

~ RUTH ~

“Following THE Trustworthy God”

Study written by Elena Johnson

Elena Johnson is a wife, mother to 3, and a daughter of the King. The idea for writing a Bible Study caught Elena quite by surprise. After taking a brief sabbatical from a formal church Bible Study due to a death in her group, God whispered that she should write one. After much prayer, “Ephesians: Living Like Daughters of the King” was birthed. The study of Ruth is Elena’s second written Bible Study.

Elena can be reached at elenajohnson@verizon.net.

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The NIV translation of the Bible was utilized in the development of this Bible Study.

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THE BEGINNING

Ahhhh...there is something exciting about opening up a brand-new book, a blank journal, or starting a Bible Study, isn't there? A crisp newness ~ all the possibilities ~ the journey ahead. It's exciting! It's the anticipation of good things just waiting in front of us. Right?? Anyone with me on this concept? Certainly, I am not the only paper-lovin' girl in this techie-lovin' world?

I cannot wait to explore the book of Ruth in the Old Testament with each of you, my friends, and dabble around in other areas of the Bible, too. What fresh, new Word will we hear from God? What concept will jump off the pages and shout at us? Amaze us? What new things will we learn about The Eternal God, especially in a book called the OLD Testament?

Get your paper Bible (or open your techie Bible App), grab your favorite juicy pen, and let's do this...together let's meander through one the greatest love stories ever told...

LESSON ONE

Lesson 1, Day 1

"Backing It Up"

The Bible can be intimidating to read sometimes because it's set in a different culture, with odd names, and heady concepts from God. Ruth is a fairly simple, straight-forward story to read. However, the Bible comes ALIVE to me when I am given details about the background and setting of the book. When I understand who wrote it, who it was written for, what the people's situations were, well, it's like hearing the backstory of why a songwriter wrote a particularly moving song. Now, when I hear the song, I savor the lyrics, and feel great emotion experiencing the music and its words because I understand better the circumstances of why it was written. Can you relate?

So, we are going to learn a little bit about what's going on around the book of Ruth, as it will help set up the whole story for us.

The book of Ruth is one of only 2 in the Bible named after women (Ruth and Esther). It is known as a great love story, as well as a shining example of sacrificial Godly love during a **very** dark moral time in history. It is most likely occurring simultaneously as a portion of the book of Judges, but not actually written until the time of King David's reign (or perhaps even David' son, King Solomon's reign). Some scholars say the prophet Samuel wrote Ruth, probably to prove the lineage is pure and justified for King David to sit on the throne. This right to kingship is important to prove the authenticity of God's word and prophecies about Jesus as Messiah through David's lineage, as well.

Let's go a bit further back though, and sum up what God did for his Hebrew (Jewish) people. Even if you do not know much about the Old Testament, this will give you a good flavor for what God did on behalf of His chosen group of people.

Go to the book of Joshua and read Chapter 24, verses 1 – 29.

1. Who is the man currently in charge (under God)? (see verse 1; or shortened as v1)

2. Who is Joshua speaking on behalf of? (v2)

3. It seems like the Hebrew people had a crazy amount of troubles with enemies of foreign countries. Do you notice the prevailing “theme” we hear God say over and over about His involvement/action in the first 13 verses? Name some examples:
 - I'll get us started... in v2 – v5: “*I took your father Abraham*” “*I gave him Isaac*” “*I sent Moses*” “*I afflicted the Egyptians*”
 - See the theme? You write some examples now from v6 - 13:

4. What does Joshua beseech of the people in v 14?

5. What call to action does he demand in v15 and v23?

- ⌘ What about you? If Joshua were to ask you today “whom will you serve?” can you answer with a resounding: “I serve Jesus Christ?” Or do you feel like you are half-heartedly serving Him? Perhaps, like in verse 23, you need to inventory the things you spend a lot of time on and decide – are these “foreign gods” to me? Do I need to lay before God the amount of time I spend on my phone, social media, gaming, pleasure reading, exercise, shopping, food or whatever I've put ABOVE Him?

- ✎ Take a moment and pray. Ask God to show you where you've over-emphasized *things* and what you need to quickly put back into perspective or fast from altogether. Ask Him to help you follow Him more pointedly and purposefully every day.

“But as for ME and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Joshua 24:15b

Lesson 1, Day 2

“Are we still in?”

