



RUTH
a primer on relationships

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PRAYER FOR OUR GROUP

Father, as we join together to study your Word and to learn about what YOU say about relationships, may our hearts be joined both to Yours and to one another. May we be encouragers to one another and make every effort to lift each other up, to pray for each other, and to be a safe place for each other.

Above all, we pray that Your Name be lifted up. May our words and our thoughts be pleasing to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Group Members & Phone Numbers

BIBLE STUDY BASICS

What IS Bible Study?

The systematic process through which we interact with Scripture with the primary understanding that the Bible is a book primarily about God not us.

Why is Bible Study important?

Recognizing the Bible is God's revelation of Himself and His purpose
Identifying the nature and character of God in contrast with the nature and character
Understanding the big story of Scripture (creation-fall-redemption-restoration)
Applying these truths to our lives as we are conformed to the image of Christ

Big Story of the Bible

Creation: One Hebrew word sums up the picture of Genesis 1 and 2: shalom. Peace. Earth was full of God's shalom, the kind of peace in which everything works according to God's intention. The world was made for human flourishing, there we could live in joy in the presence of our Maker, worshiping God by loving Him and one another forever.

Fall: Adam and Eve rejected God's rule over them. We refer to their rebellious choice as "the fall," and because they represented all of humanity, their action affects us too. We have-- through our attitudes and actions-- declared ourselves to be God's enemies. This rebellion results in physical and spiritual death.

Redemption: Thankfully the loving Creator who rightly shows Himself to be wrathful toward our sin is determined to turn evil and suffering we have caused into good that will be to His ultimate glory. So, the next movement shows God implementing a master plan for redeeming His world and rescuing fallen sinners. In the Person of Jesus Christ, God Himself comes to renew the world and restore His people. The grand narrative of Scripture climaxes with the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Restoration: The story doesn't end with redemption. God has promised to renew the whole world, and the Bible gives us a peak into this glorious future. The restoration of all things will take place in two ways. Christ will return to judge sin and evil, and He will usher in righteousness and peace. God will purge this world of evil once and for all.¹

¹ Wax, Trevin, *Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2011).

Text vs. Topical Study

Text studies focus on expository study of a particular book or large portion of Scripture. This should be the primary type of study utilized.

Topical studies focus on a specific topic (such as fear, marriage, or speech) and are useful as supplemental studies.

6 Ways to Interact with Scripture

Study

Devotional Reading

Meditation

Memorization

Writing

Listening

BIBLE STUDY METHODS

3 Rs

Designed to help identify the main ideas of smaller chunks of Scripture (typically around 3 to 5 verses).

Best for people who have limited time each day or find it difficult to read and understand longer portions of Scripture in one sitting.

PROCESS

Read

Slowly read through the verses a few times. It may also be useful to read the verses aloud or listen to them via YouVersion or another Bible app.

Make note of words or ideas that stand out, are repeated, or you are unclear about.

Reflect

Identify the main idea or focus of the verses.

Write out a short summary of passage.

Choose a key word or phrase to help you remember what you have read.

Respond

Using what you have read and written, reflect on what you have learned about God and about yourself.

Pray for wisdom and understanding to apply what you have gleaned in your life.

5-Day Study Method

Designed to help overview books or larger passages of Scripture (like the Sermon on the Mount).

Ideal to use as starting point for a new study and to fill in with more detail throughout the study. Also useful if you are studying through a book with a group by chapter or section

PROCESS

Monday – Meditate

Take time to read through the passage or the whole book (if it's shorter). As you read, underline or circle words or phrases that stand out. If you have time, read through the book in a couple of translations, noting the differences in wording.

Tuesday – Transcribe

Write out the passage you are studying. This is helpful to let the words sink in deeper. Don't worry about how neat or sloppy you write, this is an opportunity for you to spend some time thinking about the passage.

Wednesday – Wrestle

Look over what you have underlined and what notes you made. Identify any phrases or ideas that stand out to you.

Look up words you don't understand and write out the definitions.

Read any verses cross-referenced and add notes about what they reveal.

Thursday – Think

Using study notes and commentaries, continue digging into the passage.

Make note of new ideas or understanding you gain. Identify other passages connected to what you have read.

What does this passage reveal about the character and nature of God? What does it reveal about the character and nature of man? How do you need to change in order to align yourself with the Lord?

Are there sinful habits or attitudes you need to confess after reading? Take time to do so. How does understanding these things give you reason to be grateful? What in this passage leads you to gratitude?

Friday – Feature

What are the main ideas in this passage? Summarize the passage in 2-3 sentences.

Reporter Method

Designed to help overview books or larger passages of Scripture (like the Sermon on the Mount).

Ideal to use as starting point for a new study and to fill in with more detail throughout the study.

PROCESS

Who?

Who wrote the book? To whom?

Who are the people in the book?

What?

What is the context?

What events surround the book?

What are the main themes of the book?

When?

When was the book written?

When did the events take place?

Where?

Where do the events of the book take place?

Where does it fit into Bible chronologically?

Where are the places mentioned in the book?

Where was the book written?

Why?

Why did the author write the book?

Why is it directed to its audience?

How?

How does the book fit into the big story of Scripture?

PRAYER METHODS

ACTS

Adoration – Begin with praising God for who he is. This is about his character and nature. Using the Psalms is a great way to learn to do this.

Confession – Confession is agreeing with God that what he says is sin really is sin. This requires asking the Holy Spirit to search your heart and reveal those hidden sins as well as acknowledging the places you know you have sinned.

