

Stay Out Of Moab

The last bit of advice I will give you is to ...

Stay out of Moab!

I previously shared two thoughts for ensuring a happy marriage.

**Cling, Cling, Cling
The Wow Factor**

When you marry and henceforth you are to cling to each other as though no one else exists. Just like Adam and Eve, the first married couple who were alone. They were the only couple on the planet. Their source of direction was God Almighty. Husband and Wife, had to cling to each other and God Almighty to survive. This is still true today.

Since Adam and Eve, the world population has increased dramatically, and selecting one's spouse takes a bit of effort especially if you want it to last happily for a lifetime. When we find someone whose soul, spirit and body meshes with ours we enter what I call the WOW factor.

Going forward the best advice I can give you is to stay out of Moab.

Let me explain.

Moab is a country just outside of Israel that had its beginning in a cave. Maybe you recall the story found in Genesis 19...

Lot and his family had been told by God to leave Sodom immediately as He was going to totally destroy the area.

They were warned to leave and not even look back as God reigned down His judgement.

Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt as she disobeyed God and looked back at Sodom, maybe with the desire to go back. God had warned her, but she disobeyed anyway.

Following the destruction of Sodom, Lot and his two daughters took up housing in a cave overlooking the city. While living in this cave, Lot's two daughters felt they would never have a husband or children, so they devised a plan and got their father drunk and seduced him.

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The children born from that incestuous relationship were Moab and Benammi who became known as the Moabites and the Ammonites.

These two nations were continuously a thorn and an enemy to the nation Israel.

With this background let's go to Ruth 1 to gain clarity.

Ruth 1:1- "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, gamed down His judgement. green and continued there..."

In this verse we are introduced to a happy Hebrew family residing in the country of Judah, in the city of Bethlehem.

How do we know they were happy?

Look at their names.

Elimelech means, "God is my King;"

Naomi means "Pleasant;"

Mahlon means "Song;"

Chilion means "Satisfaction."

Ruth 1:1 is strongly saying that this family had God Almighty as their King and they all enjoyed God's blessings and they continued to read, study and meditate on God's word. This family was one whereby their names told the story of their faith. We see God was their King and as a result, there was pleasantness, song, and satisfaction. Why? This is what it means to live in the city of Bethlehem.

Bethlehem means, "House of Bread," and it is the city where Jesus, the Bread of Life would be born. No wonder there was satisfaction and pleasantness in Elimelech's family. No wonder there were songs and happiness. God was their King, and they were living in the Word (House of Bread).

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It is so important to understand that Jesus is The Word of God, and this family was living in and by the Word. We will always be a happy, blessed, successful people if we dwell in the House of Bread, which is the Word of God. As Pastor Caruso stated, “When we eat of heavenly manna, we will experience earthly happiness.”

Read Psalm 1:1-3. It declares. “Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; [2] But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law, he meditates day and night. [3] He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, which brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.”

What is an oak tree? An oak tree is simply a little nut that grew and grew digging its roots deep into the ground and reached great height, strength and stands steadfast We’re all to be like that nut. If we refuse to give ground and plant our roots solidly in the Word of God, we will find ourselves experiencing God’s blessing. if we study it, meditate on it, devour it, and make it the top priority in our lives—we will find ourselves growing in strength and stability and becoming like a tree planted by the rivers of water.

Notice also that Elimelech’s family not only resided in the city of Bethlehem, but in the tribe of Judah. Throughout the Book of Ruth, Bethlehem is always hyphenated with Judah. Judah means, “Praise.” Throughout the Book of Ruth, Bethlehem is always hyphenated with Judah. Judah means, “Praise.” Therefore, there is a connection between the House of Bread—which is the Word of God—and Praise—which ascends toward God.

David, the psalmist of Israel, declared this in Psalm 119: “I will praise thee O Lord, when I have learned thy statutes.” A person who is learning about the ways of God and the character of God through the Word of God cannot help but overflow in praise to God.

This family overflowed with praise to God, and they were blessed abundantly.

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Then something happened.

Ruth 1;1 tells us that “there was a famine in the land.”

Oh, my goodness, things are so good and then suddenly a huge challenge looms before us that stresses and tests every fabric of our faith. How do we react? How do we get through difficult situations?

There are two ways: Take it to God or take matters into your own hands.

This family took matters into their own hands. At Naomi’s urging, according to many biblical scholars, Elimelech and his family left Betlehem when the famine came to the land. Understand that they had not lost their position before God as believers, they simply didn’t handle this challenge appropriately, they had a weakness in their faith. This is why God tests us, to point out our weaknesses so we can fix them.

