

Introduction: A story of hope and restoration – Ruth 1-4

Naomi’s Story

- Widow → Single Parent → Grieving Mother
- Living in a foreign land without help or hope
- Becomes the mother of a non-Jewish daughter-in-law

Naomi’s Wisdom

- She returned to _____ and His _____.
- She faced her _____ and _____.
- She followed God’s _____ (2:20), not the _____ (3:10).

Result: God _____ and _____ her life and family.

Premise: Single parents and blended families (for whatever cause), are not God’s ideal, but His grace is sufficient to overcome any and every obstacle if we surrender fully & holy wholly unto Him.

I. Single Parenting – Principles and Practice

• **What We Know . . .**

1. It’s a high and growing percent of all families.
2. A single parent can NOT provide the same quality of care and quantity of time as a two parent home.
3. With God nothing is impossible – Luke 1:37, Jeremiah 32:17

• **What Must You Do?**

1. _____ your relationship with Christ your #1 priority.
2. Get _____ with a strong, godly, same sex group for support and accountability.
3. _____ this “season” of your life and set realistic expectations.
4. Remember God can “make-up” for what you can’t give your kids.
5. _____ to become a victim, a martyr, or a super parent.
6. Don’t _____ your spiritual and moral standards to “provide a father/mother” for your children.
7. A story to remember God’s faithfulness and grace.

II. Blended Families – Principles and Practice

- **What We Know . . .**

1. Blended families rarely, if ever, “fully” blend.
2. Every family relationship is a system; when one relational component changes, there is a domino effect that changes the whole system.
3. Honesty – it rarely works well or easily; success requires extreme effort, time, intentionality and outside help.

- **What Must You Do?**

1. Count the _____ thoroughly.
2. Get pre-marital counseling from a mutually trusted, biblical, and wise resource.
 - Work through expectations
 - Work through specific finances
 - Talk through the impact on each child
 - Agree on parenting goals, discipline, and a common front with all kids

3. Make your _____ your new, unequivocal #1 relationship ahead of children.

4. Develop a weekly _____ tool and mechanism to wrestle family conflicts, schedules, and miscommunication to the ground in a nonthreatening and safe environment.

5. Make the _____ development of your marriage and family the utmost priority; only God and supernatural love can make this work - you don't have that apart from vital union with Christ in the context of a strong, loving, biblical community.

6. Remember it will take time, it will be harder than you thought, and it can be a glorious testimony of God's restoration and redemption – so don't quit, don't withdraw, don't bail out, and know that _____ will bring results.

See: James 1:2-4
and Hebrews 10:36