Thanksgiving – Making a habit of expressing your gratitude to the Lord is vital to keeping yourself in a position of humility toward him. Make a point of giving thanks and acknowledging the ways God is working in, through, and around you.

Supplication – Interceding for others is a gift for us as believers. This is more than just listing the sick or hurting, it's also an opportunity to invite God to reveal himself to others and to be an encourager or support to our friends in their spiritual journeys.

BREATHING OR CENTERING PRAYERS

Simple sentences or phrases used throughout the day. Great for helping refocus.

MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT

I complain and groan morning, noon, and night, and he hears my voice. Psalm 55:17

Set an alarm to pray for specific things that are worries or concerns.

PRAYING THE HOURS

I praise you seven times a day for your righteous judgments. Psalm 119:164

Useful for setting specific times to pray. Great to use with seasons of fasting or praying for urgent needs.

PRAYER CALENDARS

Developing monthly or yearly prayer focus on specific topics or passages of Scripture.

PRAYER MARKERS

Identifying specific items or locations as reminders to pray for specific people, events, situations, or relationships.

PRAYER REQUESTS

PRAYER REQUESTS

NOTES

NOTES

RUTH

Full text from the CSB for you to use for annotation, etc.

Ruth 1

Naomi's Family in Moab

1 During the time^[a] of the judges, there was a famine in the land. A man left Bethlehem^[b] in Judah with his wife and two sons to stay in the territory of Moab for a while. **2** The man's name was Elimelech,^[c] and his wife's name was Naomi.^[d] The names of his two sons were Mahlon^[e] and Chilion.^[f] They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the fields of Moab and settled there. **3** Naomi's husband Elimelech died, and she was left with her two sons. **4** Her sons took Moabite women as their wives: one was named Orpah and the second was named Ruth. After they lived in Moab about ten years, **5** both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two children and without her husband.

Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi

6 She and her daughters-in-law set out to return from the territory of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the Lord had paid attention to his people's need by providing them food. **7** She left the place where she had been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah.

8 Naomi said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May the Lord show kindness to you as you have shown to the dead and to me. **9** May the Lord grant each of you rest in the house of a new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly.

10 They said to her, "We insist on returning with you to your people."

11 But Naomi replied, "Return home, my daughters. Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any more sons who could become your husbands? **12** Return home, my daughters. Go on, for I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons, **13** would you be willing to wait for them to

grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying?^[g] No, my daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share,^[h] because the Lord's hand has turned against me." **14** Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. **15** Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Follow your sister-in-law."

16 But Ruth replied:

Don't plead with me to abandon you
or to 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.

17 Where you die, I will die,
and there I will be buried.

May the Lord punish me,^[i]
and do so severely,
if anything but death separates you and me.

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped talking to her.

19 The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival^[j] and the local women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

20 "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara,"^[k] she answered, "for the Almighty has made me very bitter. **21** I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has opposed^[l] me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

22 So Naomi came back from the territory of Moab with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Footnotes:

- a. 1:1 Lit *In the days of the judging*
- b. 1:1 = House of Bread
- c. 1:2 = My God Is King
- d. 1:2 = Pleasant
- e. 1:2 = Sickly
- f. 1:2 = Weak or Failing
- g. 1:13 Lit *marrying a man*
- h. 1:13 Lit *daughters, for more bitter to me than you*
- i. 1:17 A solemn oath formula; 1Sm 3:17; 2Sm 3:9,35; 1Kg 2:23; 2Kg 6:31
- j. 1:19 Lit *excited because of them*
- k. 1:20 = Bitter
- l. 1:21 LXX, Syr, Vg read *has humiliated*

Ruth 2

Ruth and Boaz Meet

2 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side. He was a prominent man of noble character from Elimelech's family. His name was Boaz.

3 Ruth the Moabitess asked Naomi, "Will you let me go into the fields and gather fallen grain behind someone with whom I find favor?"

Naomi answered her, "Go ahead, my daughter." **3** So Ruth left and entered the field to gather grain behind the harvesters. She happened to be in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family.

4 Later, when Boaz arrived from Bethlehem, he said to the harvesters, "The Lord be with you."

"The Lord bless you," they replied.

5 Boaz asked his servant who was in charge of the harvesters, "Whose young woman is this?"

6 The servant answered, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the territory of Moab. **7** She asked, 'Will you let me gather fallen grain among the bundles behind the harvesters?' She came and has been on her feet since early morning, except that she rested a little in the shelter."^[a]

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter."^[b] Don't go and gather grain in another field, and don't leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants. **9** See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven't I ordered the young men not to touch you?^[c] When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled."

10 She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner?"

11 Boaz answered her, "Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn't previously know. **12** May the Lord reward you for what you have

done, and may you receive a full reward from the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

13 “My lord,” she said, “I have found favor with you, for you have comforted and encouraged^[d] your servant, although I am not like one of your female servants.”

14 At mealtime Boaz told her, “Come over here and have some bread and dip it in the vinegar sauce.” So she sat beside the harvesters, and he offered her roasted grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over.

15 When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his young men, “Let her even gather grain among the bundles, and don’t humiliate her. **16** Pull out some stalks from the bundles for her and leave them for her to gather. Don’t rebuke her.” **17** So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. She beat out what she had gathered, and it was about twenty-six quarts^[e] of barley. **18** She picked up the grain and went into the town, where her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She brought out what she had left over from her meal and gave it to her.

19 Her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you gather barley today, and where did you work? May the Lord bless the man who noticed you.”

Ruth told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with and said, “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz.”

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May the Lord bless him because he has not abandoned his kindness to the living or the dead.” Naomi continued, “The man is a close relative. He is one of our family redeemers.”

