did she leave? Who stayed with Naomi?**

**What did Naomi name herself after returning to Bethlehem?** (She chose the name Mara.) **What does it mean?** (It means “bitter”.) **Why did she choose that name?** (She chose that name because in her eyes, God had dealt bitterly with her. She left full—with two sons and a husband—and returned empty.)

**At what time of year do Naomi and Ruth return to**









## **DEEPER WALK**

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**Leader:** *Encourage your group to pick at least one of the following suggested applications to put into practice this week. You may even invite them to circle the one they choose. Follow up at the beginning of the next session to see how it went.*

**Read:** Read chapters 4 and 5 from Mark’s book *Whisper*.

**Study:** Use the method discussed in this session to study the Bible this week. If you don’t know where to start, finish reading the book of Ruth. Read a chapter a day and pray for the Holy Spirit to speak.

**Memorize:** Pick one of the verses from this session to memorize this week. Write the verse on a card and put it where you’ll see it often and practice saying it multiple times a day.

**Discuss:** Sit down with Christians who are more mature in their faith than you this week. Ask them how Scripture has helped them grow closer to God and how they approach reading the Bible.

**Pray:** Ask God for a heart for His Word. Every time you open the Bible this week, pray for the Spirit to speak and awaken your heart to hear His voice.

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