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WIDOW'S CHRISTIAN PLACE

Postcards from the Widows' Path

Let's Just Talk . . .



It's so good to talk, and my book *Postcards from the Widows' Path* provides the perfect opportunity. Gather two, three or more widows or others for a time of friendship, support and meaningful conversation. Meet around your kitchen table, a casual coffee shop, or your church library---any place that's comfortable and distraction free. You'll cherish the sacred reflections and find renewed hope as we journey through Ruth.

Discussion Guide. These simple guidelines will lay the groundwork for good discussions:

- Pray about starting your group. Pray about the time, location and who will come. Pray about everything! The Lord will guide you and be with you in every interaction.
- *Postcards from the Widows' Path* is divided into 5 sections. Everyone should read the same section before they come. Each chapter only takes about 10 minutes a day.
- Decide on a time and place to regularly meet. Explain that your book discussion time will be around 45 minutes; the entire time together about an hour, or hour and a half if you're dining. End at the agreed upon time even if you haven't covered every question.
- Use this discussion guide to help you facilitate the conversation; or you may print off a copy for each person who will attend.
- Let me emphasize this: I've given you too many questions! Don't use them all or you'll never get through! Before meeting, select the ones you think most important or engaging for your particular group. The icebreaker questions are always optional.
- Create a "safe" environment for sharing. Let your group know that no one will be pressured to answer; what's said in the group stays in the group; set a box of Kleenex on the table. Crying will happen and it's okay.
- Give everyone an opportunity to talk. Remember that some people are reserved and will not speak up unless you provide them the opportunity. Don't hesitate to ask.
- The guide questions are designed to generate thought and conversation, not to find a right answer. This isn't an exam. It's a chance to talk, grow, and hope again.
- Questions? Just email me at WCplace@gmail.com and I'll be happy to help you out.

5 Features to Love About A 'Postcards from the Widows' Path' Group

- It only takes five sessions
- Adapt each discussion to the pertinent issues of your group
- Form new friendships with other widows who 'get it.'
- Easily order more books at www.widowschristianplace.com
- The discussion guide is free! Although protected by copyright, the author grants permission for discussion groups to make as many copies as needed for free distribution to participants

Week One: Grieving—chapters 1-5

Icebreaker: Which postcard did you like most? Which chapter was your favorite? Which journaling exercise was most helpful for you? *How would you feel after a 50-mile hike like Naomi and Ruth took?*

Discussion Questions

- The widows in Ruth seem pretty special since we can read about them in the Bible, but in what ways were they like ordinary women today?
- What are the ways a person's identity might change because of loss?
- How can listing her losses help a widow through grief?
- What tasks could you start on now in case you decide to move in the future? What would it take for you to decide to re-locate after loss?
- What sort of mountains and challenges do you face? How would seeing them as part of the scenery along the way, rather than the destination, offer hope and help?
- What do you think of the statement that every widow needs both kindness and rest? What might have happened in this Bible story if Naomi had *not* prayed for kindness and rest? What should we do if we feel our prayers are going nowhere?

Conclusion: Establish a routine of taking prayer requests and closing with a prayer. Thank everyone for coming and decide when and where you'll meet next time. Session 2—**Changing**—will include the three choices of widows, how friendships change, Naomi's big meltdown and more!



Week 2: Changing—chapters 6-10

Icebreaker Which postcard did you like most? Which chapter was your favorite? Which journaling exercise was most helpful for you? *If you could live anywhere in the world you wanted, where would you choose to go?*

Discussion Questions

- On page 59 is a list of some misconceptions which are easy to believe when we are suffering. Which one do you think is the most common for people today?
- Discuss the three choices for widows in chapter 7. In which group do you find yourself---1) remain? 2) return? 3) risk?
- During grief, some widows are drawn closer to the wonder and love of God, as Ruth. Others struggle like Naomi. How do you see faith existing in both of these women?
- Have friendships changed for you since your husband died? If so, what are some character traits you need to look for in new friendships?
- How would you have felt and responded to the villagers of Bethlehem if you were Naomi returning home after ten years and so much loss?
- There are both similarities and differences between Naomi's outburst in Ruth 1:21 and Christ's cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? How are they similar? How are they vastly different?
- Do you view your experience in following God as closer to Ruth's or more like Naomi's?