Oh, good! You came back for Day 2! That Day 1 ended rather “in your face”, didn't it? Here's why: a sneak peek into the future - our gal, Ruth, has to make a decision, and she has to be whole-hearted, not half-hearted. (I want us to really get *into* the book of Ruth as well as be *changed* by the book of Ruth so we are going all in on her journey!! So we are going to put ourselves in her sandals.)

If we're really honest with ourselves, isn't that what God truly wants from us? Whole-hearted devotion because of everything He has done for us?? After all, God sent His one and only Son to die on a cross for our sins. Jesus loved us enough to take upon His sinless self each and every one of our sins, suffer a brutal/wrongful death and through that allow a way for us to have a relationship with God, both here and in heavenly Eternity. Only if we 100% accept that Jesus is the Son of God, truly God in the flesh, the perfect sacrifice, and confess we are sinners, saved only by Jesus dying on a cross for our sin, can we have eternal life! It cannot be a half-hearted decision to accept what Jesus did. 100% in or 100% out. With that spiritual knowledge of what Jesus did we can begin to understand why God wants our devotion. He is deserving of it.

Here is a verse for you to look up and fill in the blanks. You'll see how God feels about half-heartedness versus whole-heartedness with regard to serving Him.

Read Revelation 3:15-16 and fill in the blanks.

(I use the **NIV Bible version** throughout our study. A Bible App like “YouVersion” has the NIV version if you are using a different Bible translation):

“I know your deeds, that you are neither _____ or _____. I wish you were either _____ or the _____! So, because you are _____, neither _____ or _____ - I am about to _____ you out of my mouth.”

Whoa. Jesus does not mince words, does He?

I know we can't yet look back upon our individual entire lives and see with clarity ALL the things He has done as neatly as Joshua summarized for the Jews in those 13 verses. I do know that I can look back upon poignant situations in my life that were dire, difficult or life-changing and see His hand prints all over it, though. (Even BEFORE I accepted Christ!!) It's in my hindsight viewings that I have 20/20 vision to see that God truly is in every aspect of my life. The good and the bad. And those glimpses in the rear-view mirror are some of what help me live by FAITH and not by SIGHT as I walk day to day. Of course, we still struggle and wrestle with the God who has chosen to be invisible yet be right here with us. How could we not struggle a little when we don't know our future and its consequences? It is intimidating and scary to think about sometimes, right?! But as we begin to follow Him whole-heartedly, and give ourselves over to Him daily, it becomes easier to trust Him.

⌘ Can you look back, now, and see a time that God was completely right there in your situation/ midst but perhaps you did not see Him as vividly in the moment? What was it?

✎ Stop for a few minutes and spend some time in prayer. Specifically, reflect on the above situation you described and praise Him and thank Him for being there in that moment! Then, thank Him for all the times you do not see Him working in your life, but He is.

Lesson 1, Day 3

“Let's Start!”

I know what we just studied may seem unrelated to what we are going to study, but bear with me...there are threads that tie it all together. I know you're all so ready to read this beautiful love story so let's start!

Read Ruth Chapter 1, verses 1 -5 (or Ruth 1:1-5).

1. What are some observations you made from this paragraph?

Wow. Talk about a dramatic opening! In just 2 short paragraphs, we have a famine, a family fleeing, 2 marriages, 3 deaths, and we're left in verse 5 with 3 widows. I know you're thinking, "um, hi, I thought this was a love story? Seems like a depressing chick-flick. What gives?"

I know, I hear you – and it's a lot of life experiences condensed into just 7 sentences! It's also a lot to unpack, and deserves a bit of "backstory" so we can better understand. Y'all ready??

Verse 1 "In the days when the judges ruled..." Well, that's how we know when the story was set: in the Old Testament book of Judges. In fact, scholars are not 100% sure of the exact time of Ruth, but possibly 1380 – 1050 BC, and there is evidence of a famine (both spiritual and literal) in Judges 6.

Read Judges 6: 1 - 6

2. Does it seem logical why Elimelech, his wife and 2 sons left the Promised Land? For what reasons did they leave?
3. Elimelech's name literally translates to "(My) God is King." Do you feel like he acted in such a way that by leaving he proved his name to be his truth?
4. We can see in hindsight that the famine lasted 7 years because the Lord allowed punishment upon the Israelites for doing evil. Do you think Elimelech was wrong to not wait it out and stay in the Promised Land despite the famine/hostile takeover?

