

“Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.” Ruth 1:3-5 NLT

## lectio // Ruth 1:1-18

A decade of struggle. A famine, a severe loss (husband dying), ten years with sons and daughters-in-law (no grandchildren), then both sons die as well. There is nothing left of a future hope in family. Naomi believes she knows who is responsible - it's God! In a “come to Jehovah” moment she tells the girls to go home, stating “Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord himself has raised his fist against me.” She paints a possible future of hopelessness by staying with her in a crazy “if-this-then-that” scenario. Then she pretty much curses the girls brain by saying, “The Lord has raised his fist against me.” Did Naomi just tell the girls that God flipped her off and forgot about her? What kind of crazy does that do to your thoughts about God? He's the God that kills my family, hopes, dreams and future? How sad. Granted, they did not have a broad theology at that time, a belief that said, “hey, life is hard, there is a real enemy (Satan) and really messed up people (sinners) and EVERYONE struggles!” To Naomi it was over simplistic - God flipped me off and will forget about me. Was that at all true? Will that ever be true? These are the questions humans have wrestled with their whole life, “when things are bad, who is responsible (to blame)?” Its tidy when it's just God - he did it. It's not easy to sift through the possibilities that other things are at play. Remember, this is Naomi REFLECTING on a very long and difficult season. Have you ever done that? hand raised 🙋.

## oratio

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,  
I figure you get blamed for a lot of what goes on around here on earth. You created in us the wonderful gift of “finger-pointing.” It is interesting to think, we've each “sinned” appropriately enough to deserve judgment, but we don't want to think of it like that. And I know the Naomi (Ruth) story ends so beautiful, a salvation and restoration story for sure. But Naomi, who wanted to change her name to Mara (Mary) was bitter at the time - a LONG time. My “bitter” season was comparatively short (two years). I had questions, but avoided blaming you for it. I saw my part and the evil in others as well. BTW, how did things turn out for Orpah?

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root