

Ruth 1:1-5

English Standard Version (ESV)

1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the
2 land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the
3 country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. ² The
4 name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife
5 Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and
6 Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah.
7 They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³ But
8 Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with
9 her two sons. ⁴ These took Moabite wives; the name of the
10 one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived
11 there about ten years, ⁵ and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so
12 that the woman was left without her two sons and her
13 husband.

Observation (What does it say?):

Consider the observation questions on the back of this page. What do you notice in this passage?

- **Circle** any words or phrases that are not familiar, or that you would like more explanation for.
- **Underline** the names of persons. Who are the characters in this story?
- What are the events in the beginning of this story? Mark positive events with a **+** and negative events with a **-**.
- Other observations you make?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

After observing the passage:

- Other than the title of this book and with only this introduction to go on, who you guess the main character might be?
- Why did the writer mention the “ten years” (v. 4) with no other details? What would you like to know about that decade?
- How would you summarize Naomi’s life up to this point?
- What other questions come to mind as you read this brief passage?
- Would you keep reading a story starting like this if it wasn’t in the Bible? Why or why not?
- What attitudes can you imagine in Naomi?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What is the closest your life has ever come to the circumstances Naomi faced?
- Based on your experiences with difficulties (and without reading ahead yet), what kind of responses would you expect from Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah?

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation (What does it say?)

What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer's thought process?

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose ("in order that...")?
- Are there conclusions ("Therefore...")?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good "headline" for the passage?

Interpretation (What does it mean?)

What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer's thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?)

What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures,
but draw everything from them,
and suffer nothing to remain
hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**