We just read in Joshua 24:1-29 that the Israelites pledged themselves fully devoted to God, especially after seeing what God had done for their people group. But here we are learning that the people have done evil in God's eyes, falling back again into old, bad habits. They started worshipping other gods again, probably Baal, "god of the land and its fertility." God probably chose famine to prove that worshipping Baal will not result in any fertility.

⌘ Remember how in Day 1 we were to confess to God what it is that we might need to do less of or even fast from? It is so important to daily seek God and His will. I am so grateful that Jesus forgives me freely and with much mercy and grace. But there are still consequences sometimes for behaviors, even today for worshipping false idols. Too much

phone/gaming/social media can make us envious, irritated and waste time we could spend with family, serving God, etc. Too much food can make us sick, overweight and lethargic. Too much shopping can put us into debt, overwhelm our households' storage and increases desire for more stuff/greed. So, what we think of as harmless habits can actually be like worshipping false gods. We look to it to satisfy us, fill up a desire or longing, make us feel more powerful or less lonely. **Had you ever thought of it this way?** Why or why not?

Elimelech reasoned it was better to leave the Promised Land, God, the enemy and famine in Israel and head around the Dead Sea down to fertile grain-and-flock filled Moab. Moab was actually an enemy of God's people because they worshipped false gods. The two had fought in the past and neither had forgotten.

So, he, his wife, Naomi (which translates to "the lovable" or "my delight") and 2 sons, Mahlon ("invalid/sickly/weakling") and Kilion ("pining/sickly") leave Bethlehem and set off for Moab. We do not exactly know when, only that Elimelech dies sometime after arriving in Moab.

⌘ Is this because of his choice to lead his family away from where God said to live? We are not sure. What do you think?

⌘ I wonder why Naomi and her sons do not go right back to Israel. What do you think?

Lesson 1, Day 4

"And then there were 3...twice..."

Read Ruth 1: 1-6.

I know the mother and sons must have grieved for the loss of their hometown, living in foreign Moab, and now Elimelech's death, but we don't see evidence of it here. Instead, we see life carries on and the sons marry women, not from their own tribes of Israel, but foreign women from Moab.

⌘ How long did Naomi, her two sons and daughters-in-law live together in Moab?

⌘ What happens when you live somewhere for 10 years?

⌘ If you had to move away from Dallas, what are some things you would miss terribly?

When we become vested in a new place (like college or a new home town), we begin to set down roots. You find a job, plus a doctor, grocery store, good hair stylist who knows her color/highlights, a nail salon, gas station, and drug store - right? You may begin to pick up the local accent or local expressions (fixin' to, y'all, all y'all, sic' em Bears!), and perhaps even local customs (Friday night football games, homecoming mums the size of a 5th grader, cravings for queso and margaritas). While this is normal for us to move around in the States, this is not what God wanted from his Israelite people. He wanted them gathered together, where they could worship Him and marry each other, and be set apart by their faith, and to serve and focus on Him. Ten years is a very long time to live somewhere, especially when it's not where God had led you to live - The Promised Land of Canaan. When we live somewhere else for a long time, we may not want to return to our hometown and pull up roots again. We may also start to adopt some of the regional cultures.

Naomi was left in Moab in a dire predicament. She was now a widow *without* two sons. It's probably not shocking that her sons, whose names translate to "Sickly" and "Pining," died as young men. But a widow did not have the means, like today, to go out and easily get a job to support herself and pick up Social Security. A widow was dependent on sons to help her out financially, or she practically became a welfare case dependent on the kindness and generosity of the town's people. She also now has two daughters-in-law in her home to consider.

Read Deuteronomy 7:1-4.

- What is the reason given for not marrying certain people groups?

- Is there any warning against marrying a Moab woman?

We do not see any warning against marrying Moabite women, although it may not have been done often given the Israelites and they were enemies. Perhaps if Mahlon and Kilion had stayed healthy, the small family would have stayed forever in Moab, away from Israel.

1. What are the daughters-in-law's names?

2. Ruth's name translates to "friend/companion" and Orpah's name translates to "stiff-necked/gazelle." Do you think these names are foreshadowing of what is to come?

