

The Fork In The Trail

1. Where does the trail lead? Toward God or Away from Him.

Ruth 1.1-5 In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him.² The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there.³ Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons.⁴ The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later,⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

Proverbs 14.12 (NIV) There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

2. At the fork in the trail there is a choice to be made.

Ruth 1.6-14 When she heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. ⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me. ⁹ May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband." Then she kissed them and they wept aloud ¹⁰ and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people." ¹¹ But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? ¹² Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me--even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons-- ¹³ would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has gone out against me!" ¹⁴ At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ "Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

3. Choose the trail that leads home

Ruth 1.16-19 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me." When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her. ¹⁹ So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

2 Corinthians 7.10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Ruth 4.14-17 The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! ¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth." ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap and cared for him. ¹⁷ The women living there said, "Naomi has a son." And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

