

Let It Go to God

A 10-Day Reading Plan on Surrender and Grief

Surrender is not the same as giving up. Giving up walks away. Surrender walks toward.

10 Days · 8-12 min/day · All levels · NKJV

Surrender is not the same as giving up. Giving up walks away. Surrender walks toward — toward the God who arrives in the wilderness, who receives the bitter without correcting it, who lets a woman pour out everything she has and calls it exactly right. This plan follows four women who knew loss — and found that the God who permits the grief is the same God who arrives in it.

Hagar discovered she was seen when no one else was looking. Naomi came home empty, said so without apology, and watched God restore what the years had taken. Ruth surrendered her entire world to walk into the unknown beside a grieving old woman. Mary of Bethany poured out a year's wages without calculating the cost. Each day: read the NKJV passage, reflect, pray aloud, and write honestly in your journal. Open your hands. Let it go to God.

DAYS 1-3 · HAGAR

The God Who Sees

Hagar was abandoned twice and found that God saw her when no one else did. She gave Him a name — El Roi — and became the only person in Scripture to do so. These three days are for anyone who has ever felt invisible.

DAY 1 · HAGAR · WHEN YOU FEEL INVISIBLE

El Roi — The God Who Sees

Genesis 16:7-13

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Genesis 16:7-13

""Now the Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness... And He said, 'Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?'... Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, 'Have I also here seen Him who sees me?'"

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

Hagar was a slave, an Egyptian, used and then discarded. Sarai had given her to Abram as a surrogate; when Hagar conceived and Sarai felt diminished, she treated Hagar harshly until Hagar fled into the wilderness — pregnant, alone, with nowhere to go. And then the Angel of the LORD found her. Not

Abram. Not Sarai. Hagar. A slave on a road to nowhere, beside a spring in the desert. The text is specific: He "found her." He knew exactly where she was.

Hagar gave God a name — El Roi, the God Who Sees — and she is the only person in Scripture to do so. In all the great patriarchal narratives, with all the divine visitations to Abraham and the prophets, it is Hagar — the slave, the outsider, the one with no power and no position — who names God by what she experienced of Him. You are not invisible to God. However small, however hidden, however dismissed — He finds you. He speaks to you specifically.

PRAYER

"El Roi — You are the God who sees. You see me now: what I am carrying, what has been done to me, where I am hiding. I do not need to explain it. You already know. Find me here, as You found Hagar — not when I had it together, but when I had run out of options. I am here. Amen."

Journal prompt:

Hagar named God by what she experienced: "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees." In what specific moment — past or present — have you experienced God seeing you in a way no one else did? Write it as your own name for Him. And: where do you need Him to see you right now?

DAY 2 · HAGAR · WHEN YOU HIT THE WALL

She Sat Down and Wept

Genesis 21:14–17

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Genesis 21:14–17

"And she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. Then she went and sat down across from him a good distance away... for she said to herself, 'Let me not see the death of the boy.' So she sat across from him, and lifted her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, 'What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.'"

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

The second time Hagar is in the wilderness is worse than the first. Now she has her son. The water is gone. The boy is dying. She places him under a shrub and sits down a bowshot away — far enough that she cannot watch him die. This is the limit of what a person can endure: the complete exhaustion of hope, the inability to witness what is about to happen. She wept. The text does not say she prayed. She did not have words for prayer. She only had weeping.

And God heard. Notice the tenderness: "God has heard the voice of the lad where he is." Not where he should have been. Not where he should have arrived. Where he was — in the shade of a shrub in the wilderness. God meets us exactly where we are, in the precise geography of our exhaustion. Hagar did not have to perform faith she did not have, or find her way to a better position first. She wept. And that was enough for God to respond.

PRAYER

"Lord, I have sat a bowshot away from my own grief because I could not bear to watch it. I have run out of water and words. Receive my weeping as prayer — it is the only honest thing I have right now. Meet me where I am, not where I should be. Amen."

Journal prompt:

"She sat a bowshot away because she could not watch." Is there something in your life right now that you have been grieving from a distance — unable to look directly at it? Write honestly about what that is. You do not have to resolve it. Just name it. God hears from where you are.

