

- 1.** A main thread in this story is the restoration of Naomi's faith in Israel's God. It's hard for us to understand how traumatic Naomi's experiences would have been: leaving home during a famine, then losing not only her husband but also her two sons while living as a foreigner in Moab. The psychological and economic impact would have been enormous, leaving her bereft. How did this affect her view of the promise-keeping God of Israel?
- 2.** Another obvious storyline is how God redeemed Ruth – a foreign woman – how He incorporated her into the lineage of Israel's greatest king, David. We read this story knowing how it will end, with her married to a kind and wealthy Jewish man and bearing a son who will be David's ancestor. But at this point in the story (ch. 1), what would have been her prospects, a foreign widow living with her widowed Jewish mother-in-law? What reason does Ruth have to hope in Israel's God?

[illegible]

- 1.** The wilderness experience can be heart-wrenching and disorienting. Can you remember a time (perhaps now) when you, like Naomi, felt that God had abandoned you? When you were in that wilderness, what was there about the nature and character of God that you were most tempted to doubt: His love for you, His power to provide for you, or His wisdom in ordaining things?
- 2.** What are some of the means that God used to redeem your situation and restore Shalom for you and yours?
- 3.** How did your faith grow as a result of your experience of God's faithfulness in those dark moments?
- 4.** One of the debts mature believers owe to younger believers is that we who have experienced both the wilderness and the redemption must testify to the faithfulness of God. We know what it's like to trust God for a future we cannot envision and see Him bring about our redemption in unlooked-for ways.
 - What stories of wilderness and redemption have mature believers shared with you over the years?
 - Have you ever shared your own story of wilderness and redemption with someone who needed to hear it? Who do you know who needs to hear that God is faithful to keep His promises?