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, “He also told me, ‘Stay with my young men until they have finished all of my harvest.’”

22 So Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “My daughter, it is good for you to work^[f] with his female servants, so that nothing will happen to you in another field.” **23** Ruth stayed close to Boaz’s female servants and gathered grain until the barley and the wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with^[g] her mother-in-law.

Footnotes:

- a. 2:7 LXX reads *morning, and until evening she has not rested in the field a little*; Vg reads *morning until now and she did not return to the house*; Hb uncertain
- b. 2:8 Lit *"Haven't you heard, my daughter?"*
- c. 2:9 Either sexual or physical harassment
- d. 2:13 Lit *and spoken to the heart of*
- e. 2:17 Lit *about an ephah*
- f. 2:22 Lit *go out*
- g. 2:23 Some Hb mss, Vg read *she returned to*

Ruth 3

Ruth's Appeal to Boaz

3 Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, shouldn't I find rest for you, so that you will be taken care of? **2** Now isn't Boaz our relative? Haven't you been working with his female servants? This evening he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. **3** Wash, put on perfumed oil, and wear your best clothes. Go down to the threshing floor, but don't let the man know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. **4** When he lies down, notice the place where he's lying, go in and uncover his feet, and lie down. Then he will explain to you what you should do."

5 So Ruth said to her, "I will do everything you say."^[a] **6** She went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law had charged her to do. **7** After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits,^[b] he went to lie down at the end of the pile of barley, and she came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8 At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! **9** So he asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Ruth, your servant," she replied. "Take me under your wing,^[c] for you are a family redeemer."

10 Then he said, "May the Lord bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than before,^[d] because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor. **11** Now don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say,^[e] since all the people in my town^[f] know that you are a woman of noble character. **12** Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a redeemer closer than I am. **13** Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that's good. Let him redeem you. But if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the Lord lives, I will. Now lie down until morning."

14 So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still dark.^[g] Then Boaz said, "Don't let it be known that a^[h] woman came to the

threshing floor.” ¹⁵ And he told Ruth, “Bring the shawl you’re wearing and hold it out.” When she held it out, he shoveled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she^[j] went into the town.

¹⁶ She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, “What happened,^[j] my daughter?”

Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. ¹⁷ She said, “He gave me these six measures of barley, because he said,^[k] ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”

¹⁸ Naomi said, “My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won’t rest unless he resolves this today.”

Footnotes:

- a. 3:5 Alt Hb tradition reads *say to me*
- b. 3:7 Lit *and his heart was glad*
- c. 3:9 Or “*Spread the edge of your garment*; lit “*Spread the wing of your garment*; Ru 2:12
- d. 3:10 Lit *kindness at the last than at the first*
- e. 3:11 Some Hb mss, Orig, Syr, Tg, Vg read *say to me*
- f. 3:11 Lit *all the gate of my people*
- g. 3:14 Lit *up before a man could recognize his companion*
- h. 3:14 LXX; MT reads *the*
- i. 3:15 Some Hb mss, Aramaic, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *he*
- j. 3:16 Lit “*Who are you*
- k. 3:17 Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Syr, Tg read *said to me*

Ruth 4

Ruth and Boaz Marry

4 Boaz went to the gate of the town and sat down there. Soon the family redeemer Boaz had spoken about came by. Boaz said, “Come over here^[a] and sit down.” So he went over and sat down. **2** Then Boaz took ten men of the town’s elders and said, “Sit here.” And they sat down. **3** He said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has returned from the territory of Moab, is selling the portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelech. **4** I thought I should inform you:^[b] Buy it back in the presence of those seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to redeem it, do it. But if you do^[c] not want to redeem it, tell me so that I will know, because there isn’t anyone other than you to redeem it, and I am next after you.”

“I want to redeem it,” he answered.

5 Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you will acquire^[d] Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased man, to perpetuate the man’s name on his property.”^[e]

6 The redeemer replied, “I can’t redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can’t redeem it.”

7 At an earlier period in Israel, a man removed his sandal and gave it to the other party in order to make any matter legally binding concerning the right of redemption or the exchange of property. This was the method of legally binding a transaction in Israel.

8 So the redeemer removed his sandal and said to Boaz, “Buy back the property yourself.”

9 Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. **10** I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man’s name on his property, so that his

name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You are witnesses today.”

11 All the people who were at the city gate, including the elders, said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is entering your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel. May you be powerful in Ephrathah and your name well known in Bethlehem. **12** May your house become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring the Lord will give you by this young woman.”

13 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. **14** 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. **15** 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.” **16** Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became his nanny. **17** The neighbor women said, “A son has been born to Naomi,” and they named him Obed.^[f] He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

David’s Genealogy from Judah’s Son

18 Now these are the family records of Perez:

Perez fathered Hezron,

19 Hezron fathered Ram,^[g]

Ram fathered Amminadab,

20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon,

Nahshon fathered Salmon,

21 Salmon fathered Boaz,

Boaz fathered Obed,

22 Obed fathered Jesse,

and Jesse fathered David.

Footnotes:

- a. 4:1 Or *said*, “*Come here Mr. So-and-so*”
- b. 4:4 Lit *should uncover your ear, saying*
- c. 4:4 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *if he does*
- d. 4:5 Lit *Naomi and from*
- e. 4:5 Alt Hb tradition reads *Naomi, I will have already acquired from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead man, the privilege of raising up the name of the dead man on his property*
- f. 4:17 = *Servant*
- g. 4:19 LXX reads *Aram*; Mt 1:3-4

WEEK 1 HOMEWORK

DAY 1: BACKGROUND

Use the Reporter Method of Bible study to help understand the context and situation in Ruth. Use the study notes in your Bible or access information online to help you answer these questions. You may not be able to find answers to all of them. Just do what you can! ☺

WHO?

