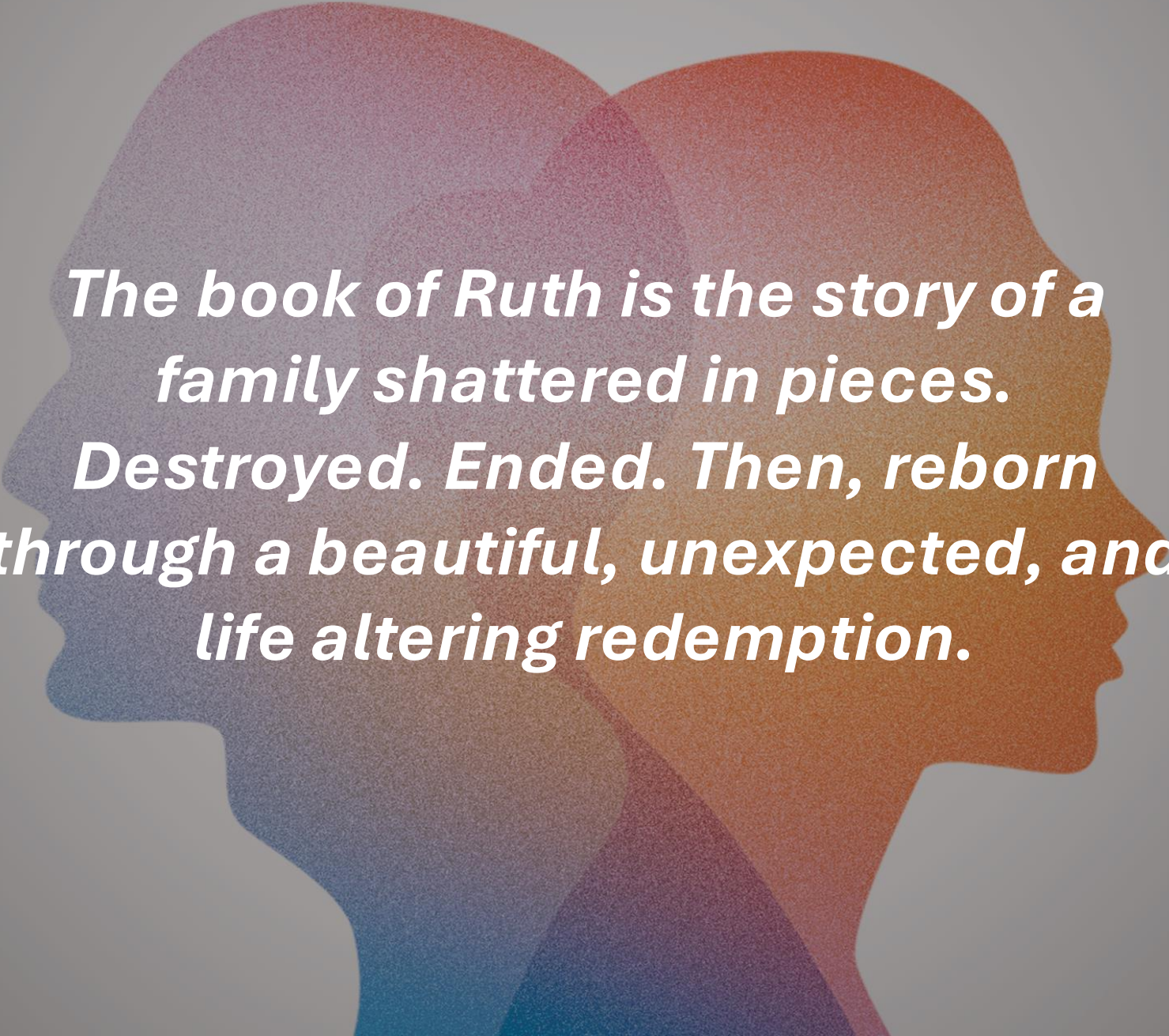


HOPE *in* FAMILY MATTERS

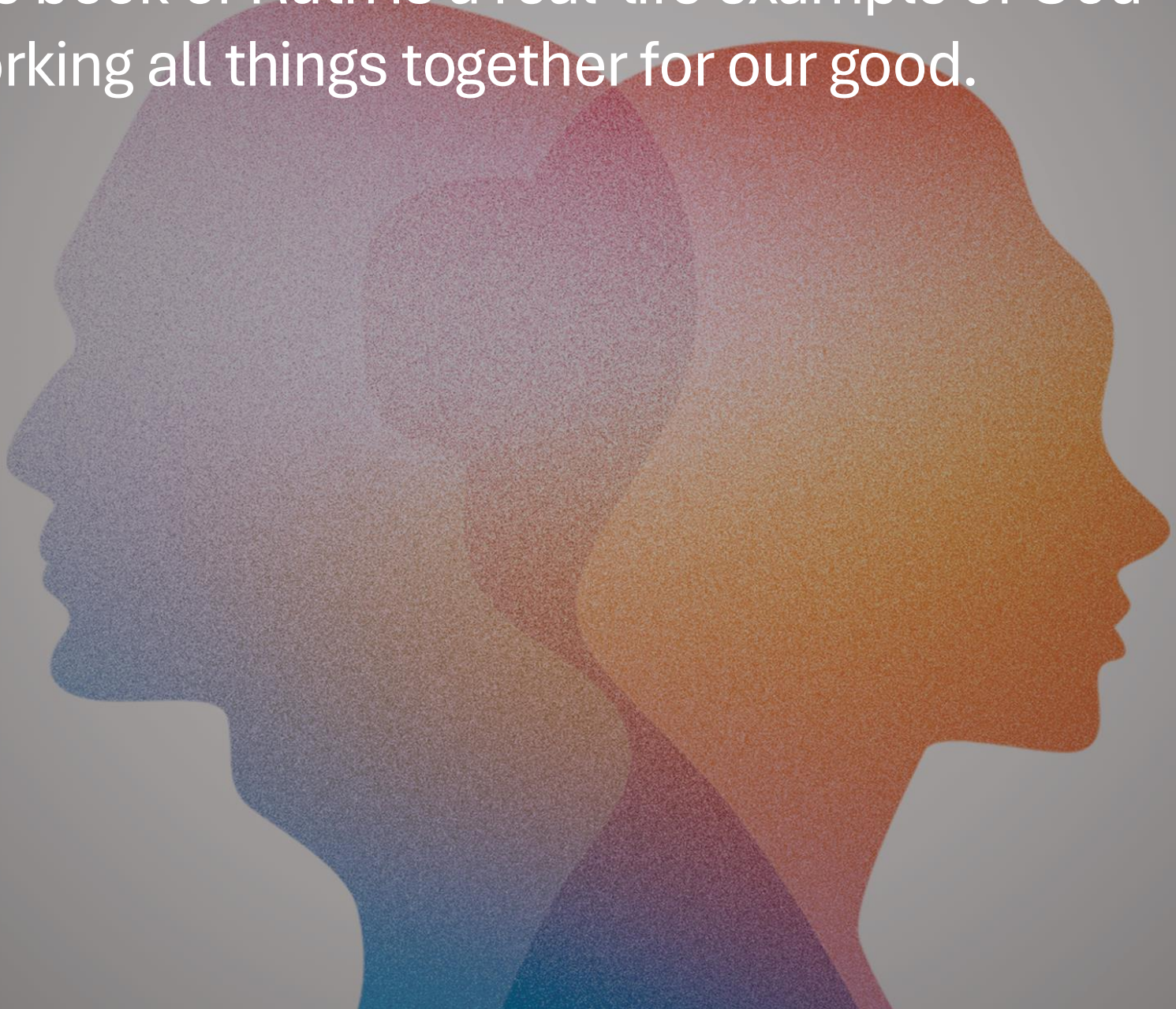
When Grief Meets God's Grace

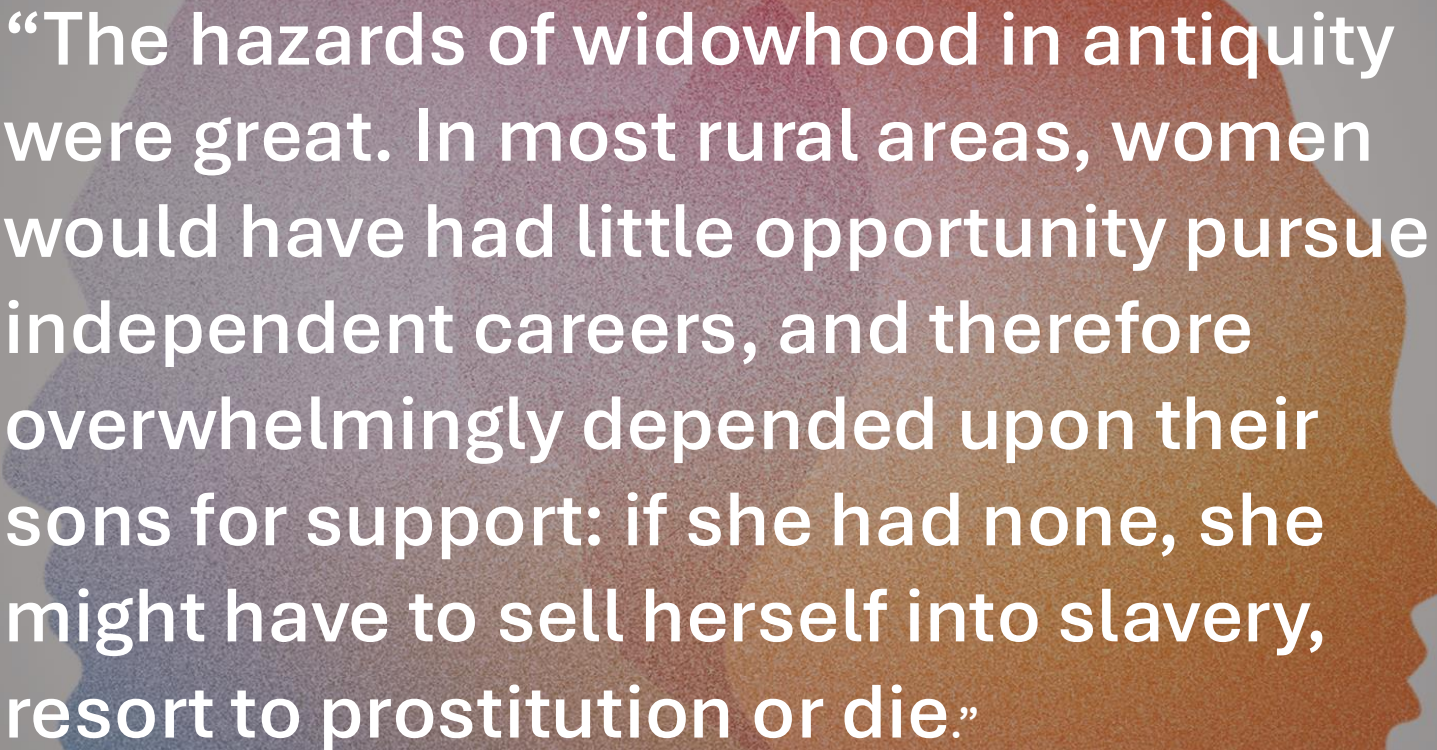
Ruth 1



*The book of Ruth is the story of a
family shattered in pieces.
Destroyed. Ended. Then, reborn
through a beautiful, unexpected, and
life altering redemption.*

