



CONNECT GROUPS:

Unconscious Part 3-It's Not Good to Be Alone:

Heb 12:15

... and see that no one DESPISES the GRACE of God; lest any root of BITTERNESS spring up and cause trouble, and thereby many be defiled.

Connect group:

- Choose ONE NIGHT a week to hold your connect group.
- Ask each member of your connect group to bring their Bible.
- If you want, you can also take communion together.

WELCOME

Ice breaker:

Choose one of the following topics and talk about it:

- a) Who has had this experience as a child? You went with your parents to a flea market, shopping mall, or vacation spot. You were so focused on your own activity. When you look up, your parents are gone. Tell us more, and how did it feel?
- b) Who has been on vacation alone? How did it feel?

Prayer: Open with prayer.

WORD

Read:

Our Core Text for Today:

Ruth 1:14 (NIV)

The daughters-in-law began to weep again. Orpah said goodbye to her mother-in-law, but Ruth refused to go.

Ruth 1:16 (NIV)

But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave your side. Wherever you go, I will go. Where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.

Ruth 1:20-21 (NIV)

"Don't call me Naomi," she said to them. "Call me Mara, for the Almighty has made my life bitter. I went out full, but the Lord brought me back empty. Why should you call me Naomi, since the Lord has turned against me and brought so much trouble on me?"

Ruth 2:21-22 (KJV)

Ruth said, "Boaz also said to me, 'Go back and stay with his workers until they have gathered in all the grain.' "That is wonderful," Naomi exclaimed. "Do as he says. Stay with his workers until the harvest is over. You will be safe there, but you may be molested in another country."

Ruth 4:14-16 (KJV)

Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the Lord, who has given you a redeemer today. May he be famous in Israel. May this child bring you joy and nourish you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law, who loves you so much and is better to you than seven sons." Naomi took the boy in her arms and considered him her own son.

Talk in your Connect Group about the following:

Naomi moved to Moab with her husband and two sons because of a drought. There her husband died, and later her two sons too. She was left a widow in a foreign land – stripped of her family and her future.

The Pain and Honesty of Loneliness

"I went out full, but the Lord has brought me back empty-handed. Why call me Naomi, since the Lord has turned against me..." (Ruth 1:21)

Naomi is so bitter and overwhelmed by loss that she wants to change her name to Mara ("bitter"). She is angry with God and feels completely abandoned.

God's Presence Through Other People

"Wherever you go, I will go... Your God is my God." (Ruth 1:16)

Now, when Naomi was convinced that she was completely alone, God had already given her what she needed: Ruth. Ruth refused to leave her.

Protection Behind the Scenes

"Stay with his workers all the time of harvest, and you will be safe there..." (Ruth 2:22)

While the two women survive as poor widows, God works through Boaz to provide them with food and security. We see God systematically providing in the background.

The Restoration of Joy

"Praise the Lord, who has given you a redeemer today... Naomi took the boy in her arms and considered him as her own son." (Ruth 4:14, 16)

At the end of the story, Naomi's life is "full" again. She has a family, joy, and community (the women of the town are with her). However, this process took time, tears, and patience.

When we feel alone, our emotions tell us that we are abandoned. However, the story of Ruth shows us the reality:

Your emotions are valid: It is okay to complain to God like Naomi and say, "I am empty." He can handle it.

Look up: God almost always sends people our way (like a Ruth or a Boaz). We need to keep our eyes open to receive love.

The story is not over: The chapter where you feel "empty" now is not the end of the book. God is always working in the background to bring fullness and salvation eventually.

Reread today's texts and talk about them:

- Who has been a "Ruth" in someone else's life during a lonely season? And how can we, as a connection group, be a "Ruth" to people in our community who are struggling with loneliness?
- How does this story of Ruth and Naomi help us persevere through our own dark seasons of loneliness?

WORSHIP

Make time to worship God today. Use the playlist on our Word and Life website under Connect Groups. Or bring your own worship songs.

WORKS

Now enjoy Communion together as a Connect Group:

Love for God, Love for People

Now, as a Connection Group, spend just 5 minutes in silence, and each member should answer the questions below individually. Create a peaceful atmosphere and allow the Lord to speak to each one individually.

- Ask the Lord to send you. To send you to someone who is experiencing loneliness today.
- Ask the Lord to send someone to you if you yourself are experiencing loneliness today.