You may be thinking, “How could a famine possibly inflict God’s holy city, the House of Bread, the Place of Praise?” God often used famines to correct His people’s behavior and return them to Him.

Second Chronicles 7 teaches that the cure for famine is to remain where you are and call upon God. But Elimelech and his family decided to ignore God and go to Moab instead. They decided to take matters into their own hands and escape God’s judgment. For Elimelech and Naomi to leave Betlehem-Judah at this point for this reason was disobedience.

It does not matter how close to God you might be, there will come into your life-times of dryness and times of difficulty. This is for testing your faith. Testing is not to destroy you or your faith. Instead. It is to strengthen you, show you where your weaknesses lie so you can correct them. The question is not whether difficulties will come. The question is: “Who will you go to when they do?” You or God? During difficulties who will we rely on, God or our own efforts?

(2 Chronicles 7:12-20) “Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. [13] When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people.

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[14] if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. [15] Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. [16] For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. [17] As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, [18] then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.' [19] "But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, [20] then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples."

In the Book of Isaiah, the Lord declared that He would go with us through the fire (Isaiah 43:2. "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.")

But so often we want to avoid fire. We want to change our circumstances. We want to run from the difficulties. Not deal with our problems. So we take matters into our own hands rather than rely on God.

So, when famine came, Elimelech, upon the prodding of his wife Naomi, decided that instead of praying it through and remaining in the land until God graciously blessed them again, they relocated to Moab, where they heard that life was great, and nobody lacked anything. It seemed to be the chance of a lifetime. In reality, however, it was a death march toward the grave.

Naomi's sad life in Moab.

And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died and she was left, and her two sons.

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“God is King” always dies in Moab. If I’m living in the sewer of the world, I can no longer say, “God is my King.” Once I leave Bethlehem–Judah, the House of Bread and the Place of Praise—the rule and reign of God in my life will dissipate and die. Whenever we quit reading and studying the Word of God, He is no longer alive in us.

Following Elimelech’s death, and against Old Testament Law, Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women.

Parents, when we go to Moab—when we kick back, choose our will over God’s, and pursue worldly things—do you know who suffers and pays the price? Our kids. Kids end up marrying worldly spouses when parents choose Moab (the World) over Bethlehem (the Word).

The name of one Moabite wife was correctly Orpah’s which means “Youthful” or “Immature.”

The other wife’s name was Ruth which means “Friendship.”

The Midrash—the Hebrew commentary respected by all biblical historians—declares that Ruth was none other than the daughter of king Eglon of Moab. He oppressed the Israelites for eighteen years. He was the only man in the Bible ever referred to as a “very fat man” (Judges 3:17), Eglon met his death when the Lord raised up Ehud to kill him with a double-edged dagger.

Imagine that?

A Hebrew marries the daughter of one of the most hated and oppressive enemies of Israel.

After 10 years their boys died just like their father further crushing Naomi. She had left Bethlehem with everything. She had left the Word of God and was going to do things her way. She no longer allowed God to be her King, she had no song or satisfaction in her life. She was no longer pleasant and had become bitter.

In Ruth 1:21 Naomi declares, “I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty:”

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Underline this verse in your Bible and underscore it in your mind? This is the reason backsliding is so destructive. When you leave Bethlehem-Judah—the House of Bread, the Place of Praise—and wander off to Moab, you will always leave full, but come back empty. Sin always brings sorrow and sadness. Be not deceived, God is not mocked—whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap (Galatians 6:7).

Naomi went through ten years of hell on earth and would carry scars for the rest of her life because she left the land of the true and living God. She quit being in the Word.

Sin always adds to your sorrows, subtracts from your energy, multiplies your troubles, and divides your loyalty.

Naomi went out full but returned empty. But praise God, the remaining three chapters of the Book of Ruth will chronicle Naomi's refilling and recharging as the Lord renews and revives her. Naomi's story should be both an inspiration and a warning to all believers.

Not all is lost in Moab. Ruth sees the life her husband and his family lived for 10 years and when Naomi made the decision to leave Moab and return to Bethlehem, Ruth insisted upon abandoning Moab and going to Bethlehem with Naomi. In Ruth 1:15-17, - And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. Ruth embraces Judaism, accepts the Lord God Almighty as her personal lord and savior. Ruth goes on to become the great grandmother of King David.

Let me conclude with this God created each one of us so He could fellowship with us. He wants to spend eternity with you and your spouse, personally. He wants you to enjoy everything He has with abandon for all eternity. No pain, no problems, no suffering. Just total joy. He created you for His joy. He has written the Bible so you can read all about God, His plans, how to have a great life and relationship, everything we need to know is in the Bible.

How can you have a great marriage? Stay in the Bible every day, seek God first in all things.