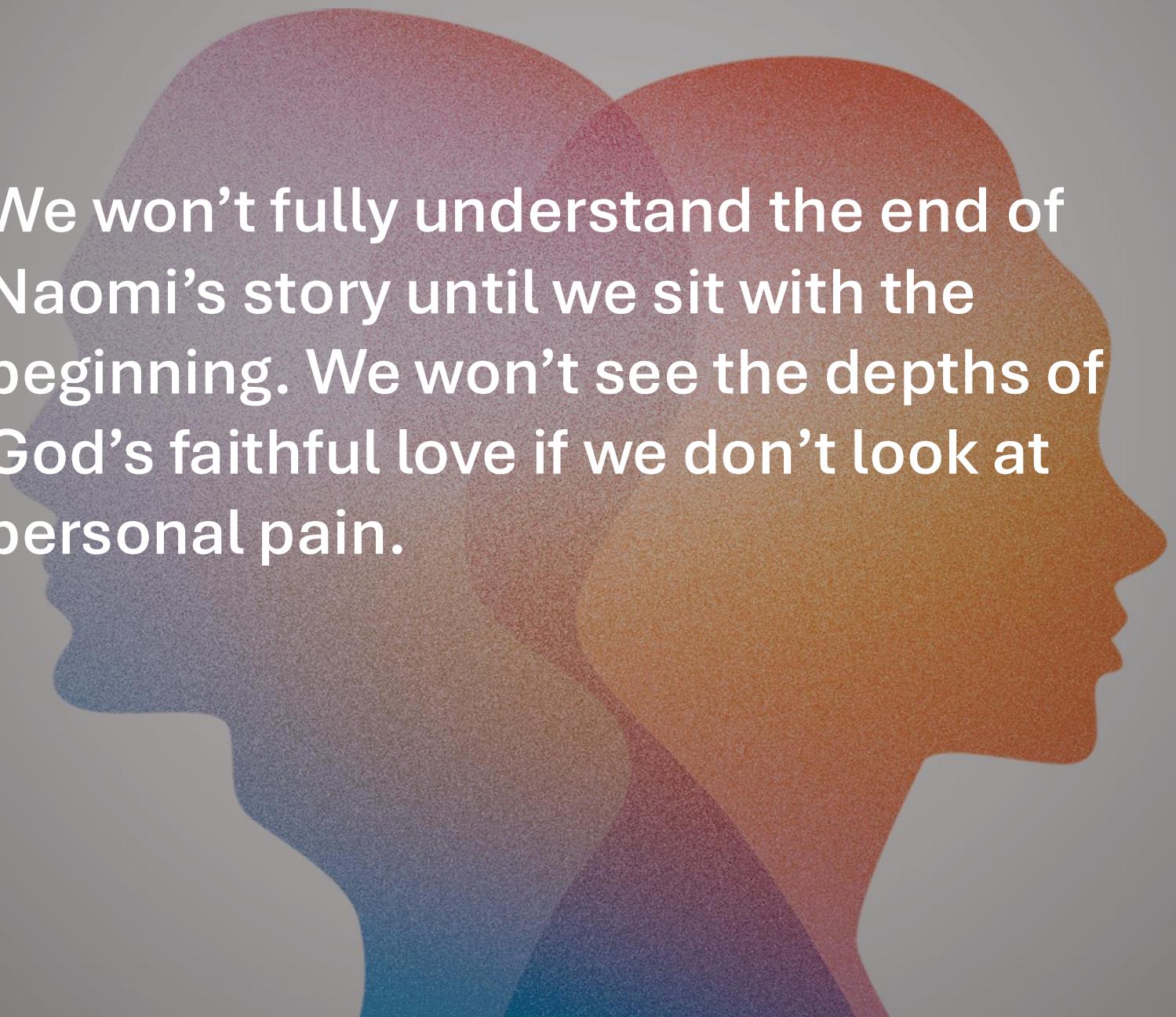
The book of Ruth is a real-life example of God working all things together for our good.





“The hazards of widowhood in antiquity were great. In most rural areas, women would have had little opportunity pursue independent careers, and therefore overwhelmingly depended upon their sons for support: if she had none, she might have to sell herself into slavery, resort to prostitution or die.”

– NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, Zondervan Publishing p.449

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- We won't fully understand the end of Naomi's story until we sit with the beginning. We won't see the depths of God's faithful love if we don't look at personal pain.

