

Naomi LEAVES to live in Moab

Naomi lived with her husband and two sons in Israel near Bethlehem. During a famine, the family moved to the nearby nation of Moab. Arriving there, Naomi helped her family settle in the new reality in a new land and culture. *Mothers can be used by God to help their families flourish anywhere!* While there, her sons marry two Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. The three women form a close bond of friendship and family. *One of God's gifts of femininity is creating friends from strangers and family from acquaintances.*

Naomi LOSES her family in Moab

Over the next 10 years, Naomi's husband and two sons die. These unforeseen circumstances left her and her daughters-in-law on the verge of ruin. But hearing there is now food in Israel, Naomi reconsiders living in Moab and plans to return. While Orpah stays in Moab, Ruth comes with her, but Naomi returns to Israel angry and bitter. *Relational difficulty is the furnace God uses to mold a woman's character!* But instead of getting depressed and giving up, Ruth gets up and goes to work. By God's grace, she ends up working in Boaz's field, who is a distant relative and family redeemer. *God blesses women of God who work to bless others (Prov. 31:25-31)!*

Naomi GAINS her family in Israel

Being impressed with her character and work ethic, Boaz offers to redeem Naomi's property and marry Ruth. Ruth then gives birth to a son, and Boaz names him Obed (Heb. *Oved*, 'servant, worshipper of God'), who would later become the grandfather of King David! *Never give up on your family or your faith, as you never know what God is going to do in the future (Prov. 3:5, 6)!* As Ruth's son (Heb. *ben*, 'son' from *banah* 'to build up'), Obed would preserve Naomi's son's family line and 'build up' his lineage from extinction. In seeing Obed on Naomi's lap, the women of Bethlehem bless the Lord as the Author of life and bless Naomi as the receiver of life. *Sometimes the blessing of God is later, but it is never late!* For both Naomi and Ruth as mothers, they got to see God shine during the dark times of their lives and find peace when there was chaos. God walks alongside mothers in every journey of life. *God specializes in bringing beauty from ashes and life from death!*