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Old Testament Final Project

This final project is designed for a mother-daughter Bible study group that has someone in the military. This session is designed to concentrate on Ruth Chapter One. It is preferred that it is a woman and her mother-in-law if her spouse is the one who is in the military. I personally found that this Bible Study could relate directly to anyone who has someone serving in the military especially if they have had to move because of that person's service and now that person is serving overseas. I think that this story has direct implications for people who have had to give up the life that they have known in order to follow someone that they love. This story also teaches what it means to show love and compassion to everyone, not just to our immediate family. This lesson of loving others needs to occur when we are unsure of our own lives, just as Ruth did.

The opening prayer and blessing both come from the book, "Life Prayers from Around the World, 365 Prayers, Blessings, and Affirmations to Celebrate the Human Journey", by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon, copyright 1996.

Opening Prayer

Dear God, We are all on a journey together to the center of the universe we look deep into ourselves and into one another. It is to a center, which is everywhere, that is the holy journey, first we need only to look: notice and honor the radiance of everything about you. Tend all these shining things around you: The smallest plant, the creatures and objects in your care. Be gentle and nurture. Listen as we experience and accept all that we really are. Help us as we grow in care for all around us. We begin to embrace others as ourselves and help us learn to live as one among many. Amen.

Based off a Prayer by Anne Hillman page 15

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Continue with a reading of Ruth Chapter One, and then continue with this story and the questions that follow.

Following, trusting, believing, hoping, questioning, and wondering, that is what I believe Ruth was doing as she was following her mother-in-law. When I think about how Ruth picked up her life to follow someone that she loved, with no questions asked, I cannot think to be anything but amazed. Her story reminds me of my Grandmother and how she was willing to give up her life for a person that she loved while holding onto her faith. My Grandmother grew up in Berlin, Germany with her family when World War II happened. She was very close with her one older brother, and both of her parents. She is a life long Lutheran and even when she talks about the war, she will mention how they continued to go Church even when their world was falling apart. After the war my Grandmother met my Grandfather who was serving in the US Army, then married soon after and she headed off to America to live with him, leaving her family behind. She left her family, life, friends, and every single support system that she had. She trusted that with my Grandfather that she would be ok and that she would be provided for and taken care of. My Grandmother had that trust in God; it was a faith that helped her survive the war and come out of it stronger then when it all began. It was that faith that everything would be ok, that she is still able and willing to tell stories of her experiences growing up in Nazi Germany to my cousins and myself. My Grandmother had a faith that helped her survive the death of her brother in the war. Her belief in God also helped her watch her father go off to serve in the war for Germany and come home a changed man. Ruth and my Grandmother and so many more people all over the world have given up their life in order to follow someone that the love while they are trusting in God. Currently people are following their spouses, parents, loved ones all over the world because those loved ones are serving in the Military, however now those people are being sent over seas to fight for our freedom. It also gives us a basis of how we should experience and view all the relationships that we are in, not just those relationships with our in-laws. This is a story about trust, love, hope, caring, and faith in one another and within us. This story from Ruth is not one that just applies to the people of Ancient Israel but to us today. Let us now begin with a brief summary of how you ended up here today. What brought both of you to this Bible Study and what do you hope to receive from this time together in fellowship?

1. How does this story relate to you and to your family in context of your spouse/child who is serving in the military?
 - a. What did you have to give up in your personal life to follow them and how difficult or easy was it for you?
2. Think back to five years ago and how you thought your life would turn out? Did it follow your plan or did it follow another plan?
 - a. What were some of the tragedies that happened to you during the past five years?
 - b. Can you see how God may have used those tragedies to help shape God's plan for your life?
3. Ruth follows her mother-in-law trusting in God that everything would be ok. How did you feel when you had to trust the Military/Government when you found out that you had to move to a new place? What were you scared about and anxious about as you moved?
 - a. When you were told that you would have to leave your home, who did you turn to for support and why?

Closing Prayer, The Prayer of Vision

Dear Merciful God, we ask for your blessings upon all of us as we journey to places that are unknown to us. We are thankful for the time that you have given us so that we may come to a better understanding about our lives and what we are being called to do. We thank you for giving us the support of this community and we ask that you watch over everyone and our families as we leave this place and go back to our homes. We ask that you be there with us to support us through these transitions and with our family members as they go to serve our country. We pray that all of those fighting overseas that they will return safely to those that they love. In your name we pray, Amen.

Blessing

May the blessing of God go before you.

May God's grace and peace abound.

May God's Spirit live within you.

May God's love wrap you around.

May God's blessing remain with you always.

May you walk on Holy Ground.

Based off a Blessing of Miriam Theresa Winter, page 247

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