DAY 3 · HAGAR · WHAT GOD OPENS

Then God Opened Her Eyes

Genesis 21:18–20

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Genesis 21:18–20

"Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation." Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer."

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. Four words — and they reframe everything. The well was already there. Hagar had not seen it. She had been sitting in the presence of provision she did not have the eyes to perceive. Sometimes the miracle is not the creation of something new — it is the opened eyes to see what is already present. She ran, filled the water skin, gave the boy a drink. The action followed the seeing.

The final line of Hagar's story is one of the most understated endings in Scripture: "So God was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness." Hagar's willingness to sit in her grief — not performing hope she did not have — led to the opened eyes and the full water skin and a son who grew and flourished. Grief does not have to be productive to be held by God. She only had to weep. And that was enough.

PRAYER

"Lord, open my eyes to the well that is already here. I have been sitting in the presence of provision I could not see because my grief was too heavy. Open what only You can open. Show me what has been there all along. Let me rise, fill my hands, and give the ones I love a drink. Amen."

Journal prompt:

"God opened her eyes, and she saw a well that was already there." Has God ever shown you provision — comfort, a person, a way forward — that had been present but invisible in your grief? Write about that moment of opened eyes. And: what might He be asking you to see right now that your grief is obscuring?

DAYS 4–8 · NAOMI & RUTH

Empty Hands, Open Road

Naomi came home empty and named herself bitter. Ruth surrendered her entire world to walk into the unknown beside her. Together their story becomes one of the most complete pictures of redemption in the Old Testament: how God works in the empty spaces.

DAY 4 · RUTH · SURRENDER AS LOYALTY

Into the Unknown

Ruth 1:14–18

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Ruth 1:14–18

""But Ruth said: 'Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.' When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.""

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

Ruth's declaration to Naomi is one of the most beautiful passages in the Old Testament. It is also a radical act of surrender — not of her comfort or convenience, but of her entire world. She was a Moabite widow choosing to go with a Jewish widow back to a country that regarded Moabites with historical hostility. She had no guaranteed future, no legal protection, no established position. What she had was love for a grieving old woman who had told her twice to go back.

Her surrender was deliberate, specific, and comprehensive. She listed what she was letting go: her country, her people, her gods, her future. She gave all of it to the God of Naomi — a God she had never personally met, in a land she had never visited, through a relationship with a bitter woman who had nothing visible to offer. This is what surrender as faith looks like: not a shrug or resignation, but a full-throated, eyes-open commitment to walk into the unknown with the God she had heard about from the person beside her.

PRAYER

"Lord, give me the surrender of Ruth — not passive, not reluctant, but deliberate and specific. Let me name what I am releasing, one thing at a time, and give it to You the way she gave her entire world to Naomi's God. Let my surrender be a choice, not a capitulation. Lead me, and I will follow. Amen."

Journal prompt:

Ruth's surrender was comprehensive — she named everything she was giving up, one category at a time. Write your own declaration: name the specific things you are releasing to God today. Not in resignation, but in deliberate, eyes-open surrender. What does "wherever You go, I will go" cost you personally right now?

DAY 5 · NAOMI · THE PERMISSION TO BE HONEST

Call Me Mara

Ruth 1:19–21

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Ruth 1:19–21

"But she said to them, 'Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?'"

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

Naomi returned to Bethlehem a widow who had buried both her sons. When the women of the city recognized her, she did not manage their expectations or perform a recovery she had not experienced. She said: stop calling me Naomi — pleasant. Call me Mara — bitter. Because that is what I am. The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full. I came home empty.

This moment is shocking in its bluntness. Naomi does not protect God's reputation by softening what she says. She names exactly what she believes has happened — and Scripture does not correct her in this moment. It records her grief in all its rawness, and then continues with the story. This is the permission you have been given: to say what is actually true about your experience, without dressing it up. "Bitter" is a valid name. God is not fragile. He can hold what is true about where you are.

PRAYER

"Lord, I am giving You my honest name today — not the one I perform for other people, but the one that is actually true right now. I went out full and came home empty. I am not pretending otherwise. Receive this. Hold this. And be who You were to Naomi — the God who was working in the emptiness even before she could see it. Amen."

