

PART THREE

Shadowlands

LIVING IN THE LAND OF LAMENT

**Grief
Experienced**

SERIES BIG IDEA:

We experience grace in loss when we turn to and trust in God.

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Ruth 1:1-5 (NIV)

Our life story can have ongoing periods of different types of loss.

But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands?"

Ruth 1:11 (NIV)

Experiencing grief can lead to questioning our relationship with others.

"Don't call me Naomi," she told them. "Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

Ruth 1:20-21 (NIV)

Experiencing grief can lead to blaming God.

Experiencing grief can lead to completely changing how we see ourselves.

"The Lord bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers."

Ruth 2:20 (NIV)

Healing from grief begins by recognizing God's continuing role in our story.

Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Ruth 4:16 (NIV)

With God, the rest of our story is part of His story.

Experiencing grief is unique for each person.

TEACHING BIG IDEA:

God uses every loss to accomplish His good will.

Will I turn to and trust Him?

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MY NOTES:



STAY CONNECTED:

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TEACHING SUMMARY:

Naomi's story, found in the Old Testament book of Ruth, shares how loss can devastate. Naomi experienced famine, moving to a foreign nation, the loss of her husband, and the loss of both of her sons.

Her story demonstrates that our life stories can have continuing and differing types of extreme loss. Her experience with grief impacted all her relationships - with others, with God, and with herself. She blamed God and identified as a bitter woman with little worth.

She eventually began to see God's continuing role in her life and as a result was able to experience healing. Her faith actions impacted her Moabite daughter-in-law so that Naomi's story found a deeper meaning beyond her loss.

Understanding that grief and loss are unique to each person leads us to trust that God is moving even through our most challenging experiences. Through it all, we can choose to turn to and trust in God as He uses our stories to be a part of His story.

TALK IT OVER:

How have your experiences with loss impacted your relationship with others? With God? With yourself?

What have you learned by observing how others have experienced loss?

Much has been written about grief. What differences or similarities do people have in experiencing grief?

How can you experience grace in loss when you turn to and trust in God?

How can we be praying for you?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS:

Mon: 1 Peter 1:3-7

Tue: Hebrews 13:1-6

Wed: Romans 8:28; Genesis 50:15-21

Thu: Job 40:1-5; 42:1-6

Fri: John 10:27-30

Sat: Romans 12:1-3 (NLT)