

# Never Going Back

OLD TESTAMENT CHARACTER GUIDE



## NAAMAN

849 BC • 2 KINGS 5

### ABOUT

---

Naaman was the general of the nation of Aram's military. (Aram is modern-day Syria.)

He suffered from leprosy. His slave girl told him the only person who could help was the God of Israel, a conquered nation.

The Lord worked through him by bringing victory to the nation of Aram.

Naaman was looking for a great display of power. He felt washing in the Jordan was beneath him.

He became totally committed to God after being healed.

He wanted a great task to add to his reputation and earn his healing. He was humbled by a simple act of obedience.

### QUESTIONS

---

Do you struggle with pride?

Do you only want to serve God when it seems significant?



# R

## RUTH

1140 BC • RUTH 1-4

### ABOUT

---

Ruth was from the country of Moab. She married one of Naomi's sons when the family lived in Moab to escape a famine in Israel. Ruth later married Boaz and was the grandmother of King David.

Ruth demonstrated sacrificial love by working hard to provide for her mother-in-law. There was no expectation that she would do this.

Ruth was a risk-taker. She was willing to break the "rules" to live as a child of God.

Ruth was proactive. Upon arriving in Bethlehem with Naomi, she decided to get to work as a common worker in the field. All she was allowed to do was gather grain left behind from harvest each day.

### QUESTIONS

---

Do you commit to people beyond what is polite or expected?

Do you take risks to serve and share the love of Christ?



# N

## NAOMI

1140 BC • RUTH 1-4

### ABOUT

---

Naomi was an Israelite who fled to Moab with her family to escape a famine. While in Moab, her husband and two sons died. She was left with her two daughters-in-law, whom she sent back to their parents to find new husbands. Ruth decided to stay with her.

Naomi was a fighter. She never gave up, even though she lost her husband, two sons, and a daughter-in-law. She was a refugee (imagine the challenges of different languages, dialects, customs, food, etc.) with no means to provide for herself in a patriarchal culture.

She could be called the female Job in the Bible. She struggled with depression and surely was homesick while living in Moab.

Naomi's belief in God must have run deep. Perhaps Naomi knew at any moment God could break through and change her story just like He had done for Israel so many times before.

### QUESTIONS

---

Do you keep looking for God even when life is terrible?

Does your belief in God run deeper than your circumstances?



# J

## JACOB

2006-1906 BC • GENESIS 25-34

### ABOUT

---

Jacob was the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. He had a twin named Esau. He was the younger brother by seconds. He married Leah and Rachel and had 12 sons who became the tribes of Israel. His most loved son was Joseph, the guy with the technicolor coat.

Jacob was more interested in staying at home than going camping and hunting.

Jacob shrugged responsibility. He usually didn't take responsibility for his actions or deal with his mistakes.

Jacob was crafty. He tricked his brother Esau into selling him the family birthright then tricked his father into giving him the family blessing. He cheated Esau out of what should have belonged to him.

Jacob avoided conflict as much as possible. He usually ran away.

### QUESTIONS

---

Do you deal with problems by avoiding them?

Are you afraid of how people will react when you make a mistake?



# I

## ISRAEL (BEFORE EXILE)

627-586 BC • JEREMIAH, 2 KINGS 25

### ABOUT

---

Israel split into two nations after the reign of King Solomon. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel. The Southern Kingdom was called Judah. Of the 12 tribes, ten made up Israel in the North while two created Judah.

At the time of Jeremiah, Israel belonged to Assyria, and Babylon was quickly becoming the new world superpower.

Israel struggled to change so they could live as God's people. They wanted to be like everyone else.

The Israelites were terrible at loving God. Israel was caught in a cycle of forgetting God, worshipping other gods, being punished by God, repenting so God would save them, then forgetting about Him all over again.

### QUESTIONS

---

Do you run to things other than God to fix your problems?

Do you have a hard time wanting to live like Jesus?



# I

## ISRAEL IN THE DESERT

1145 BC • NUMBERS 14

### ABOUT

---

They romanticized what slavery in Egypt was like. Instead of enjoying their freedom, they would rather be slaves again!

God's chosen people quickly forgot what God had done to provide for them.

The people challenged Moses and Aaron's leadership instead of humbly submitting to them.

The generation who lived in Egypt died in the desert because they didn't trust God. Their kids trusted God more, even though they didn't all witness the plagues or the crossing of the Red Sea.

### QUESTIONS

---

Do you trust God?

Do you often remember how God has been faithful?



# E

## ELISHA

865-795 BC • 1 KINGS 19:19-21; 2 KINGS 2-13

### ABOUT

---

Elisha was a prophet to Israel, the Northern Kingdom, around the 9th century BC.

Elisha eliminated all options of going back to his ordinary life by killing his oxen and burning his farming equipment (1 Kings 19:21).

He was a powerful man by reputation. It was clear God's power was with him. Elisha performed many miracles throughout 2 Kings 2-13.

He trusted God to provide, since he walked away from the financial security of his family farm.

Elisha had a compassionate heart. He wept over Israel's sin (2 Kings 8:11-12).

Elisha was fully committed to following Elijah and God's plan. In 2 Kings 2, Elijah asked him several times to stay behind, but Elisha insisted on staying with Elijah.

### QUESTIONS

---

Could you drop everything now if God asked you to do something new?

Do others recognize you spend time with God?





# E

## ELIJAH

870-842 BC • 1 KINGS 17-2 KINGS 2

### ABOUT

---

Elijah mentored Elisha  
to take his place.

He struggled with  
depression from  
his incredibly  
difficult ministry.

Elijah courageously stood  
against the most powerful  
people in his country on  
behalf of God. His most  
famous miracles came  
from these moments, like  
proclaiming a drought  
over the land in front of  
King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1)  
and calling down fire from  
heaven to defeat 850 false  
prophets (1 Kings 18:19-40).

### QUESTIONS

---

Do you find yourself feeling depressed  
when faced with challenges?

Are you currently discipling  
anyone or being disciplined?



[southeastchristian.org](http://southeastchristian.org)