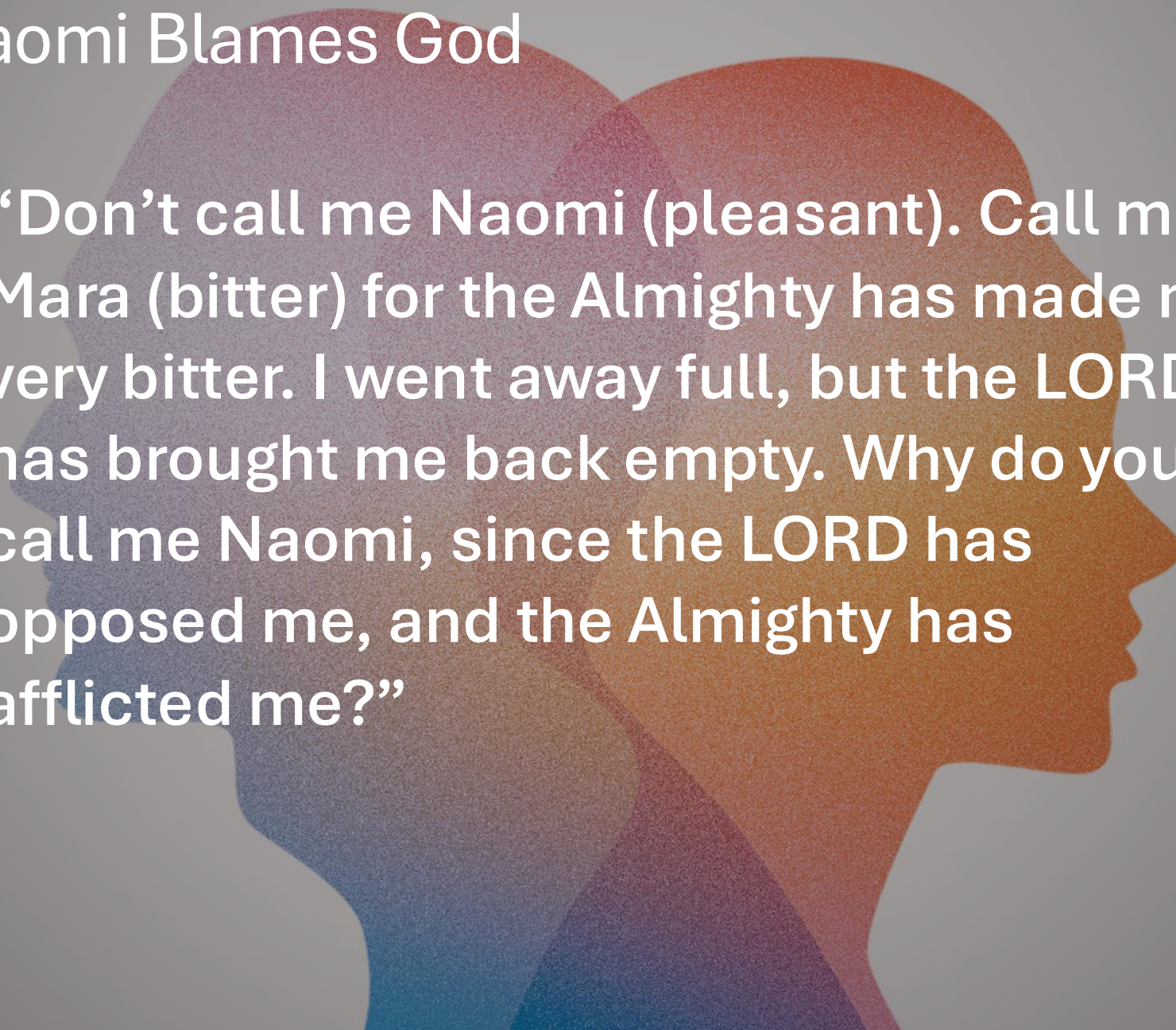
Personal Pain Inventory

- Loss
- Miscarriage
- Illness
- Accident
- Infertility
- Lost Dreams
- Abandonment
- Loneliness
- Infidelity
- Wayward Child
- Poverty
- Betrayal
- Homelessness
- Food Insecurity
- Sexual, Physical, Verbal Abuse
- Victim of a Crime
- Trauma
- Abortion
- Gave Child Up for Adoption



