

WORTH FOLLOWING:
The Story of Two Great Friends:
Ruth and Naomi

RUTH 1:6-18

6 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. 7 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. 8 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.

9 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.

10 And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.”

11 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?”

12 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, 13 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.” 14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 And she said, *“See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”* 16 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. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 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.” 18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

- These are people in crisis
 - *Death of spouses and sons*
 - *Famine in the land*
 - *Where to turn to? Who to turn to?*

- These are family members
- *We CAN have an influence for Christ among family (Ruth “clung” to Naomi)*
- *But NOT EVERY family member will necessarily follow (Orpah “kissed” Naomi, but did not cling).*
- *Very Significant: (v. 15) <> And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people **and to her gods**; return after your sister-in-law.*

We live in a culture filled with numerous “gods” ...

We will turn back to them like Orpah did?

Or will we be wise enough to listen to the true believers in God (**like Ruth did**) and follow those role models and teachers,
without also turning them, into gods!

- We need to honestly assess why do we want to follow certain people.
- Naomi is getting these young women to assess why do they want to follow her
- Who are we following? Why are we following them?
- Modern movements in Christianity today

- What did Ruth see in Naomi, and what do people see in you?
- These two are more than in-laws, and more than family ... they are friends, WHO NOW FOLLOWED THE ONE TRUE GOD.

16 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. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. **17** 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.”

- How can we be a friend to people in our family, continuing to speak to them about things that matter?
- Listen carefully, and intently and lovingly.
- Interject Truth, *occasionally and prayerfully*
- Let our speech be seasoned with grace
- Keep avenues of communication open
- Pray *continually (weeping, fasting kinds of prayer)*
- Stay in the word of God yourselves
- Love them, love them, love them
- Guard yourself: Galatians 6:1 *(next slide)*

Galatians 6:1

“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

THE REST OF THE STORY: *Ruth and Naomi*

- Their return to the homeland (Judah) was of God
- They were provided for by the Lord
- Ruth, the Moabitess marries an Israelite
- They have a son (OBED)
- Ruth becomes the great grandmother of DAVID
- JESUS is her descendent (Matthew 1:5)

JOHN PIPER QUOTE:

- *“The story of Ruth was written to give us encouragement and hope that all the perplexing turns in our lives are going somewhere good. They do not lead off a cliff. In all the setbacks of our lives as believers, God is plotting for our joy.”*

Final Words of Encouragement:

- Keep praying for your loved ones to meet your God, befriend who you can, and speak truth lovingly to them. (BE A NAOMI)
- Be filled with the Spirit of Christ so much that people will see Him in You ... and surely, some of them will follow you because in so doing, they are following Jesus too ...

May we be this kind of Godly FRIEND:

- 16 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. Your people shall be my people, and **your God my God.**
17 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.”