Who wrote the book of Ruth? To whom was it written?

Who are the main characters in the book?

WHAT?

What is the context of Ruth? (Hint: Judges 21:25)

What events surround the book?

What are the main themes in the book?

WHEN?

When was the book written?

When did the events take place?

WHERE?

Where do the events in Ruth take place?

Where does it fit into the Bible chronologically?

Where are the places mentioned in Ruth?

Where was the book written?

WHY?

Why did the author write the book?

Why is it directed to its audience?

HOW?

How does the book fit into the big story of Scripture? (Hint: Matthew 1:5-6)

DAY 2: BACKGROUND

Today we'll be looking at a few verses to help gain insight into the places of the book of Ruth. Also, if you haven't finished all those questions from Day 1, keep working on them.

Look up each of these verses or passages and write down what you learn about Moab and the Moabites.

Genesis 19:37

Numbers 25:1-5

Numbers 33:48-49

Judges 2:6-14

Judges 10:6

Now take a moment to look at these verses to see what the Bible says about Bethlehem.

Micah 5:2

Luke 2:4-7

DAY 3: OVERVIEW

Continue working on the background questions if you haven't finished.

For the rest of the week, your goal is to become familiar with the text. We'll do this through a few methods.

Today, simply read through the whole text provided in this workbook. That's it – read the text. There are 85 verses in this book and it is written very much in story form. It should take you about 30 minutes to read it.

This is not the time for annotation (we'll get to that in the coming weeks, I promise!). But if there are words or ideas that stand out to you, it's a good idea to make note of them. {And, if you want to do a little more – read through the text in at least one other version of the Bible.}

DAY 4: LISTEN

Using a website or app (such as Bible Gateway or YouVersion) listen to the book of Ruth. You can listen in many different versions using these apps.

Listening activates a different part of our brains than reading. Listening to Scripture will often bring to light words, phrases, or ideas you didn't grasp while reading.

You can listen to the whole book in about 15 minutes. You may find it helpful to listen in a couple of translations.

Again, you can note anything that stood out to you as you listened.

DAY 5: MEDITATE

Meditation is a great way to dig into Scripture. There are many ways to meditate on the Bible. But the goal is the same – to focus your attention on the Lord through the text.

Today, spend some time reflecting on what you've already learned, read, and heard as you've explored the book of Ruth. It's a good idea to read the passage in a different translation if you haven't already.

What stands out to you? What character traits of God do you see? Did you discover anything new? Which person in the story do you most connect with and why?

One way to meditate on Scripture is to write it out. If you are unsure about meditating, try writing Ruth 1:16-17 and considering what this vow means and how making a promise like this impacts every part of someone's life.

WEEK 2 HOMEWORK

DAY 1: OVERVIEW

Read Ruth 1:1-22 and begin annotating the passage. Pay careful attention to what you see about both the character of God and the nature of man.

“The book of Ruth is an ideal narrative for our post-Christian world, where breaking covenants—not enduring in love—is the new norm. Ruth offers a template for love that understands both the craziness of our modern world and a way forward. Ruth is all about surviving and even thriving in a collapsing world.”²

What themes or experiences do you see in this chapter that are also visible in our culture today?

What character traits or truths about God do you find in this chapter?

What character traits or truths about people do you see?

Put a star beside or circle any of those traits you have seen in yourself.

Summarize this chapter in two to three sentences.

² Miller, Paul E., *A Loving Life: In a World of Broken Relationships*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), p.14

DAY 2: DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 1:1-5, continuing to make notes about what you observe or don't understand in the text.

Review your notes from day 2 of last week. Summarize what we know about Moab and its relationship with Israel.

What does your name mean? Why did your parents give you the name they did?

Names were vitally important to the Israelites and most ancient cultures. Names given to people and places carried great weight and significance. Today we are going to spend time exploring the names we find in these verses.

Using the footnotes or study notes in your Bible or online, write down what each of the following names mean.

Bethlehem

Moab

Elimelech

Naomi

Mahlon

Chilion

Knowing what their names mean, what do you understand about Elimelech and his family?

Look up Psalm 16:6 and write it below.

God had given the Israelites boundaries for their good. Elimelech and his family had left the Promised Land, gone beyond the boundaries of God's blessing because of the famine.

How do you view the boundaries of God? Do you see them as pleasant? Or, like Naomi and Elimelech, do you move beyond them in search of something better?

DAY 3: BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU SETTLE

Read again Ruth 1:1-5.

Today we finish exploring these first five verses of Ruth. In these verses we will get a picture of the progression of disobedience in the lives of Elimelech and Naomi.

First, they just intended to stay for a while (v. 1).

They didn't go with the intention of settling; they were seeking an immediate solution to their problem.

Then, they slowly settled there (v. 2)

Once they'd removed themselves from the umbrella of God's protection, they settled in to a place He had not made for them.

Where else do we see this in Scripture? (Hint: Luke 15:11-32) What can we see about God's character when we begin to settle? What is He doing?

Finally, they lived there for ten years (v. 4).

In that time Elimelech died and the sons married Moabite women. What does this reveal about their intentions?

Read James 1:13-15. What do these verses tell us about the progression of sin in our lives?

Are there places you have settled, places that are not what God has made for you? What do you need to change in order to be settled in the places God HAS made for YOU?

Look up 1 Peter 1:16. What is the call of God in our lives?

Write out this verse as a prayer.