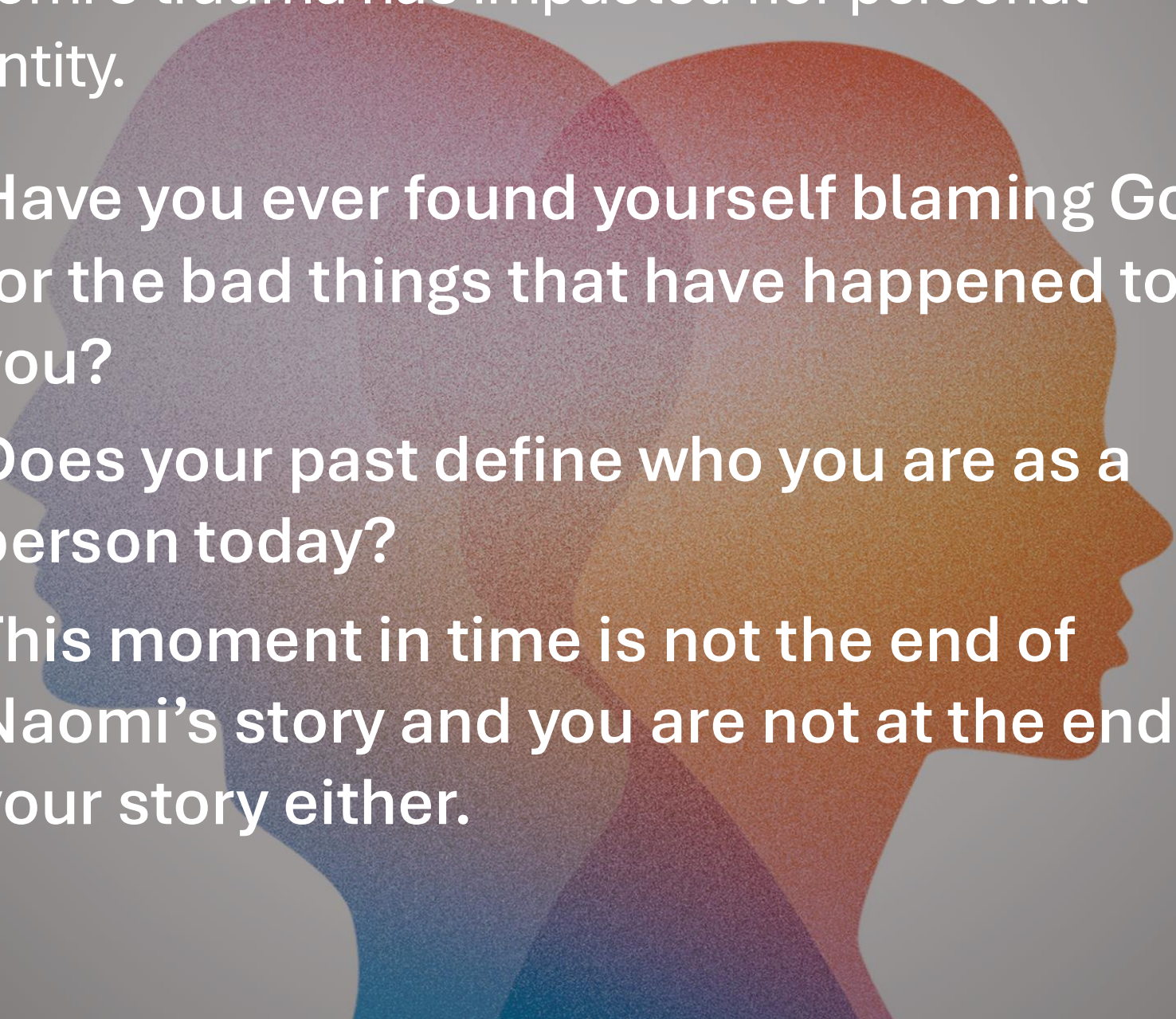
Naomi Blames God

- “Don’t call me Naomi (pleasant). Call me Mara (bitter) for the Almighty has made me very bitter. I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has opposed me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”



Naomi's trauma has impacted her personal identity.

- Have you ever found yourself blaming God for the bad things that have happened to you?
- Does your past define who you are as a person today?
- This moment in time is not the end of Naomi's story and you are not at the end of your story either.



*You can't go back and change
the beginning, but you can
start where you are and
change the ending.*

C.S. Lewis

What Jesus says about our losses and our identity.

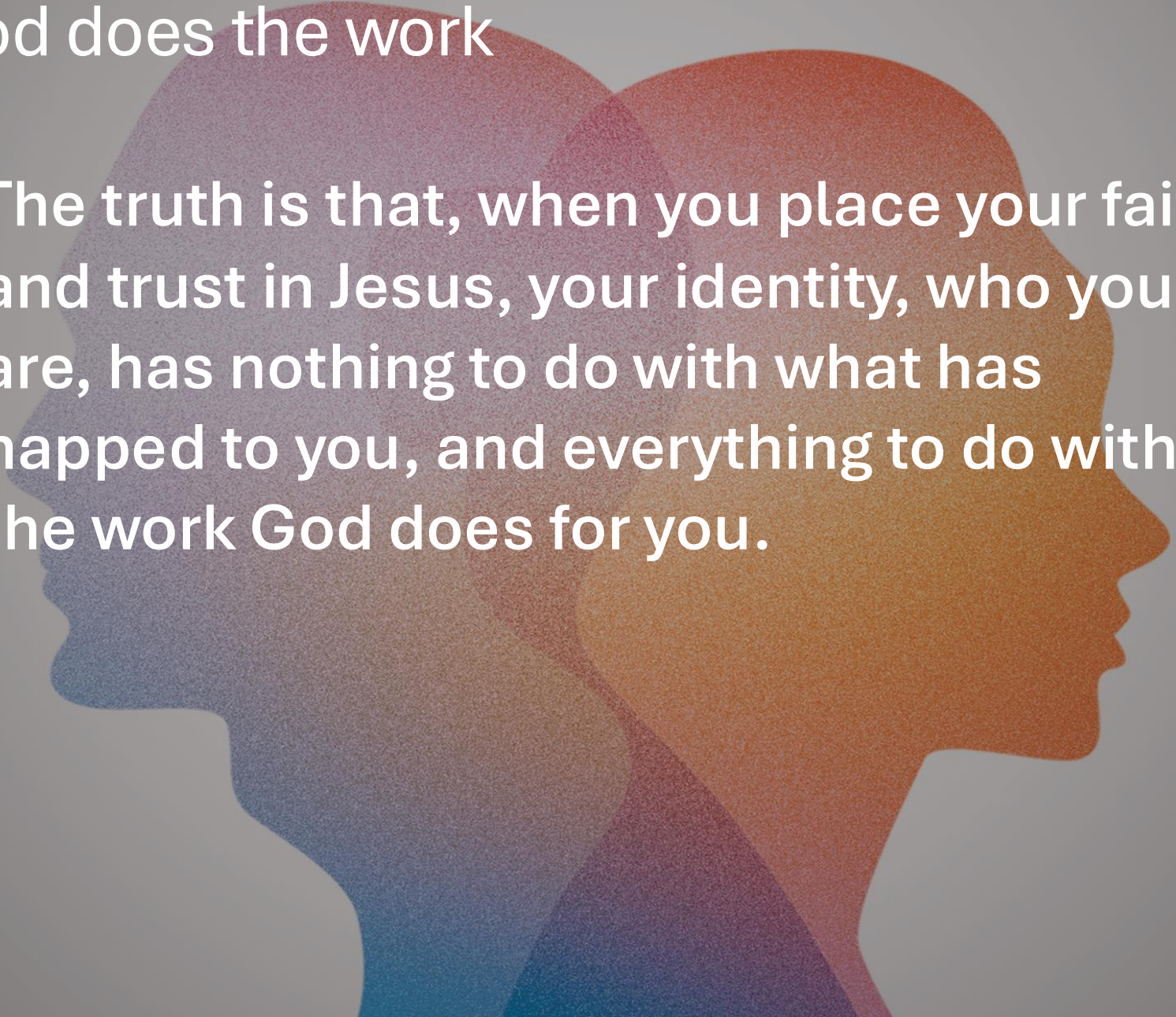
- Isaiah 61: The Spirit of the Lord God is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of our God's vengeance; to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who mourn in Zion; to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, festive oil instead of mourning, and splendid clothes instead of despair. And they will be called righteous trees, planted by the LORD to glorify him. They will rebuild the ancient ruins; they will restore the former devastations; they will renew the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. CSB

What Jesus says about our losses and our identity.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! CSB
- Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. NLT

