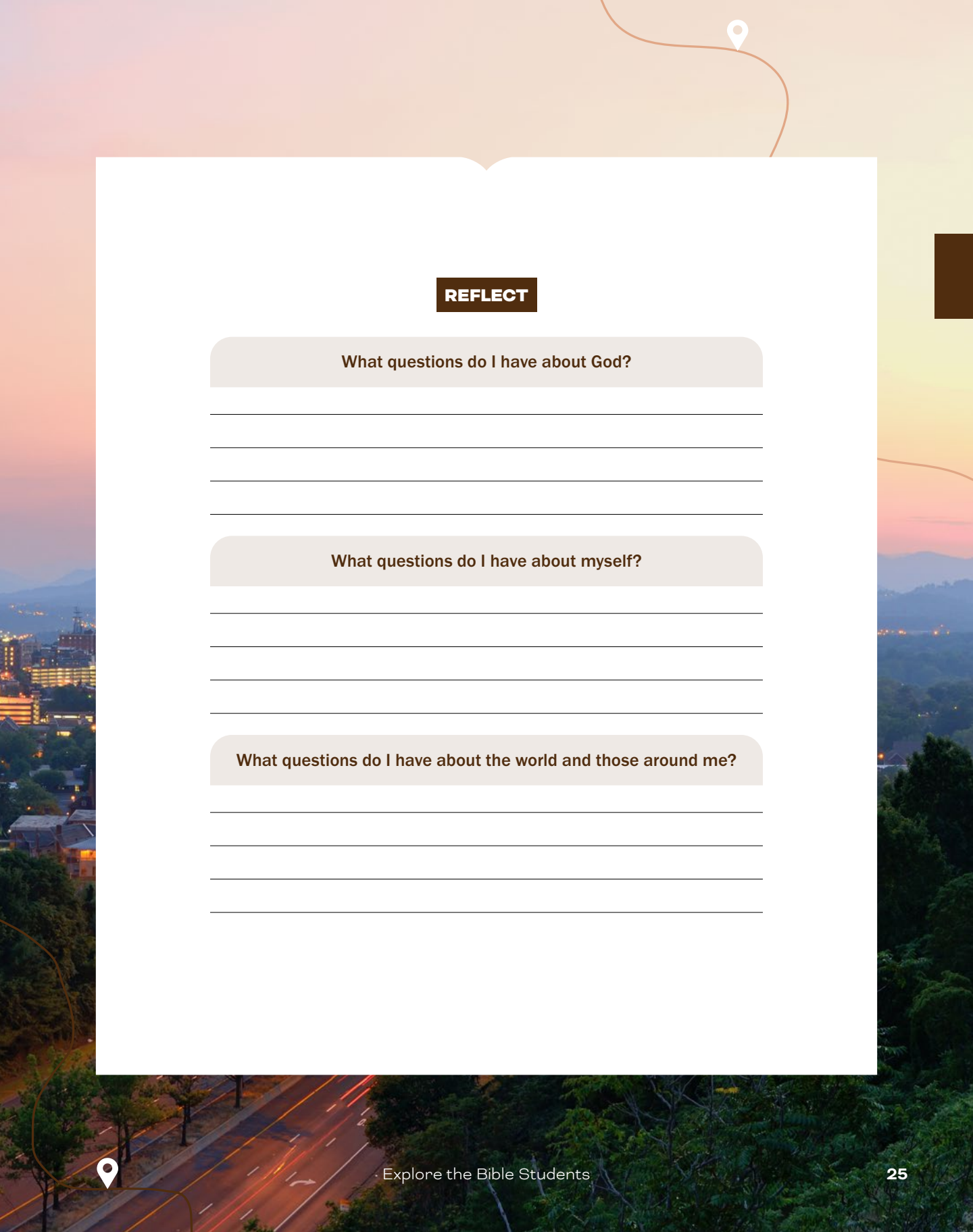


Session 03

Naomi's RETURN

CENTRAL TRUTH | The Lord is sovereign, and we are called to trust Him.