DAY 4: DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 1:6-9.

Why is Naomi going back to Bethlehem?

The end of the famine reveals repentance on the part of the Israelites and their restored relationship with God.

Why did Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to go back home?

What is it that she desires for them? (v. 8-9)

What do her words tell us about her feelings for Ruth and Orpah?

In verse nine, Naomi asks God to grant them rest. The Hebrew word used here is *menuchah* which means “rest, security.” The idea here is arresting place.

Look up these verses where the same Hebrew word is used and write down what they reveal about this rest Naomi desires for Ruth and Orpah.

- 2 Samuel 14:17
- Psalm 23:2
- Isaiah 66:1

Now look up these verses about rest:

- Psalm 4:8
- Psalm 37:7
- Matthew 11:28-30
- John 16:33
- Hebrews 4:9-11

What do those verses tell us about where true rest is found?

DAY 5: DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 1:10-17.

After pleading with her to let them accompany her, Naomi explains why it is useless for Ruth and Orpah to go with her. What is her reason (v. 11-13)?

What was Orpah's final decision (v. 15-15)?

Do you think she was wrong? Why or why not?

What was Ruth's decision (v. 16)?

Write out Ruth's declaration in verses 16 and 17. Underline or highlight every place she says, "I will."

What do these statements reveal about Ruth?

We often hear these verses used in weddings. Why?

The context here is Ruth talking to her mother-in-law. Can you imagine making this sort of commitment to your mother-in-law AFTER your husband has died?

Ruth's words reveal a love described as "hesed" love in Scripture. The word *hesed* is often translated as steadfast or faithful love. {We'll talk more about this in our group session.}

Today, reflect on the steadfast, faithful love of God by reading through Psalm 136 and considering how he has provided for and protected you in your life.

Write out the second half of each verse as a reminder to yourself of the way God loves you.

WEEK 3 HOMEWORK

DAY 1: TWO TYPES OF FRIENDS

When you think about friendship, what are some words or phrases that come to mind? How would you describe a true friend?

Look up the word friend and write the definition below.

Read Ruth 1:6-18.

Ruth and Orpah made opposite decisions concerning Naomi. Ruth chose to stay with Naomi even though Naomi was clear about what she wanted and Orpah decided to go back home as Naomi directed. Which choice do you think would you have made? Why?

Orpah and Ruth illustrate two types of friends. Both are valuable and important to us.

Orpah – Friends for a Reason or Season

Read Colossians 4:7-9.

Who does Paul mention in these verses? What does he say about their relationship?

Tychius served with Paul for a season. Paul commended him for his faithfulness. But Tychius didn't stay with Paul throughout his whole ministry.

There are times when God brings people into our lives for a specific reason or season. Think about some people who have been influential or significant to you at one time but are no longer a big part of your life. Perhaps there was some reason the friendship dwindled. But often there isn't.

As the seasons of our lives change, there are people who will also fade in and out of our lives. It's not a sign of our love or care for them, it's just the nature of relationships.

Ruth – Friends for Life

Read 1 Timothy 1:2, 2 Timothy 1:2

Who does Paul mention in these verses? What does he say about their relationship?

Timothy became a son to Paul. While they did not stay together physically through Paul's life, we know how close they were. Paul wrote two of the three pastoral epistles to Timothy (the other was to Titus). Additionally, he wrote a letter to the church at Ephesus which is the church he left Timothy to pastor.

God will intersect your path with people who you will remain close to for your whole life. Some will live in your town, others will not. But the bond between you will be unaffected by distance and time.

Take some time today to consider both types of friends. Make a list of some of those friends for a reason or season. As you write their names, make note of what you learned from them, why the relationship was important to you, or how you are changed from knowing them.

Now, make a list of those people you believe will be friends for life. What are some common threads among them? What are some differences? What is it that each of these people bring to your life? And, even more, how can you invest in these relationships to strengthen them?

DAY 2: DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 1:18-22

Briefly describe what happens in these verses.

Everyone was excited to see Naomi return (v. 19). But how did she respond to their enthusiastic welcome (v. 20-22)?

Write out what Naomi says about how her situation in verses 20-21.

Where is Naomi assigning blame?

It's easy for us to only see where God has failed us when we are in a hard time. What did Naomi have to be thankful for?

When we face difficult situations or seasons, it can often be next to impossible for us to find the truth about God's care and concern. Think about a time when you felt afflicted or abandoned by God. Maybe you are in one of those seasons right now.

Read Isaiah 43:1-4. What do these verses tell us about God's presence and care for us, even in the most difficult seasons?

The truth is, God loves us and cares for us. John Piper wrote this about Naomi, "What she does not see with the eyes of her heart is that in all her bitter experiences, God is plotting for her glory. This is true of all God's children. In the darkest times of our lives, God is plotting for our glory."³

³ Piper, John, *A Sweet and Bitter Providence: Sex, Race, and the Sovereignty of God*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2010), 58.

DAY 3: HARD FRIENDSHIP

Have you ever had a friend who couldn't be pleased? Or one who was always a victim? Or one who seemed to choose to be unhappy? It's hard to be friends with people like that, isn't it?

Read Ruth 1:18-21. Write out verse 18 below and underline the last phrase.

Sounds a little bit like middle school, doesn't it?

Ruth and Naomi's trip was between 30 and 60 miles, depending on the route they took. They would have traveled for seven to ten days. Now, imagine being essentially alone for seven to ten days with someone who refused to speak to you. How much fun would that be?

I imagine Ruth had all kinds of questions about what to expect when they got to Bethlehem. Maybe she wondered about the people and customs she would find. Certainly she knew she would likely not receive a warm welcome since she was from Moab.