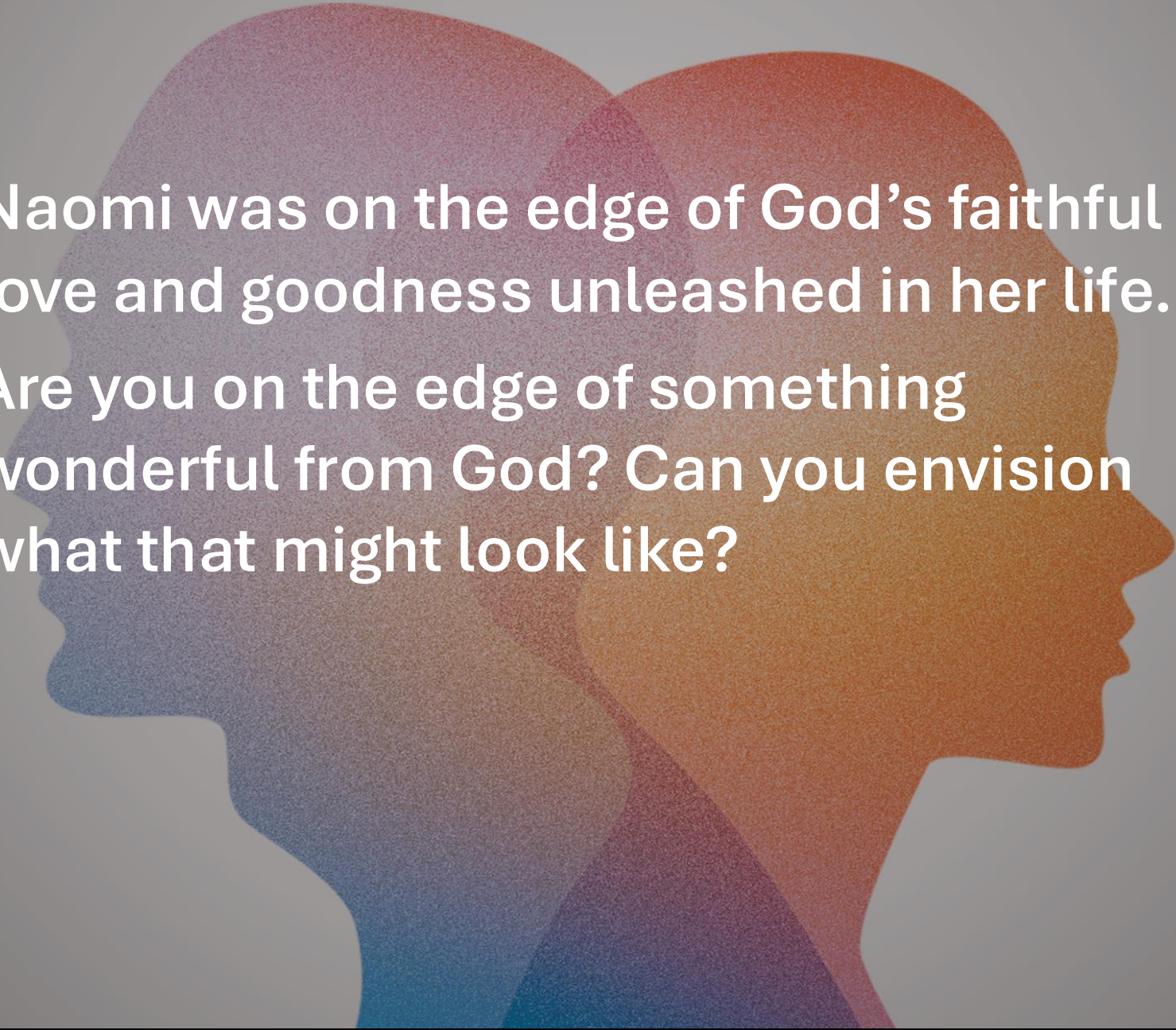
God does the work

- The truth is that, when you place your faith and trust in Jesus, your identity, who you are, has nothing to do with what has happened to you, and everything to do with the work God does for you.



God does the work.

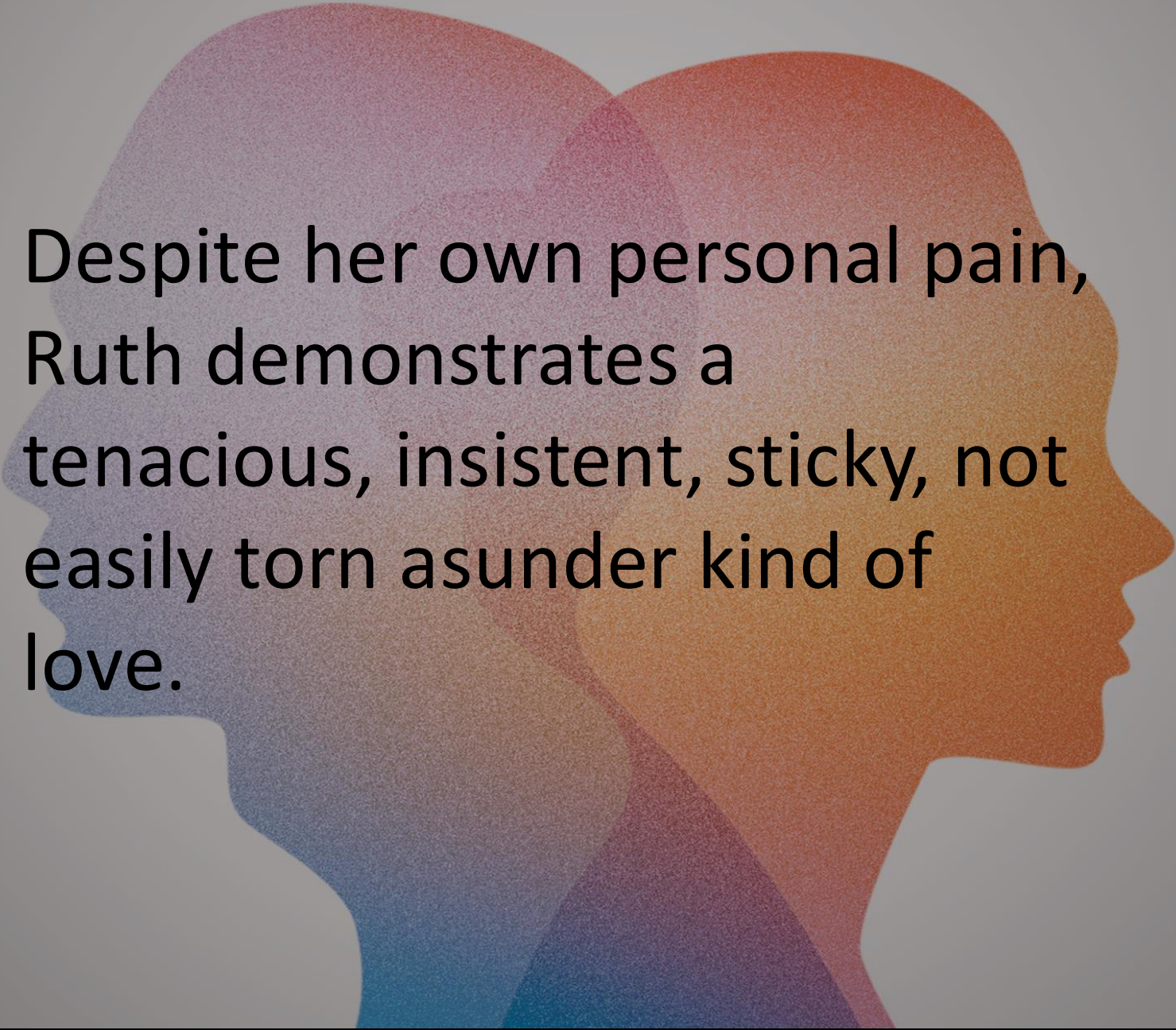
- Ephesians 1:17 – 19 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the HOPE of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength. CSB