3. Did either woman have children by her husband?

Three women. No husbands. No grown sons. No children or grandchildren. No jobs. No income. I promise this REALLY is a love story! You know how Disney sets up a heroine with a horrible and rough situation, like Cinderella, but there is always redemption in the end? The book of Ruth is like that, but even better, because we have One greater than Disney!

To make sure we understand what these words mean fully, use a dictionary app and look up what "redeemed" and redeemer" means?

a. Redeemed

b. Redeemer

Read Isaiah 47:4 in NIV.

1. What are the 3 names we see God called here?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

2. God calls Himself our Redeemer. What does it say about why Christ redeemed the Jews and Gentiles? **Read Galatians 3:13 - 14.**

Praise God! He is in the business of setting people free from bondage!! God speaks through Joshua to free Israelites from the bondage of worshipping false gods. In each of our lives, what we may see as hardships many times is God working to redeem us from a bad relationship, an addiction, or something else that has us in bondage. And we will soon see in Ruth how God redeems a couple of women in a dire situation. ***He truly is the One who sees each of us and our situations.***

LESSON TWO

Lesson 2, Day 1

“Decisions, Decisions”

Read Ruth 1: 6 – 17.

Naomi finds out that rain has returned to Israel and the land is again fertile and producing food. Perhaps she found out through someone passing through Moab. Maybe a revelation from God? If the time we read about in Judges is 100% accurate and not just speculation, perhaps she heard that the Israelites also had victory over the peoples invading their land. Regardless, God had come to the aid of His people.

Naomi has decided: she is ready to go home, and she and her daughters-in-law prepare for their journey. They must have packed their clothes and cleaned out their dwelling, perhaps sold off extra belongings to keep the road trip light. The three walk to the road that will lead back to Judah (a portion of land within Israel). The three are standing literally at the crossroads of their future.

- What does Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to do? Does it seem harsh or logical?
- What are the blessings she offers to each girl?
- What are the physical reactions each woman has?
- In verses 11 – 13, what specific reasons does Naomi give as to why the girls should each go back to their mother’s home?

Living life as a family for years, plus enduring the suffering of widowhood together truly must have bonded the women. I am sure it would have been extremely difficult for Orpah and Ruth to say good bye to Mama Naomi just as much as leaving their Moab homeland and family. After returning to their own mother’s home, they would stand a very good chance of finding another husband. That would mean security again for their future as well as the opportunity to have children. They could continue with the customs they grew up with and knew, as well as serve their gods. (Never mind keep their colorist and nail salon, right?) It would be the easiest decision to just go back to life as they knew it. Naomi figures all three women don’t have to be in dire straits. Just herself.

- Orpah sees her mother-in-law’s logic and tearfully says good-bye and walks away. Spiritually speaking, do you think she lives up to her translated name or not?

- Ruth makes a dramatic stand. What does she vow? (v 16 – 17)

- How does she live up to her translated name?

- How/why do you think Ruth came to the decision to follow Yahweh God?

Perhaps the years of living with a Jewish family, and seeing traditions, prayers, customs, and hearing stories of Yahweh God with His Hebrew people must have impacted Ruth tremendously. Perhaps when she saw how Naomi handled being a widow, and then how she suffered under the loss of two sons, maybe it all impacted Ruth eternally. Perhaps it was seeing the contrast of a Jewish family living very differently than the Moab people that caused her to reconsider her entire spiritual belief system.

The road to Israel was a true “Joshua call to action” for our lady, Ruth. She is given an out. A chance to change her mind. But she does not take the “out.” Ruth is not lukewarm! Her vow is strong, sincere and whole-hearted. Each of us, in turn, has to decide whom we shall follow as God.

- Are we wholeheartedly “in” as a follower of Jesus Christ?
- Are we being lukewarm or lackluster in our walk if we have chosen Jesus as Savior, going back to old behaviors, habits and ways of life?
- Or, do we need to hear the words from John 3:16 and make the eternal decision to start following Him, and leave our own worldly Moabs behind? *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*
- Stop, pray and ask God to reveal to you areas where you need to recommit your life to Him.

Lesson 2, Day 2

“The Journey”

Following Jesus is not for the faint of heart, is it? When we do follow Him wholeheartedly, we begin to see things the way God does, and love what He loves and hate what He hates. The world may begin to despise us for following God. Going through trials or persecution as a Christian does not reduce the severity of the situation, but our focus, mindset, and ability to cope and persevere is radically different *because* of our relationship with God.

