

2. We should understand that we can not always see the big picture. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

3. We can however trust that God is working the big picture. “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation” (Daniel 4:34).

4. Furthermore, we can trust that God is **for** us. Paul wrote, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

5. Therefore, since God is working in the big picture and is for us, we should begin to look beyond ourselves to see what God has set before us and get in on what God is doing. Jeremiah recorded God’s words being, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).

6. We should be thankful that God is working all things together for good. “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (I Thessalonians 5:18).

7. We should learn to praise God in the midst of the painful circumstances. “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Hebrews 13:15).

8. We should seek God’s healing grace for our pain of loss. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).

9. We should begin to look to see who God will set before us that we may minister God’s grace to them. “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” (II Corinthians 1:3-4). God did this with Naomi, He did it with Job (Job 42:10), He did it with Elijah (I Kings 19:13-17), and He will do it with you.

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# OVERCOMING

## The Pain of Suffering Loss

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In the book of Ruth, there is a story of a Jewish woman by the name of Naomi. Her name means "my delight" which is a name that should make someone feel accepted. We can assume that Naomi fell in love with Elimelech. They got married and had two sons. Then there came a famine in the land of Israel. Because of the famine, her husband took her and their two sons to the foreign pagan country of Moab to live.

While they were there, her dear husband died. She lost the love of her youth. She was left with her two sons. It is interesting to note the names of the two boys. One was named "Mahlon" meaning "sick", and the other was named "Chilion" meaning "pining". There probably developed a codependent relationship between Naomi and her two sickly young sons. The two sons did live long enough to marry Moabite women, and then both of Naomi's sons died.

Now, Naomi was left all alone except for her two daughters-in-law. In her distress, she encouraged her two daughters-in-law to stay in the country of Moab and remarry while she went

back to Israel to her kinsman. She must have thought that her relatives would somehow fill the loss in her life. At least she would be in the land where she grew up. Her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, said that they would stay with her. However, Naomi insisted that the two young women stay and remarry while she when back to Israel. Orpah gave Naomi a kiss and reluctantly stayed in Moab, but Ruth said, "Don't ask me to leave you. I will not leave you, but go where you go, live where you live, worship your God, and be buried where you are buried."

Therefore, Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem and met Naomi's kinsman. Everyone came out to greet Naomi and said, "Is this Naomi?" However, Naomi said, "[Call me not Naomi, call me Mara \(meaning bitterness\): for the Almighty had dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why call me ye Namoi \(my delight\), seeing the LORD hath testified again me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?](#)" (Ruth 1:21b-22).

Now maybe you can relate if you have suffered loss. Naomi suffered having to move and to leave all her kinsman because of a famine. She suffered the loss of the love of her life, her husband, and then suffered the loss of the next most important thing, her two sons. Next, one of her daughters-in-law (Orpah) stayed behind (even as Naomi insisted on her doing so). She felt even

that God had dealt unfairly with her. She felt empty. She felt that God was against her and had afflicted her.

**Here are some questions that she may have asked.**

***Was her life a total loss as she felt it was? Was God really against her? Was God really working good in the picture? What was the big picture?***

1. She had the experience of knowing the love of a caring husband for many years.
2. She had the experience of raising two sons.
3. The famine brought her family to the land of Moab, but God saved her from starving to death.
4. She had the delightful experience of seeing her own two sons marry.
5. She had a great influence upon daughters-in-law. Initially, both of them were willing to leave their own country and go to Bethlehem with their mother-in-law.
6. Her influence upon Ruth was so great that Ruth became determined to follow her no matter what, even to worship her God (Yahweh). God even used Ruth to provide food for her in Bethlehem.
7. She then became a counselor to Ruth (the young Moabite woman) which led Boaz to marry Ruth.
8. She saw God give Ruth and Boaz a son by the name of Obed.

9. God also gave Obed a son by the name of Jesse.

10. God gave Jesse a son by the name of David who became the king of Israel.

11. David wrote the book of Psalms and was in the lineage of Jesus who is the Savior of the World.

12. Now we have the God inspired book of Ruth as part of Scriptures and the encouraging story of Naomi in it.

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In one sense, if the famine had not come and if there had not been the loss of Naomi's husband and two sons, the rest of the story would not have happened. Our Bible would be rather short. Jesus would not have been born and there would be no salvation today through Him.

**But what about Naomi's loss? How did God deal with that?**

God gave her a faithful daughter-in-law (Ruth) to counsel. Then, not long thereafter, God gave her an adopted grandson to love and to care for.

**What should our response be when we face the pain of suffering LOSS?**

1. We should begin by recalling all that God has already done for us. "[I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings](#)" (Psalms 77:11-12).