- 
- Naomi was on the edge of God's faithful love and goodness unleashed in her life.
 - Are you on the edge of something wonderful from God? Can you envision what that might look like?



On the road to Bethlehem, something changes.

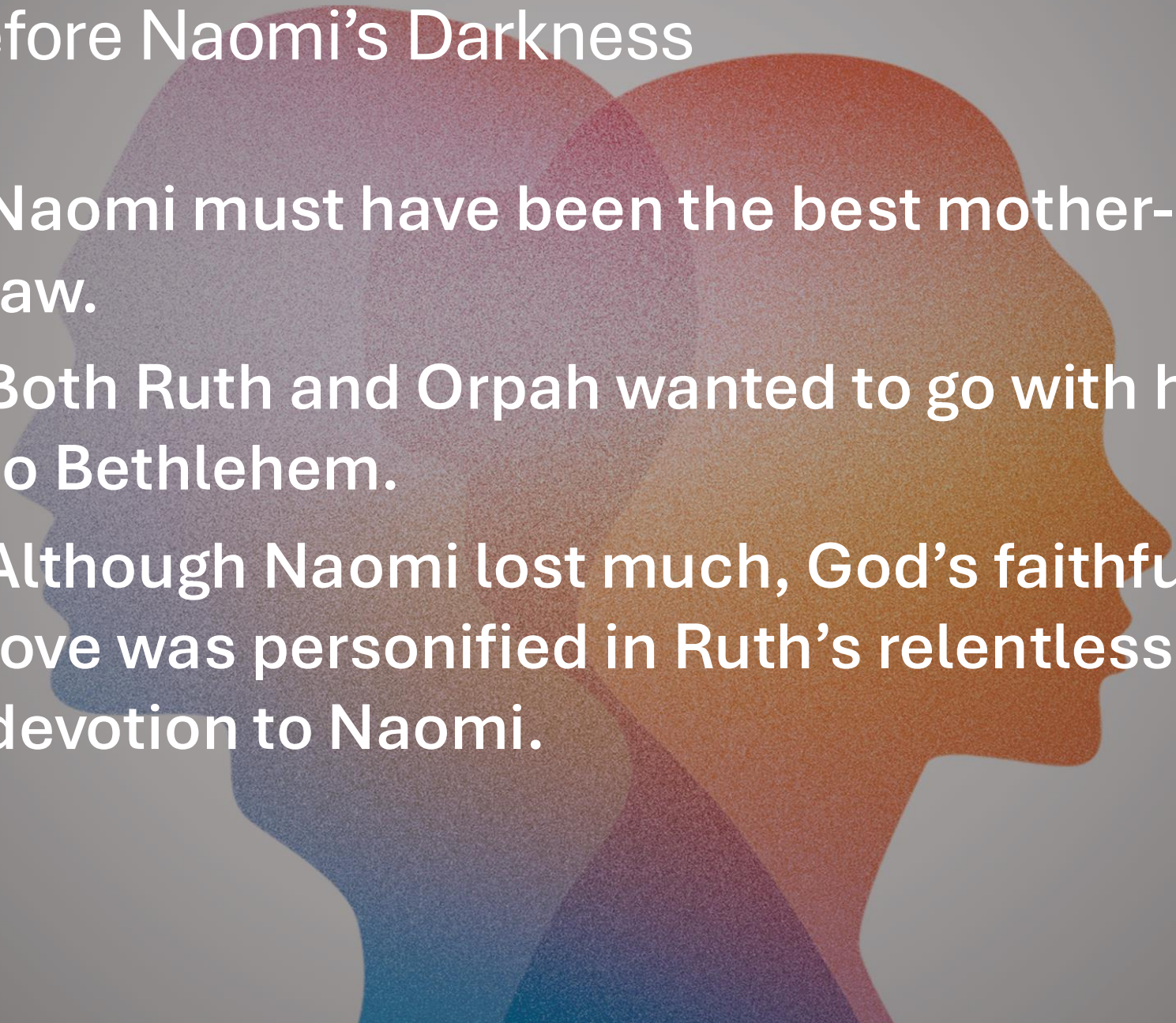
1. She heard a rumor about God. She had heard in Moab that the Lord has paid attention to his people's need...
2. Ruth clings to Naomi.
 1. Don't plead with me to abandon you or return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me, and do so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.