Journal prompt:

If you could name yourself honestly right now — not the name you carry in public, but the one that describes your actual interior state — what would that name be? Write it. Then write what you would want to say to God about how you arrived at it. Naomi said it in public. You can say it here.

DAY 6 · RUTH · PROVISION IN UNLIKELY PLACES

The Grace in the Gleaning

Ruth 2:2–3, 10–12

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Ruth 2:2–3, 10–12

""So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain.' And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.' Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz... Then Boaz answered and said to her, 'The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.'""

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

Ruth went out to glean — a provision in the Mosaic law for the poor, the widow, and the stranger. She did not demand or grasp. She asked. She worked. She picked up what the reapers had left. And she "happened" to come to the portion belonging to Boaz — a kinsman-redeemer of Naomi, a man of standing who noticed her, extended protection, and told his workers to leave grain in her path intentionally. The word "happened" carries the sense of divine arrangement. What looks like chance in Ruth's story is the quiet sovereignty of God disposing circumstances before she arrived.

Boaz's blessing to Ruth names what surrender produces: "a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." She had sheltered under God's wings. She worked

with open hands. She gleaned rather than grasped. And the reward came from Him. Gleaning is a picture of what surrender looks like in practice: take what is given, trust that the provision is in the field even when you cannot see it from where you are standing.

PRAYER

"Lord, I want to be someone who gleans rather than grasps — who takes what is given with gratitude rather than demanding what is not mine. Let me work with open hands, trust that the field You have placed me in holds what I need, and shelter under Your wings with the full weight of my life. Amen."

Journal prompt:

"She happened to come to the portion belonging to Boaz." Write about a moment when you "happened" upon provision — a person, an open door — that looking back was clearly more than coincidence. What was God arranging? And what field are you in right now that might contain more than you can presently see?

DAY 7 · NAOMI · GRACE YOU DIDN'T ARRANGE

When Something Kind Happens in the Dark

Ruth 2:18–20

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Ruth 2:18–20

"So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, 'Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.' So she told her... 'The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz.' Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'Blessed is he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!' And Naomi said to her, 'This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.'"

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

Something shifts in Naomi the moment Ruth brings home the ephah of barley. When she hears the field was Boaz's, something long-dormant wakes up in her. She says: "Blessed is he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead." This is the first time since her return that Naomi speaks of God's kindness rather than His bitterness. The provision she did not arrange, the field Ruth happened

upon, the man who gave intentional orders — she reads all of it as the fingerprint of hesed: covenant lovingkindness that persists even when we cannot see it.

The woman who named herself Mara is beginning, slowly, to see that what appeared empty sometimes contains provision she has not yet found. This is how grief turns: not in a single dramatic moment, but in small kindnesses we did not arrange, arriving unexpectedly, softening what had hardened. The God who seemed absent from Naomi's story was working in the fields of Bethlehem long before she knew to look there.

PRAYER

"Lord, open my eyes to the kindness You have not forsaken — the small, unannounced mercies I did not arrange and did not deserve. Even in the season I have named bitter, You have been present in ways I have not yet recognized. Teach me to read the fingerprints of Your hesed. Let them soften what grief has hardened. Amen."

Journal prompt:

In the hardest season you have walked through, was there a kindness that arrived unexpectedly — something you did not arrange, a person who showed up? Write about it as evidence of hesed — lovingkindness that does not forsake. What does that tell you about what God may be doing in your present emptiness?

DAY 8 · NAOMI · WHAT REDEMPTION LOOKS LIKE

The Restored Years

Ruth 4:13–17

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Ruth 4:13–17

"So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife... Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, 'There is a son born to Naomi.' And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David."

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

The women of Bethlehem — the same women who watched Naomi walk back into town empty — are now naming the child born to Ruth and Boaz as "a son born to Naomi." Naomi takes him to her bosom, holds

him close, nurses him. This is a picture of extravagant, unearned restoration. She did not just receive comfort. She received a son — the son of a son she had buried — through the love of a daughter-in-law she had tried to release, through the kinsman-redeemer she had not arranged.

Naomi could not have known, when she named herself Mara, that she would hold this child. She only had to be honest, stay present, and let God do what God does in the empty spaces of those who hold on. That child Obed became the grandfather of David — and an ancestor of Jesus. What Naomi carried in her emptiness, God carried into history. Redemption did not erase the loss — it grew something new from the soil of it.