Conclusion: Take prayer requests and close in prayer. Thank everyone for coming and decide when and where you'll meet next time to talk about section three—**Working**—taking the next step, a turning point in grief, safe people and much more!

Week 3: Working—chapters 11-15

Icebreaker: Which postcard did you like most? Which chapter was your favorite? Which journaling exercise was most helpful for you? *Have you had any days this past week when you could barely "Do the next thing?" Is anyone in the group having sleeping problems?*

Discussion Questions

- What sort of needs did Ruth and Naomi encounter? How are they similar to widows' needs today?
- How can needs be doorways of opportunity? How would a prayer for kindness and rest, and Ruth's looking for a field in which she'd find favor, apply today?
- How would you have felt if you were waiting, like Ruth, for Boaz to determine your fate?
- Have you personally found your relationship to Christ to be at the "My daughter" level, or is it more impersonal? (page 114).
- Who are the people in your life who play roles similar to Ruth, Naomi and Boaz?
- Which of the roles on a "board of directors" for a widow do you think would be helpful? (page 140)
- How can gratitude truly provide a turning point in a widow's life?
- What are you most afraid of? What sort of help do you need to face that fear?
- What are some practical tips and words of advice you've heard since the funeral?

Conclusion: Take prayer requests and close in prayer. Thank everyone for coming and decide when and where you'll meet next time to talk about section four—**Waiting**. We'll discuss our experiences and perhaps frustrations of waiting for help, talk about dating and remarriage in today's society, virtue, and what each one might like to look for in a man.

Week 4: Waiting—chapters 16-20

Icebreaker: Which postcard did you like most? Which chapter was your favorite? Which journaling exercise was most helpful for you? *Some widows remove their wedding ring right away, others will never remove it. How does everyone feel about their wedding ring?*

Discussion Questions

- Why do you suppose the villagers didn't pitch in right away and initiate the kinsman-redeemer help for Naomi and Ruth? Do you think you might be in the same sort of waiting period Naomi and Ruth were in? Let's list some ways they could have responded to this frustrating situation.
- Which response did you check off on page 155 regarding remarriage?
- How different is dating in today's culture from when you and your husband were dating?
- What safeguards do you think are best for a widow? Why is it important to protect virtue?
- Have there been times when you've felt like you've been waiting in the dark like Ruth? (page 170) What happens to faith when we can't see ahead?
- Which verse on page 172 meant the most to you? Explain why if you'd like.
- Which character traits of Boaz would you most admire if you met a potential "Boaz" today?
- What would happen if you had a "Naomi" in your own life? When have you found yourself being a "Naomi" to another widow?

Conclusion: Take prayer requests and close in prayer. Thank everyone for coming and decide when and where you'll meet next time to talk about section five—**Blessing**. Remind them to read the chapters and do the journaling exercises. This time they may also do some research if interested: Read Matthew 1 and list all the women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ. After counting them, find out how many of them were widows.



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Email: WCPlace@gmail.com

*A safe place, a healing place, a place
to belong for long as you want . . .*

TO:

Week 5: Blessing—chapters 21-25

Icebreaker: Which postcard did you like most? Which chapter was your favorite? Which journaling exercise was most helpful for you? *Find out if anyone did the research on Matthew 1. Ask if they were surprised by the number of widows in the genealogy of Christ and if they found it significant.*

Discussion Questions

- Which of the struggling women's stories in chapter 21 did you find the most tragic or unsettling? How can knowing about their struggles help us with our own?
- Who are the women in your family line who have overcome obstacles and hardships?
- Which Hebrew name for God on page 201 means the most to you?
- Sketch a timeline of your life as described on page 208. Use it to briefly tell a bit about your life.
- What difference would it make in the world today if we began to treat the people in our sphere of influence as if they will someday be royalty?
- What might intrigue you about Isaiah 54:5?
- Do you "run your race" any differently now as compared to when you first started this journey? Compare your answers on pages 227 in section five, and page 11 in section one.
- Name three different things you look forward to in heaven.

Conclusion: Thank everyone for coming and decide if you'd like to get together in a month or so for a social time. You've probably begun to develop some good friendships so give everyone a chance to exchange phone numbers or email addresses if they haven't done so by now. If the Lord leads, close your time together by forming a circle, hold hands, or each place a hand on another's shoulder and read the blessing on page 201 as a prayer over all of you. Or follow your previous closing prayer routine.