Despite her own personal pain,
Ruth demonstrates a
tenacious, insistent, sticky, not
easily torn asunder kind of
love.

Before Naomi's Darkness

- Naomi must have been the best mother-in-law.
- Both Ruth and Orpah wanted to go with her to Bethlehem.
- Although Naomi lost much, God's faithful love was personified in Ruth's relentless devotion to Naomi.



Naomi's Influence

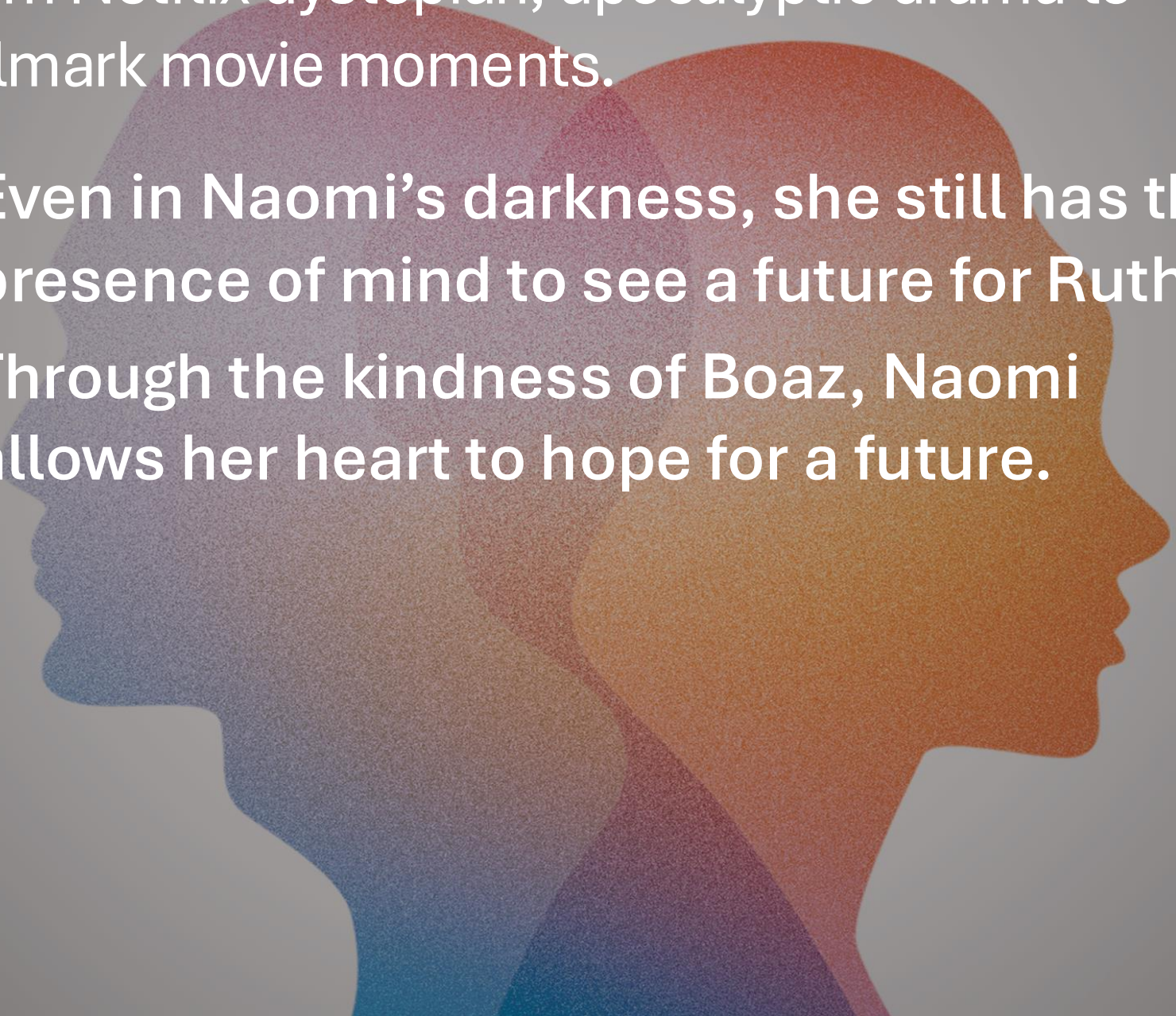
- Naomi's influence was a blessing to Ruth. Naomi's influence was the train track that God used to bring Ruth into the family of God, into a committed marriage, into motherhood, and the mother in the line from which the King of Israel and Jesus the Messiah would be born.

Naomi's Influence – Your Influence

- Do you think Naomi had any idea that she had influence?
- Do you realize that you have influence that God wants to use to shape those around you?
- Naomi had a generational impact. Moms, you too have influence and impact on future generations. What do you want that impact to look like?

From Netflix dystopian, apocalyptic drama to Halmark movie moments.

- Even in Naomi's darkness, she still has the presence of mind to see a future for Ruth.
- Through the kindness of Boaz, Naomi allows her heart to hope for a future.



Grief's Partner



- When our grief partners with our fears, life is hell on earth.
- When our grief partners with faith in God, hope is born within us.
- God is busy working all things, even our losses, for our good.

Spoiler Alert: The end to this story has been known for thousands of years.

- Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD granted conception to her, and she gave birth to a son. The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap and became a mother to him. The neighbor women said, “A son has been born to Naomi,” and they named him Obed, He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

More Hope

- May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. – Romans 15:13