It couldn't have been a great experience. Look again at Ruth's declaration in verses 16 and 17. Did she mention anything about Naomi's responsibility to her in the relationship?

Ruth was willing to go first in the relationship, to give 100% regardless of what Naomi did. Look again at verse 21. What does Naomi say about her situation?

Imagine being Ruth standing there beside her mother-in-law, listening to her describe her life. How would you have felt? How would you have responded?

Read John 21:15-19. Such a familiar story. But I think it's a great picture of a hard friendship. Peter had betrayed Jesus. And yet, here we see Jesus seeking to restore the relationship and even push it forward to become more than it had been. How can we follow this example and work through hard season in friendships?

DAY 4: OVERVIEW

Read Ruth 2:1-23 and begin annotating the passage. Pay careful attention to what you see about both the character of God and the nature of man.

What themes or experiences do you see in this chapter that are also visible in our culture today?

What do you observe that is different?

What character traits or truths about God do you find in this chapter?

What character traits or truths about people do you see?

Summarize this chapter in two to three sentences.

I love the way John Piper sums up where we are at the end of chapter 2:

Chapter 2 overflows with hope. Boaz is a God-saturated man in his business and personal relations (2:4,10-13). Ruth is a God-dependent woman under the wings of God. Naomi is now a God-exalting woman under the sovereignty of God. All the darkness of chapter 1 is gone. God has turned her mourning into dancing.⁴

⁴ Ibid., 79-80.

DAY 5: DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 2:1-7, continuing to make notes about what you observe or don't understand in the text.

What new character is introduced in these verses and what do we discover about him in verse 1?

Look up the word "glean" and write down the definition.

Ruth looked for a way to serve Naomi. She knew their basic needs would have to be met and that she was the one to do it. What does this reveal to us about Ruth's character?

In verse 3, the CSB says "She happened to be ..." (emphasis added). God often puts us in places and circumstances that seem random or coincidental until we can look back and see what He was doing. Do you have any examples of this from your life?

Ruth was definitely a foreigner. Look over the verses and circle every time she was identified based on where she was from. Why do you think the writer continued to make this distinction about Ruth's heritage?

In verse seven we discover a little bit more about Ruth's character. What does this verse tell you about Ruth?

WEEK 4 HOMEWORK

DAY 1: DIGGING IN

Reach Ruth 2:8-14.

These verses offer us the first conversation between Ruth and Boaz. What do you notice about how they spoke to one another?

What is Boaz primarily concerned about? (Hint: v.9)

Write down what Ruth said to Boaz in verse ten.

John Piper draws attention to the reality of Ruth's situation. He writes,

Ruth knows that she is a Moabitess. From a natural viewpoint, she is at a great disadvantage; she is a foreigner. She doesn't not resent this but accepts it. As a non-Israelite, she does not expect any special treatment. Her response to Boaz's kindness is humble astonishment⁵

"She does not expect any special treatment." How does that contrast with our culture? Is there any area in your life where you have felt entitled?

What does Boaz highlight as the reason he has taken an interest in Ruth? (Hint: v. 11)

When we treat people with kindness, people notice. The Bethlehem gossip mill had undoubtedly reported Naomi's words when she arrived back in town. Look back at what Naomi said in 1:21. Ruth was demonstrating her commitment to fulfill the vow she had made to Naomi, regardless of Naomi's attitude or actions toward her.

How does this reveal God's love for us? And what does this teach us about loving others well?

⁵ Ibid., 64.

DAY 2: YOUR REPUTATION

Read Ruth 2:1-14. What do we learn about Ruth's reputation from these verses?

A good reputation is more valuable than money.
Pubilius Syrus

Look back at Ruth's dramatic declaration in 1:16-17. What do we see about her character in her words?

Based on what we read in 2:1-14, how can we see Ruth living out her promise to Naomi?

D. L. Moody once said, "If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of me." What do you think that means?

How can you see Ruth's character in the verses we've read so far?

Look up the following verses and write down what each reveals about the value of a good reputation.

Proverbs 22:1

Proverbs 20:11

Ecclesiastes 7:1

Matthew 5:16

1 Peter 2:12

Now, read Proverbs 20:7. How does protecting your reputation affect your future?

“It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad to lose.” — Benjamin Franklin

DAY 3: DIGGING IN

Read Ruth 2:15-23, continuing to make notes about what you observe or don't understand in the text.

Look up the word "glean" and write the definition below.

Gleaning is practice God instituted for the provision of the poor, the widows, the orphans, etc. The practice of allowing them to gather grain also afforded them an opportunity to work and provide for their needs. {You can read more about gleaning in Leviticus 19:9-10, 23:22; and Deuteronomy 24:19.}

In verses 15 and 16, what does Boaz instruct his men to do?

Boaz went above and beyond the law's requirement in order to help Ruth and Naomi. Why do you think he did so?

Look up these verses and write down what they reveal about God's Word says about generosity.

Proverbs 11:24-25

Proverbs 28:27

Matthew 6:19-21

Luke 21:1-4

2 Corinthians 8:9

James 2:15-16

How important is generosity in friendships? What are some ways your friends have been generous to you?

Take some time today to consider someone in your life who could benefit from radical generosity. What could you do to show this person how generous God is to us?

DAY 4: GROWING IN WISDOM

What is the best advice you have ever received? From whom did it come?

How would you define wisdom? On a scale of one to ten, how wise do you think you are today?