During the time of the judges in Israel, we get a picture of the sweetness of family and redemption in the story of Ruth. This week we will look specifically at Naomi, who left Judah with a husband and two sons in search of provision, later to return to her land and God with one daughter-in-law. When we examine this season of Naomi's life, and then begin to examine our own, there's a lot we can learn. We discover that grief and hope can co-exist, that community is essential to our walk, and most importantly, that the Lord is sovereign, and we are called to trust Him.



REFLECT

What questions do I have about God?

What questions do I have about myself?

What questions do I have about the world and those around me?

RUTH 1:6-13

⁶ She and her daughters-in-law set out to return from the territory of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the LORD had paid attention to his people's need by providing them food. ⁷ She left the place where she had been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah. ⁸ Naomi said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you as you have shown to the dead and to me." ⁹ May the LORD grant each of you rest in the house of a new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly. ¹⁰ They said to her, "We insist on returning with you to

your people." ¹¹ But Naomi replied, "Return home, my daughters. Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any more sons who could become your husbands? ¹² Return home, my daughters. Go on, for I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons, ¹³ would you be willing to wait for them to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying? No, my daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share, because the LORD's hand has turned against me."

RUTH 1:14-19

¹⁴ Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Follow your sister-in-law." ¹⁶ But Ruth replied: Don't plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and

there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me, and do so severely, if anything but death separates you and me. ¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped talking to her. ¹⁹ The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival and the local women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

RUTH 1:20-22

²⁰ "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara," she answered, "for the Almighty has made me very bitter. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has opposed me, and

the Almighty has afflicted me?" ²² So Naomi came back from the territory of Moab with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Day 01

JUDGES 2:14-19



Refer to page 5 for a description of the 7 Arrows of Bible Reading.

📍 READ & RESPOND

After Joshua died, the Israelites abandoned the Lord and forgot the works He had done for their ancestors. They lived in a chaotic cycle of sin where they would abandon the Lord and embrace sin; then the Lord would punish them by giving them over to their enemies. He'd then raise a judge to save them and lead them back to Him; the judge would die, and they'd abandon God for other gods again. The cycle continued for generations, and each generation became more wicked than the last. This cycle repeated itself seven times in the book of Judges. These generations of Israelites are a warning of the evil and brokenness that happens with spiritual amnesia, when just one generation forgets what the Lord has done.



What does this passage teach us about God's relationship with His people?



What does this passage tell us happens when people don't know the Lord? What modern "gods" do people abandon the Lord for today?



How does this passage encourage you to make sure the generation behind you knows the gospel?

📍 MEMORIZE

Write out **Ruth 1:16** on a notecard. Read the passage out loud five times. Next, read it in a whisper five times. Finally, say it in your head with your eyes closed five times.

📍 PRAY

Lord, forgive me when I forget You, when I put other "gods" of this world before You. Never let me forget You or Your works.

Day02

RUTH 1:6-13

📍 READ & RESPOND

Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were heading back to Judah from Moab after their husbands had died. Naomi and her husband, with their sons, had left Bethlehem for Moab because of a famine many years before. After their husbands' deaths, the three women went back to Judah because Naomi had heard that the Lord was providing food there. Naomi told both Ruth and Orpah to go back to their homes, find new husbands, and live their lives. In grief and bitterness, Naomi urged them to leave her because she believed the Lord had abandoned her. But, as we'll soon see, the Lord had not abandoned her at all but set her and Ruth on course to be a significant part of the lineage of David and of Jesus.

← Why was Naomi so insistent that Orpah and Ruth go back to their own families instead of staying with her?

↓ When life feels empty or bitter, why is our first instinct often to push people away?

↔ How can you show loyalty to someone when they are going through a season of grief or pushing you away?

📍 MEMORIZE

Write out **Ruth 1:16** on a piece of paper or notecard. On the back, write only the first letter of every word. Keep attempting this until you can use only the first letters to say the verse comfortably.

📍 PRAY

Lord, thank You for being a King who stays with me when life feels empty. Give me the courage to trust Your goodness even when my circumstances feel bitter.