Ruth has been through the trial of infertility, widowhood, and now the trial of leaving her homeland. She has just declared the LORD her God and made a lifelong pledge to Naomi. No going back to her Mom, Dad or siblings. There’s no turning back now. Her mind and heart are made up.

Read Ruth 1:18 – 22. Ruth and Naomi set off together on foot on a 30 - 60 mile journey. Can you imagine what it would’ve been like for one older woman to do this alone with no *male companion*? It probably took the two of them a week or more to complete the trek. Let’s explore where Naomi and Ruth are physically, emotionally, and spiritually:

- What did Naomi arrive in Moab with? What is she leaving with?

- Remember back to what Naomi’s name translated to?

- What does she wish to be called now, and why?

- Has Naomi abandoned her faith in these trials?

- What has Ruth left Moab with? What did she leave behind?

- After 10 years in Moab, what do you find interesting about verse 19?

- Did you notice, in her depression, who Naomi brushes over introducing or acknowledging? (v21)

- Is there any mention of Ruth’s emotional or spiritual condition?

You may have noticed that I've given the meaning of every person's name in Ruth. Names held great significance to the Jewish people. People were named for a reason, and not like today where we chose a name based if we love it, how it goes with sibling or last names and most importantly, that its initials don't spell out a bad word. Naomi went from being called "lovable" and "my delight" which would probably indicate she was a happy, upbeat, loving woman, to now wanting to be called "Mara." She feels like God has completely stripped her bare, like the fields of Israel once were: barren and without fruit. She is struggling with emotions and is depressed. She can no longer even bear her name. I think we can all relate to at least one experience that rocked us to our core and empathize with Naomi.

But she still acknowledges the LORD is in control of her situation. Jot down her words about God:

1. V13

2. V20

3. V21

⌘ What about you? When the trials come, what do you do? Do you walk away from God, like Orpah? Go and seek out things that numb the pain/numb our brain for a while like social media, TV, wine, food or shopping? Or do you walk towards God and cry out to Him with your heart and emotions laid bare, like Naomi?

If only Naomi and Ruth could pull back and see their lives with the bigger picture perspective as God does, they would know their journey to Israel is the start of beautiful things to come.

Read Proverbs 3:5 – 6.

Naomi knew that trusting God, even though it looked like He was punishing her and afflicting her, was her only hope. Going back to the Promised Land of God was where she wanted to be. She was going to trust Him on the road back to Israel with all of her heart, knowing He would make a path for her and Ruth. Naomi/Mara is defeated, grieved, depressed, but resolved: no more being apart from God.

And so, back in Bethlehem at last, this is it. This is the pivotal moment: the barley harvest is beginning.

Lesson 2, Day 3

“Provisional Harvest”

Because we just run in to Market Street, Sprouts and Kroger for our food, we have no idea the significance of a harvest. The harvest meant food, income, and provision. It is no coincidence that barley harvest is occurring when Ruth and Naomi arrive. God already had a plan in motion!

Maybe you remember another profound time that barley is mentioned in the Bible? **Read John 6:3 – 13.**

- What did Jesus do with the 5 barley loaves and 2 small fish?
- How many baskets were left over?
- How many disciples of Jesus are there?

Jesus used this little boy’s meager and humble lunch of tiny barley loafs and small sardine sized fish to overcome great obstacles: the hunger of a large group of people listening to Jesus as well as the unbelief of the people and His disciples with regard to miracles and God’s provision. God is about to provide barley for Ruth and Naomi for their literal emptiness and daily provision as well as provide a miracle.

Read Ruth 2:1 -3. What do you think? Random coincidence that Ruth JUST so happens to be in the field of Boaz? Who JUST so happens to be related to Elimelech? Of course not.

We are about to see Ruth and Naomi providentially provided for. There are also biblical provisions God put into place for the least of people, those unable to provide for themselves adequately, like widows and foreigners. Let’s look at **Leviticus 19:9-10 and 23:22.**

- Landowners are not to reap where?
- Or gather up what?
- The gleanings are to be left behind for whom?

God cares for people - even the foreigners who are not His children. Let's look at Boaz and how he treats people - even a foreigner in his midst.

Read Ruth 2: 4 – 23.

- How does Boaz greet his workers?

- Amidst all the workers, who does he immediately notice?

- What many things does Boaz offer to Ruth in verses 8 -16?