Socrates said, "The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing." What do you think about that idea, that wisdom is found in realizing what you don't know? One of the most important lessons I've discovered in my life is this, the more I learn, the more I understand how much I have left to learn. Have you experienced this also? That's why it's so important for us to spend time growing not just in knowledge but also in wisdom. Look up Proverbs 3:13-18. What do these verses teach us about the value of wisdom?

But how do we grow in wisdom? Hopefully, our experiences in life help us gain insight and understanding. But also, we can grow in wisdom from spending time with wise people. Who are some of the wise people in your life? How are you intentional about spending time with them?

Jesus' brother James wrote to the church in Jerusalem about how to gain wisdom. Read his words in James 1:5-8. What these verses tell you about growing in wisdom?

DAY 5: OVERVIEW

Read Ruth 3:1-18 and begin annotating the passage. Pay careful attention to what you see about both the character of God and the nature of man.

What themes or experiences do you see in this chapter that are also visible in our culture today?

What do you observe that is different?

What character traits or truths about God do you find in this chapter?

What character traits or truths about people do you see?

Summarize this chapter in two to three sentences.

Paul E. Miller helps us begin to understand the connections between generosity, wisdom, and love all coming together in Ruth 3. He writes,

A neglected aspect of love is on display here—wisdom. Our culture puts “falling in love” front and center but forgets about “thinking in love.” Not Naomi. She thinks about how to make love happen. That’s wisdom. Without wisdom, Naomi and Ruth’s situation would remain frozen.⁶

⁶ Miller, *A Loving Life*, 121.

WEEK 5 HOMEWORK

DAY 1: OVERVIEW

Read Ruth 4:1-22 and begin annotating the passage. Pay careful attention to what you see about both the character of God and the nature of man.

What themes or experiences do you see in this chapter that are also visible in our culture today?

What character traits or truths about God do you find in this chapter?

What character traits or truths about people do you see?

Put a star beside or circle any of those traits you have seen in yourself.

Summarize this chapter in two to three sentences.

DAY 2: 4 TRAITS OF GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

This last part of our study will be structured differently. Over the next two weeks, we will be looking at specific traits and truths we discover in the book of Ruth.

First, we will explore four traits of godly relationships. These traits are vital to any type of relationship – husband/wife, friends, employer/employee, and even parent/child.

The next four days of homework will dig into each trait, helping you gain an understanding of what it is and why it's so important.

For today, though, you just need to look up some definitions. Using a regular dictionary or dictionary.com, look up the definitions and write them out below. You will want to have them so you can access them as we study each in depth over the next few days.

Loyalty –

Humility –

Integrity –

Virtue –

DAY 3: TRAIT 1 – LOYALTY

Read Ruth 3:1-7, making notes of anything that stands out to you.

In verse one, Naomi brings up a theme she's raised before. Look back at Ruth 1:8. What is it that Naomi wishes for Ruth?

For the first two chapters of the book, we have primarily noticed Ruth's loyalty to Naomi. Write down some examples of what we've discovered.

These verse mark a huge shift in Naomi's concern for Ruth. Suddenly, we can see a glimpse of why Ruth may have been so determined to go with Naomi to begin with. Ruth's loyalty and faithfulness to Naomi ultimately led Naomi to a renewed compassion and concern for Ruth. What does this tell us about the value of being loyal to others, even when they aren't necessarily willing recipients? How hard is this for you to put into practice?

Look up the following verses and write down what Scripture tells us about loyalty.

Proverbs 3:1-3

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 18:24

Proverbs 20:6

Proverbs 21:21

DAY 4: TRAIT 2 – HUMILITY

Read Ruth 3:8-18, making note of anything that stands out to you.

Notice how Ruth responds to Boaz in verse eight. Write down what she tells him below.

Look back at the definition you wrote on day 2 for humility. How do we see that evidenced in Ruth in these verses?

Using your concordance or an online search, find at least four other verses in Scripture about humility. Write them down as well as what you discover from each of them.

Why is humility in our relationships so important? Look up Philippians 2:4. Is this idea of putting others' interests ahead of your own hard or easy for you? Why?

DAY 5: TRAIT 3 – INTEGRITY

Read Ruth 4:1-12, making note of anything that stands out to you.

What is happening in these verses?

How do we see Boaz acting with integrity in these verses?

Do you think Boaz was hoping the other man would take Ruth as a wife? Why or why not?

Again, we're going to see what Scripture tells us about the value of integrity. Look up the following verses and make note of what they teach.

Psalm 41:11-12

Proverbs 11:3

Proverbs 21:3

Proverbs 28:6

Isaiah 26:7

Philippians 4:8

Hebrews 13:8

1 Peter 3:16

How are you living with integrity in your relationships?

WEEK 6 HOMEWORK

DAY 1: TRAIT 4 – VIRTUE

Reach Ruth 4:13-16, making note of anything that stands out to you.

What is happening in these verses?

Compare these verses to what we see in Ruth 1:1-5. What has happened to both Naomi and Ruth?

How is Ruth described in verse 15?

Look back at Ruth 3:11. What does Boaz say about Ruth in this verse?

Now look at Ruth 2:1. How is Boaz described in this verse?

What is the definition of noble?

Other translations of these verses use words such as excellence and virtuous. How do you see virtue displayed in both Ruth and Boaz?

How does their character open the door to Naomi's change in situation?

