

**Dr. Ron Armstrong • October 18, 2020**  
**The Story: Going Home**

**Ruth 1:1** In the days **when the judges ruled**, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went **to live for a while** in the country of Moab. [2] The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name 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.

[3] Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. [4] They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, [5] both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

[6] When she heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law **prepared to return home** from there. [7] With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

[8] Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. [9] May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them and they wept aloud [10] and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

[11] 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? [12] Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me--even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons-- [13] would you wait until they grew up?

Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has gone out against me!"

[14] At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her. [15] "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

[16] But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. [17] Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." [18] When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

[19] So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

**A. Naomi is going home.**

1. Moab was always a temporary move. It would never be home for an Israelite.
2. We know the famine was severe because it impacted even the Bethlehem area, which was known as the "House of bread." It was their severe circumstances that drove both moves.
3. It was a violent and harsh time. Naomi's fears about the future without a husband and fears for her daughters-in-law were justified.
4. In a "portable" culture, how can we define home? Let me suggest three guidelines:
  - a. Home is where God wills you.
  - b. Home is where relationships hold you.
  - c. Home is where you can bless others.
5. Don't underestimate the value of home because of its imperfections.

## **B. Amazing relationships: How can we build them?**

1. Put others first. There were no blood ties, but they were completely selfless. There is no such thing as selfish, deep friendship.
2. Be kind. You cannot be abusive and close. Build daily with love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, and kindness.
3. Pay attention. Storms occasionally damage friendships, but more often, they are damaged by neglect.
4. Accept imperfections. Friendship is a decision to connect with imperfect people, not perfect ones.
5. Value people. Jesus valued people; we should too. That young girl from Moab turned out to be pretty special and pretty important.