- According to the previous mentioned Leviticus scriptures, is he required to do any/all of this?

We are told earlier that Boaz is a man of standing. I think we can see why now. Upon arriving, one of the first things he does is greet his employees and offer them a blessing. He is not an employer who is hands-off with his business, either. He inquires of his foreman about the woman in his field. He also blesses her with so much more than what is necessary by Levitical law. His name translates to “a mighty man of valor.” Valor is defined as the qualities of a hero or heroine. Boaz definitely is a hero to these two widow women.

Lesson 2, Day 4

“Ruth was ... noticed.”

Read Ruth 2: 1 – 23.

1. **Ruth was a hard worker.** The foreman *notices* this and tells Boaz she has steadily, (not sporadically!) worked all day, with just a short break. Boaz *notices* Ruth working in his field. Naomi reacts to the large amount of food that Ruth brings home, *noticing* that she has done a great deal of work. What is truly awesome here is that *God has noticed* His new little daughter, Ruth, too.

⌘ Remember how we learned earlier that names are significant? Did you know that God has many names, too? These are some of His names from the Old Testament:

Name of God	Meaning	Application	Bible Reference	Comments
Adonai	The Lord My Great Lord	God is the Master and majestic Lord. God is our total authority.	Psalms 8; Isaiah 40:3-5 Ezekiel 16:8; Habakkuk 3:19	Pronounced: ah-doe-NI Adonai (plural) is derived from the singular Adon (Lord). This term was pronounced in substitution of YHWH (considered too sacred to be uttered).
Elohim	The All-Powerful One Creator	God is the all-powerful creator of the universe. God knows all, creates all, and is everywhere at all times. The plural of "El".	Genesis 1:1-3; Deuteronomy 10:17 Psalm 68 (Mark 13:19)	Pronounced: el-o-HEEM Plural form of El. This name is usually associated with God in relation to His creation. Some people use the plural word "Elohim" as proof for the Trinity. (Genesis 1:26) Elohim is also used to refer to false gods and even human judges. (Psalm 82:6, 7; John 10:34)
El Roi	The God Who Sees Me	There are no circumstances in our lives that escape His fatherly awareness and care. God knows us and our troubles.	Genesis 16:11-14; Psalm 139:7-12	Pronounced: el ROY Hagar called the Lord by this name beside a fountain of water in the wilderness. God knows all of our thoughts and feelings. Jesus knew the thoughts of those around him, demonstrating that he is El Roi. (Matthew 22:18; 26:21, 34; Luke 5:21-24)
El Shaddai	The All Sufficient One, The God of the Mountains, God Almighty	God is the all-sufficient source of all of our blessings. God is all-powerful. Our problems are not too big for God to handle.	Genesis 17:1-3; 48:3; 49:25 Genesis 35:11; Psalm 90:2	Pronounced: el-shaw-DIE Some scholars suggest that Shaddai refers to God's power evident in His judgment. Others suggest that El Shaddai means "God of the Mountains." God refers to himself as "El Shaddai" when he confirms his covenant with Abraham.
Immanuel	God With Us "I AM"	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. We need to obey Him.	Isaiah 7:14; 8:8-10 (Matthew 1:23)	Pronounced: ih-MAN-u-el This name indicates that Jesus is more than man. He is also God. Isaiah said that the child born to the virgin would be called "Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6) He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His nature. (Hebrews 1:3)
Jehovah (YHWH, see comments)	"I AM," The One Who is The Self-Existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful. We need to obey Him.	Exodus 3:14; Exodus 6:2-4 Exodus 34:5-7; Psalm 102	Pronounced: juh-HO-vah A 16th century German translator wrote the name YHWH (YHWH) using the vowels of Adonai, because the ancient Jewish texts from which he was translating had the vowels of Adonai under the consonants of YHWH. By doing this, he incorrectly came up with the name YahOvah.
Jehovah-Rapha	The Lord Who Heals	God has provided the final cure for spiritual, physical, and emotional sickness in Jesus Christ. God can heal us.	Exodus 15:25-27; Psalm 103:3; Psalm 147:3 (1 Peter 2:24)	Pronounced: juh-HO-vah RAH-fah Also known as YHWH-Rapha. Jesus demonstrated that He was Jehovah-Rapha in his healing of the sick, blind, lame, and casting out demons. Jesus also heals His people from sin and unrighteousness. (Luke 5:31, 32)
Jehovah-Rohi	The Lord is My Shepherd	The Lord protects, provides, directs, leads, and cares for His people. God tenderly takes care of us as a strong and patient shepherd.	Psalms 23:1-3; Isaiah 53:6 (Jn. 10:14-18; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:17)	Pronounced: juh-HO-vah RO-hee Also known as YHWH-Ra'ah (RAH-ah). Jesus is the good shepherd who lay down His life for all people.
Jehovah-Tsidkenu	The Lord Our Righteousness	Jesus is the King who would come from David's line, and is the one who imparts His righteousness to us.	Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:16; Ezekiel 36:26, 27 (2 Corinthians 5:21)	Pronounced: juh-HO-vah tsid-KAY-noo Also known as YHWH-Tsidkenu. All people sin and fall short of God's glory, but God freely makes us righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. (Romans 3:22, 23) God promised to send a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right. The people will live in safety. (Jeremiah 23:5, 6)
YHWH	"I AM," The One Who is The Self-Existent One	God never changes. His promises never fail. When we are faithless, He is faithful.	Exodus 3:14; Malachi 3:6	Pronounced: YAH-way God's personal name given to Moses. Also called the tetragrammaton ("four letters"). Occurs about 6,800 times. Translated "LORD" in English versions of the Bible, because it became common practice for Jews to say "Lord" (Adonai) instead of saying the name YHWH.