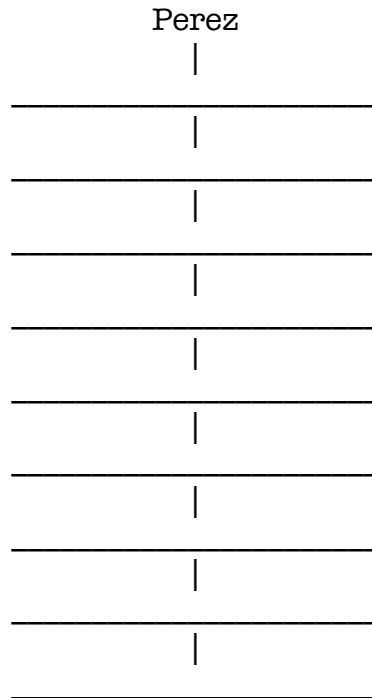
Write out what the women say in verse 14. Whose name is being made known?

When we live with virtue (moral excellence, goodness, righteousness) it impacts the lives of others as well. But most of all, it brings glory to God.

DAY 2: LEGACY OF A GODLY LIFE

Read Ruth 4:17-22, making note of anything that stands out to you.

Using these verses, create a family tree starting with Perez and ending with David.



Now look up Matthew 1:3-6. What do you see? Write down the names of the women mentioned.

Read Matthew 1:7-16. Who is the last name listed?

Ruth's legacy extended far beyond her faithfulness to Naomi and her marriage to Boaz. She wasn't just the great-grandmother of King David, she was the great^{X34}-grandmother of Jesus.

DAY 3: THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN IN ACTION

Read Proverbs 31:10-31, making note of any verses, words, or ideas that stand out to you.

Write out verse ten. Circle the word that describes the wife who is hard to find.

The Hebrew word used here is *Ishah Hayil* and means “woman of noble or virtuous character.”

This phrase is only used in four verses in the Bible. Look up each of the following verses and make note of what you learn about a virtuous woman.

Proverbs 12:4

Proverbs 31:10

Proverbs 31:29

Ruth 3:11

In the Tanakh (Jewish Bible), Ruth is immediately after Proverbs 31 making her the Bible’s real life example of what a “woman of noble character” really looks like.

As we wrap up our study of Ruth we are going to move into how to put what we’ve learned into action. And for that, we’ll spend a couple of days digging into Proverbs 31:10-31.

In Praise of a Wife of Noble Character

10 Who can find a wife of noble character?^[a]

She is far more precious than jewels.^[b]

11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will not lack anything good.

12 She rewards him with good, not evil,
all the days of her life.

13 She selects wool and flax
and works with willing hands.

14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from far away.

15 She rises while it is still night
and provides food for her household
and portions^[c] for her female servants.

16 She evaluates a field and buys it;
she plants a vineyard with her earnings.^[d]

17 She draws on her strength^[e]
and reveals that her arms are strong.

18 She sees that her profits are good,
and her lamp never goes out at night.

19 She extends her hands to the spinning staff,
and her hands hold the spindle.

20 Her hands reach^[f] out to the poor,
and she extends her hands to the needy.

21 She is not afraid for her household when it snows,
for all in her household are doubly clothed.^[g]

22 She makes her own bed coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.

23 Her husband is known at the city gates,
where he sits among the elders of the land.
24 She makes and sells linen garments;
she delivers belts^[h] to the merchants.
25 Strength and honor are her clothing,
and she can laugh at the time to come.
26 Her mouth speaks wisdom,
and loving instruction^[i] is on her tongue.
27 She watches over the activities of her household
and is never idle.^[j]
28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
her husband also praises her:
29 “Many women^[k] have done noble deeds,
but you surpass them all!”
30 Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting,
but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised.
31 Give her the reward of her labor,^[l]
and let her works praise her at the city gates.

Footnotes:

- a. 31:10 Or *a wife of quality, or a capable wife*
- b. 31:10 Vv. 10-31 form an acrostic.
- c. 31:15 Or *tasks*
- d. 31:16 Or *vineyard by her own labors*
- e. 31:17 Lit *She wraps strength around her like a belt*
- f. 31:20 Lit *Her hand reaches*
- g. 31:21 LXX, Vg; MT reads *are dressed in scarlet*
- h. 31:24 Or *sashes*
- i. 31:26 Or *and the teaching of kindness*
- j. 31:27 Lit *and does not eat the bread of idleness*
- k. 31:29 Lit *daughters*
- l. 31:31 Lit *the fruit of her hands*

DAY 4: LIFE IN COMMUNITY

As we take the next two days to discover what it looks like to live as a virtuous woman, you'll be digging into the Proverbs 31 woman. While this passage is directed to wives, there are lessons we can all learn. Remember, Ruth earned this distinction of "noble character" before she married Boaz.

It's easy for us to think we could be virtuous if we didn't have to deal with other people, right? But both Ruth and the Proverbs 31 woman are living out their character in their community, around other people. Today, as you read Proverbs 31:10-31, make note of how many verses mention her relationships with others. Use the chart below to keep track. I've got it started for you.

People in her home	Merchants, etc.	Those in need
v. 10 - husband	v. 16 - buying a field from someone	v. 20 - reaches out to the poor

Think back to what we've learned about Ruth. How did she interact with people in her home, people in business or her community, and those in need?

Tomorrow we will look at the specific character traits mentioned about the Proverbs 31 woman. But for today, spend some time thinking about who you interact with on a daily basis who fits into these three categories. How are you living with noble character in front of them?

DAY 5: REFLECTION

Read through Proverbs 31:10-31 one more time. As you do, circle every word that describes a character trait of this woman. Once you have finished make a list of those traits below.

Look back over all your notes about Ruth. What are a few things that really stand out to you about her character and the way she served others as a way to honor the Lord?

Take some time today to reflect on what you've learned. Pray that God will help you implement what you have learned and ask for wisdom to trust His sovereign hand in your life.