Day**03****RUTH 1:14-19** **READ & RESPOND**

Orpah chose to go back to her people and to her gods, but Ruth chose to stay with Naomi. Ruth renounced her people and who she was to claim Naomi's people and their God as her own. She chose an uncertain future with Naomi over the safety within her own family. Because of her time with Naomi and her family, Ruth chose to dedicate her life to Naomi and her people. She trusted Naomi's God more than her own to leave her homeland and go back to Naomi's. Ruth is a good example of how we should trust in God even when we are unsure of what the future holds. He is never surprised by the circumstances of our lives. And for her choice, Ruth was about to be grafted into the lineage of David—and the Messiah.

← Why was Ruth's decision to follow Naomi to Israel such a big, risky deal at that time?

↓ Why is it easier to be like Orpah (going back to what's comfortable) than like Ruth?

↔ What part of Ruth's commitment—"Your God will be my God"—do you need to say to Him today?

 MEMORIZE

Instead of writing out **Ruth 1:16** in words, draw the verse using icons or symbols. Translating the passage into images helps you to process the meaning of the words.

 PRAY

Lord, give me Ruth's courage to choose loyalty over comfort. Help me stick by the hurting and trust Your plan even when the future looks uncertain.

Day 04

RUTH 1:20-22

📍 READ & RESPOND

Have you ever just been angry with God? Naomi was grieving deeply. She had lost her husband and her children. When she and Ruth came to Bethlehem, she told the people to call her Mara because “the Almighty has made me very bitter.” Naomi means “pleasant” or “my delight,” and it’s safe to say that in her overwhelming sorrow, Naomi wasn’t feeling hopeful either. If you’ve ever dealt with grief, you may understand where Naomi is coming from. She was brokenhearted, and she blamed the Lord. While we grieve with hope (see 1 Thess. 4:13), we still grieve. But the Lord is near to the brokenhearted and the crushed in spirit like Naomi (see Ps. 34:18). In these moments, we must choose (even when we don’t feel like it) to trust God. As we’ll see in Naomi’s story, God shows up in our grief with healing, grace, and redemption.

↓ How is Naomi’s grief relatable? How have you misplaced your anger at God?

↔ How has grief touched your life? How does this passage change how you relate to those grieving?

↻ How do grief and hope coexist? Spend time praying for those who are grieving now.

📍 MEMORIZE

Record yourself reading **Ruth 1:16** different ways: (1) in a normal voice, (2) in a whisper, (3) as fast as you possibly can. Can you think of other ways? Be sure to listen back to the recordings throughout the week.

📍 PRAY

Lord, be near to the brokenhearted. Heal their pain and help them find hope in You. When I grieve, help me to trust Your sovereignty. My hope is in You.

Day 05

PSALM 16:1-8

READ & RESPOND

Naomi felt empty and abandoned, yet Ruth chose to stay, reflecting the heart of Psalm 16. David wrote, “Protect me, God, for I take refuge in you.” Life can be a whirlwind of change and pressure. Chasing other gods—popularity, perfection, acceptance—can be easy. We hope they’ll make us feel secure, but David’s psalm reminds us that apart from God, we have nothing good. When we choose to make the Lord first and foremost in our lives, our perspective shifts. Faith becomes an anchor. And even when the world feels shaky, we can say, “I will not be shaken” because we know the Lord is right beside us.

↓ What does this passage reveal about our human tendency to feel shaken or insecure?

→ If God is your chosen “portion,” what is one “other god” (like popularity or control) you need to stop chasing?

↺ Look at verse 8. How does always letting the Lord guide you change the way you talk to Him today?

MEMORIZE

Rewrite **Ruth 1:16** in today’s modern language. You could even text-speak it, but be sure to keep the theology accurate! Paraphrasing in everyday language ensures we comprehend what we’re trying to memorize.

PRAY

Lord, thank You for being my refuge and my greatest good. Help me keep my eyes fixed on You today so that I won’t be shaken by stress or distractions.