



## **Study #2: “Providential Suffering”**

### **LG Questions for the Week of January 06, 2008**

#### **Getting Started**

1. Suffering is a difficult, common human experience. In what ways have you suffered in the past three to six months? Looking back, where was God in the midst of your suffering? One of the major themes we will discover from the book of Ruth is God’s providence. How do you reconcile your suffering with God’s providence? (Gen. 50:20 & Romans 8:28)

#### **Getting Into the Bible**

2. Re-read Ruth chapter 1 together as a group. What qualities do you see in the women described; Naomi, Orpha and Ruth? (Ruth 1:8-16)
3. Read Ruth 1:16. This is perhaps one of the most beautiful verses in all of Scripture. Ruth, a Moabite woman whose people were adversaries of the living God, commits her life to following the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob as well as supporting her mother-in-law Naomi.
  - Why do you suppose she did so?
  - What had Ruth learned about the providence of God? (Read Proverbs 16:33)
  - In what ways does Ruth’s faith challenge you? (FYI – Ruth is one of only three Non-Hebrews in the entire OT who profess loyalty to God. The others are Rahab – Joshua 2:11 & Naaman – II Kings 5:15)
4. Read Ruth 1:19-22. Naomi returns to Bethlehem with Ruth after being gone for some ten years. Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, made the mistake of leaving for Moab back in verse one which led to disaster. Bethlehem is “stirred” over Naomi’s return. Naomi tells the people to call her Mara, meaning bitter, because of how her life had gone from being “full” to “bitter”.
  - Why do you imagine Naomi feel this way upon her return?
  - How did Elimelech’s lack of faith contribute to her bitterness?
  - What does this story say about the importance for husbands and wives to be unified in the Lord before making major decisions?
  - If married, in what ways do you need to find “one-flesh” (Gen. 2:24) with your spouse?