

Redeeming the Impossible Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. If you could have a 5 minute phone call with anyone alive today, whom would you choose?
2. What is one product or service that you are a big fan of?

Read the following passage: Ruth 1.

Over a period of 10 years, Naomi lost almost everything: her homeland, her husband, and her sons. But in her lowest moment, Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth, made a stunning declaration of love and loyalty. And God used Ruth, a Moabite woman who had also lost everything, to bring about an incredible story of redemption.

God can similarly work through our lives to bring hope to the people around us. Our commitment to love people, to persevere in the face of darkness and offense, and to trust God can bring great healing to the men and women in our lives.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Why might Elimelek's decision to take his family to Moab seem problematic to an ancient Israelite? (See Deuteronomy 23:3-4.) What are some ways you have made a challenging situation worse by the way you responded?
2. How does Ruth's commitment to Naomi prefigure Jesus' commitment to us?
3. Often, our response to broken people goes in one of two unhelpful directions: 1) Out a desire to help them and show them kindness we inadvertently enable their manipulative or destructive behavior; or 2) We label them as toxic or negative and separate from them completely. What are some better options? How do we avoid defaulting to 1) or 2)?
4. Given the history between the Israelites and the Moabites (see, for example, Numbers 25:1-3 and Deuteronomy 23:3-4), how might Ruth's ethnicity have impacted her commitment to Naomi and her experience in Bethlehem? How have race and ethnicity impacted your experience in the church?
5. Are you regularly in circumstances in which you are subjected to (potentially) offensive words or actions? Explain. Generally speaking, how well are you heeding the instruction to "overlook offense" (Proverbs 19:11)?
6. It's possible that Naomi, in her pit of bitterness, didn't even realize that what she was saying might be offensive to Ruth. Are you wrestling with any degree of bitterness in your life right now? Explain. Do you think you might be saying or doing

things that are offensive to the people around you? Explain.

7. How can we push back on bitterness when we see it creeping into our lives?
8. Ruth and Naomi could not have imagined the redemption that God brought about for them. Are you confident that God will reward you if you are faithful to him? Explain. How can we grow our trust in God?

Pray