PRAYER

"Lord, You are the God who restores the years the locust has eaten. I cannot see from here what You are growing in the soil of what I have lost. But Naomi could not see it either — she only had to hold on. Let me hold on. And let what You build from my emptiness carry something of You into the lives around me. Amen."

Journal prompt:

Naomi held Obed — the restoration of everything she had lost — and had not been able to see it coming. Is there a loss in your past that God has since turned or redeemed in a way you did not expect? Write about it as evidence of His restoring work. And: what are you inviting Him to redeem in you right now?

DAYS 9–10 · MARY OF BETHANY

Open Hands, Costly Love

Mary sits at the feet of Jesus when everyone else is busy, and then pours out a year's wages on His feet without calculating the cost. Jesus defends both acts. She is the final word in this plan: this is what it looks like when love outspends reason.

DAY 9 · MARY OF BETHANY · CHOOSING WHAT CANNOT BE TAKEN

The Better Part

Luke 10:40–42

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

Luke 10:40–42

""But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.' And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.'""

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

Mary sat at Jesus' feet while Martha served. Both women loved Jesus. When Martha asked Jesus to tell Mary to help her, He gently corrected Martha's framing — not her service, but her anxiety — and then defended Mary's choice with one of the most striking lines in His teaching: "She has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." The word "chosen" is deliberate. Mary was not lazy. She was practicing a form of surrender that is perhaps the most difficult of all: the surrender of productivity.

The anxiety that says I must justify my presence by what I do — Mary laid that down. She sat. She listened. She was fully present to the person who mattered most. And Jesus said: this is the one thing needed. Everything else can be taken — circumstances, relationships, health, certainty, plans. The one thing that cannot be taken is the presence cultivated at His feet. After ten days in a plan about grief and surrender, this may be the deepest truth: you do not have to do anything to be with God. You only have to sit.

PRAYER

"Lord, I want to choose the better part — not because I am indifferent, but because I have finally understood that everything else can be taken and You cannot. Teach me to sit. Teach me to be present to You the way Mary was: fully, without agenda, without needing to prove my worth by what I produce. One thing is needed. Let it be You. Amen."

Journal prompt:

"One thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away." What is the one thing in your life that cannot be taken — that has remained even through the losses you have walked through? And what are the "many things" crowding it out? Write about both.

DAY 10 · MARY OF BETHANY · WHEN LOVE OUTSPENDS REASON

The Alabaster Jar

John 12:3–7

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

John 12:3–7

""Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot... said, 'Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?' ... But Jesus said, 'Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.'""

New King James Version (NKJV)

REFLECTION

The spikenard was worth three hundred denarii — a year's wages. Mary broke it open and poured it on the feet of Jesus. When Judas objected, Jesus said two words: "Let her alone." And then He named what she had done: "She has kept this for the day of My burial." Mary may have understood something the disciples had not yet accepted — that Jesus was about to die. What looked like extravagance to the room was, in Jesus' framing, an act of prophetic preparation: anointing the body before the burial.

The act itself is the final sermon on surrender. Mary gave the most valuable thing she owned — not out of obligation, not in calculation, not expecting return. She poured it on the One she loved, at the moment she understood was most important, and wiped His feet with her hair — the most intimate, self-giving gesture

available to her. "The house was filled with the fragrance of the oil." Surrender that is full and costly changes the atmosphere of the room. What you hold back protects you. What you pour out transforms everything around you. Open your hands. Let it go to God.

PRAYER

"Lord, I have been holding the jar. I know what is in it — and what it would cost to pour it out. I have been calculating whether the cost is too high. Mary did not calculate. She poured. Whatever I have been keeping back — my grief, my bitterness, my unanswered questions, my most precious thing — I am opening my hands. Let it go to You. Fill this room with the fragrance. Amen."

Journal prompt:

Write the name of the one thing you have been holding most tightly. Then write: "I am opening my hands. Let it go to God." Below it, write what you believe God holds in the open hands He extends to you. Surrender is not the end of the story. It is the beginning of what God does next.

"The house was filled with the fragrance of the oil."

John 12:3 · New King James Version (NKJV)

What you hold back protects you.

What you pour out transforms everything around you.

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