<https://jimmypringle.files.wordpress.com/2010/04/names-of-god2.jpg>

The reason God has many names for Himself is because He wants His people to know His mighty character and for us to stand firm in the truth of who He is. Since God is perfect and never-changing (how do you improve upon or change perfection, after all?) we can be confident that these character attribute names of God are still absolute truth in OUR lives.

1. What is a name of God that resonates with you most? Why?

Here are two I want to focus on:

2. El Shaddai – you probably heard or sang along in the 90's to Amy Grant's song entitled "*El Shaddai*." It translates to The All Sufficient One, or the One who abundantly blesses, nourishes and provides.

3. El Roi – I think we all have a little incredulousness that amongst 6 billion or so people on the Earth, God knows our name and cares for us down to the most minute detail. It’s true. He does. El Roi translates to “the God who sees me.”
- What do you think about God being your El Roi?

As a new believer, Ruth has to marvel at the fact that her “new” God is El Roi. He sees her, and He is abundantly blessing, nourishing and providing for her. Praise God! Friends, I’ll say it again: the same God who took care of Ruth is the same God as today. He is OUR El Roi. Amen!

Ruth would have worked in the warm April – May sun, from morning til night, with just a short meal and water break. She would be constantly bending over to pick up the leftovers from the men who had cut the stalks. Then, at the end of the day, she would thresh the grain by banging it over and over to release the barley kernels from the husk, then throwing it all up in the air so the wind can blow away the husk/chaff.

She gleaned on the first day about an ephah. I can’t even convert cups to quarts, people, so I had to look this up. An ephah is an ancient measurement of grain that amounts to about 21.14 liters; think 21 Coke bottles, or 5.8 gallons of milk. She then carries it all home to her mother-in-law! Talk about some buff arms, Ruth! Day after day through two harvests Ruth works tirelessly to provide for her little family!

4. Another characteristic of Ruth is her humble nature. Notice in verse 10 her response to Boaz.

Why have I found such _____ in your _____ that you _____, a _____?

She bows with her face to the ground, a sign of respect and humility. This is no little princess curtsy! She recognizes and acknowledges Boaz’s extreme kindness, generosity and provision. She also points out that she is a foreigner, which they both know, but it further emphasizes her recognition that she is not supposed to receive this kind of favor. She also requests permission from Naomi to work in the fields (v2), requests permission from the foreman to glean in his field (v7), and she acknowledges again she is a lowly foreigner, by saying she has not even as much standing as Boaz’s servant girls (v13).

⌘ We could easily ask God the same question about ourselves: “Why have I found favor in your eyes, God, from Your saving, merciful, grace-filled son, Jesus, that you noticed me? That you died for me? Me, a foreigner, a Gentile, not a Jew.” Oh, praise You, El Roi, that you saw me and saved me, and abundantly bless me and my eternity, El Shaddai!

