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