# "Trouble with Life"

Ruth 1:1-6

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell
Part of the RBC family of Ministries

## Individual Study Introduction

After listening to the audio segment, use the following questions as your time allows. You may want to record your answers or jot down thoughts and notes in a personal journal. You may also want to use your journal as a record of your prayer time with God. Write out your prayer or simply record your requests and the areas of your life you are releasing to God. This written record will help you watch God's movement in your life. You'll see more clearly the ways God is giving you "strength for the journey"!

## Getting Started:

Joe Stowell compares trusting God in hard times to trusting a surgeon when we're told we need surgery. We don't usually respond by saying, "Will it hurt? Will it inconvenience my life? Will I have to miss work? Because, if that's the case, I'm not going to do it." If we trust a surgeon, how much more do we need to be willing to trust our God!

- How many times have you undergone surgery or other significant medical or dental procedures?

- How readily do you trust your doctor's recommendation?

## Strength through Scripture:

Read Ruth 1:1-22.

1. The question Joe considered in the last session centered on what we can know in times of trouble. In this session, he looks at the second major question: What on earth is God doing in this mess? Have you ever gone through a time when, like Naomi, you didn't know what was going in the mess of your life, yet you had a deep inner awareness of Who was managing the mess?

2. What does it mean to you that one of God's names is Shaddai—the Almighty One who is capable?



*Notes:*

*"Both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband."*

Ruth 1:5

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3. What does it mean to you that another of God's names is Yahweh—the covenant Lord who is faithful?

4. Read Romans 8:28 and Ruth 4:13-17. How did the truth of Romans 8:28 play out in Naomi's life?

5. How have you found the principle, that God ultimately manages our lives to good and glorious outcomes, to be true?

***Digging Deeper:***

If you have enough time, answer one or more of these optional questions. But be sure to save time for the final two sections.

1. What does Joe mean by saying that this story in the book of Ruth helps us understand that Jesus is our "kinsman redeemer"?

2. What point did God make by going to great pains to find a woman of Moab to bring into the line of Christ?

3. How can you relate to Joe's reference to an ancient form of Chinese drama, where we find ourselves on level one, totally clueless about what is happening on level two?

**Strength through Reflection:**

1. Joe says that Naomi's predicament in Ruth 1 reminds him of a woman in the old silent movies who is tied to railroad tracks. If you freeze-frame that scene, you end up with a really bad movie. How much of a tendency do you have to "freeze-frame" your life when you come into hard times?

2. How hard is it for you, when you don't see God doing anything, to trust Him in times of trouble? How can you grow in that area?

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**Strength through Prayer:**

Spend a few moments in prayer. Ask God to give you the tender heart reflected in the woman who prayed on behalf of her small church following the death of the third young child in a year.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Father God, in the time of trouble, trust is all I have. You are capable and faithful, the rock on which I can stand. Like the woman in that village church, I do not know why You sometimes permit terrible circumstances. Lord, it is not mine to ask why, but to trust You. So, dear Lord, teach me to trust You."

***Closing Call to Action:***

Perhaps you, or someone you know, struggle with trusting God. It's important to trust in God's character even when you don't see Him doing anything. God is capable of solving your problem and of taking you through to victory. Not only that, but He is faithful, which means you are His covenant child. He will help you in His time and in His right way, and you are to trust in that.

It's a matter of upping the trust factor in your life. This doesn't mean you won't feel any tension, but it does mean that at the end of the day you trust God. Maybe this needs to be your prayer: Lord, teach me to trust You.

*Notes:*

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