

A COMMUNITY THAT DISCOVERS THE TEXT

Week 1 — Ruth 1: From Full to Empty

MEMBER HANDOUT

Name: _____ Date: _____

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET

Do your personal study (PBS) at home before we meet. Read Ruth 1 slowly, out loud if you can, and don't reach for a commentary yet. Use the PBS Toolkit below to ask your own questions of the text. Then bring your notes to the group study (GBS).

YOUR PBS TOOLKIT

These questions work on any passage. Use them every week until they become second nature. This week, lean especially on the Observe questions.

OBSERVE → What words or ideas repeat? What surprises me? Who are the people, and what changes for them? What comes right before and right after this passage?

INTERPRET → Why did the author put this here? What does this teach me about God? About people and sin? How does this point forward to Jesus and the bigger story?

APPLY → What does this call me to believe? To turn away from? To do or to pray this week?

Thinking point: don't rush to "what should I do." Most of the treasure is in slowing down at Observe and Interpret. Application that skips those becomes shallow advice.

READ

Passage: Ruth 1 (the whole chapter). As you read, circle every time you see the word "return" or "go back."

OBSERVE

1. By the end of verse 5, what has Naomi lost? List each thing you can find.

2. How many times did you find the word "return" (or "turn back") in this chapter?

3. In verses 20–21, what does Naomi ask to be called, and which two opposite words does she use about herself?

INTERPRET

1. Bethlehem means "house of bread," yet the family leaves it because of famine. What feeling might the author want us to have here?

2. Both Orpah and Ruth are told to go back. What does Ruth refuse to do, and what does she bind herself to (verses 16–17)?

3. Naomi says she is "empty." But who is standing right next to her as she says it? What does that suggest?

APPLY

1. Naomi brought her grief honestly to God. Where do you tend to hide your grief instead of bringing it to him?

2. Where is God quietly at work in a situation that feels "empty" to you right now?

CARRY THIS WITH YOU

Naomi came home empty — but God had already placed his provision beside her, and this emptied family in Bethlehem is the line that leads to Jesus.

COMMUNITY PRAYER

We close every meeting by praying together for our life as one body. Fill in the names and needs for this week.

1. For our EM lead pastor —

Father, strengthen our pastor. Guard his walk with you, fill him with your Word, and sustain him as he shepherds us. [specific need]

2. For our families and households —

Lord, be King over each of our homes. Bring peace where there is tension, provision where there is lack, and the gospel to every family member. [a household in need]

3. For our leaders and their families —

Jesus, uphold those who lead us and the families who carry the cost with them. Guard them from discouragement and pride; let them lead from your grace. [a leader by name]

4. For our community and the ministries of EM —

Spirit, knit us together as one people under the Word. Bless every ministry of our EM and make each a place where Christ is seen. [a ministry / need]

5. For those outside (optional) —

Father, we are not gathered for ourselves alone. Send us to our neighbors, our campuses, and the nations. Give us love for the lost this week.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

PBS Toolkit — Read It Strange

A slow three-read method for personal study · work top to bottom, checking off as you go

PASS 1 · Read It Whole *just listen — no pen yet*

- ☐ Read start to finish, aloud if you can — as if you have never seen it.
- ☐ Don't mark anything yet. Take in the whole shape of it.

PASS 2 · Mark It *now the pen comes out — make your observation visible*

Step A — what you SEE · shapes, objective — anyone can do this

- ☐ ○ **Circle** every person / character.
- ☐ — **Underline** the events and actions (verbs).
- ☐ □ **Box** the places and place-names.

Step B — what it MEANS · colours, interpretive — decide the theme, then highlight

- ☐ ■ **RED — God:** Father, Son & Spirit (names, actions, attributes, his words).
- ☐ ■ **BLUE** — the world, sin & judgment.
- ☐ ■ **GREEN** — what repeats or newly strikes you. *the inductive signal*
- ☐ ■ **YELLOW** — key / important (your catch-all).
- ☐ ■ **ORANGE (optional)** — God's promises & commands. *add once the rest feel natural*

Why red vs. blue: *God against the fallen world puts the redemptive-historical drama on the page. Colour is a tool, not the goal — the reddest page is not the deepest heart.*

PASS 3 · Read It Strange *slow down and question your own marks*

- ☐ **Re-read your RED marks:** who is God here — and what is he doing? (named, acting, or implied?)
- ☐ **Re-read your BLUE marks:** what weight do sin, the world, or judgment carry?
- ☐ **WHEN / WHERE** — time words, order of events, direction of movement (up/down, toward/away).
- ☐ **HOW / WHY** — the manner, and the stated reasons or motives ("so that," "because").
- ☐ **Your GREEN marks:** what repeats — and why might that matter?
- ☐ Trace one cause → effect chain through the passage.
- ☐ What is strange? What surprises you or seems out of place? (A story that seems dropped in is often the author's design.)

PASS → · Land It *from seeing to meeting God*

- ☐ Where does this sit on the long line that leads to Christ? (Don't force it — ask what it shows about God, his promises, or our need for a redeemer.)
- ☐ Write one interpretation question to bring to your group (GBS).
- ☐ Name one way this calls you to believe, repent, or act this week.
- ☐ Close in prayer.