5. **Ruth had a good reputation.** Boaz knew about her reputation before she ever worked in his field. People must be talking about Naomi and her Moabitess daughter-in-law in town. The fact that she is a widow who left her homeland and familiarity, her mother and father, and came to care for a needier widow in Naomi, while becoming a believer in God is highly esteemed by Boaz, and seemingly the towns folk, too.
- Can you think of someone in your life whose good character stands out, like Ruth's does? What is it about that person that you notice a difference in how they live life versus others?

Lesson 2, Day 5

“My Hero”

Read Ruth 2:1 – 23.

1. **Boaz was a man of God.** His first words in the text are a blessing to his workers. He is also aware of the Levitical law for providing the edges of the fields to foreigners, and made sure his foreman knew this, too. He blesses Ruth twice after extoling her virtuous nature towards Naomi and her decision to follow God.
2. **Boaz was very responsible and protective towards those in his fields.** He has large water jars for his workers, servant girls and Ruth, and he provides lunch as well. He gives orders to his men not to touch Ruth, and not to rebuke her or embarrass her if she gleanes incorrectly. He also tells Ruth to stay in his fields for she will be safe there.
3. **Boaz was a most generous caregiver.** He gives Ruth a portion of lunch more than sufficient for her with the intention of providing for Naomi's dinner, too. He has her sit with him and his harvesters, a place of honor, and not with the servant girls (or alone) during the lunch hour. He gives his workers the command to provide some gleanings from their harvesting, and not just what is accidentally fallen behind.

I want a boss like Boaz!!

Remember...this entire book is set during the times of Judges. What does the last line of Judges say?

Read Judges 21:25.

“In those days _____ had no _____; _____ did as he saw fit.”

The character of our heroine, Ruth, and our hero, Boaz, is most exemplary even by today's standards. The fact that they are living as God-followers with humbleness, generosity, an

outstanding work ethic and a love towards others REALLY shows off God's light, love and character. Especially when it is happening at a time when people were living in God's Promised Land but consistently doing evil in His sight.

⌘ What about you? Are you consistently living in such a way that you are showing off God's light in this dark world?

⌘ Prayer: Oh, Lord. Help us to shine bright with Your love. Like Boaz, help us love the stranger, the barely-known neighbors, that hard to get along with co-worker. Help us be generous with Your earthly possessions and tithe, donate, and give. Help us be a blessing to others with our words and our time. Like Ruth, help us to be humble. We want to whole-heartedly serve you, Jesus. Help us as we are human.

LESSON THREE

Lesson 3, Day 1

“Hope”

Let's think back to Naomi's words in Chapter 1 and 2. Which choice(s) would you pick to categorize her and her emotions?

___ Happy

___ Hopeless

___ Loving

___ Sad

___ Upbeat

___ Honest

Re-read Ruth 2:19 – 22 with an eye for just Naomi's words and disposition.

- What one word could you use to describe her attitude now?

Did you say something along the lines of hope-filled? Can you imagine - these women who were wondering what they would eat each day suddenly facing 21 Coke bottles of barley grain on Day 1? Naomi knew this was not normal for a foreigner gleaning just the edges of fields. This had to be a blessing from God. Maybe, she wonders? Maybe God has taken notice of Naomi and her plight and her barrenness and is now blessing her? Her El Roi? Hope is a powerful word. Hope is a powerful emotion.

Read Psalm 130:7. Write down the verse here:

Naomi knew getting back to Israel, the land of God, would be the start of hope. Even though she was not FEELING hopeful, she KNEW God's character names, like El Roi and El Shaddai. Sometimes, in our own lives when we feel beaten down and depressed by a situation, when we FEEL like there is no hope or way out, we need to get to a place where we can even begin to imagine hope will come. Does anyone know what I'm saying? Sometimes we just have to go through the motions even though we don't see a way or feel a way out. It starts by getting in the presence of God, through prayer and scripture. God is in Heaven, and we need to go there and talk to Him.

Read Ephesians 3:12.

- What does it say to believers?

Read Isaiah 40:8.

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the _____ of _____ _____
_____ _____!”

Feelings are like a roller coaster ride. They can take us up and down at a moment’s notice. God is steady. His Word is truth. His love is enduring. We need to learn to close our eyes during the crisis moments when our feelings are all over the map and keep our spiritual eyes on Him. We need to cry out to Him, groan, and trust that He is bigger than our problem. He is our El Roi and our El Shaddai.

Read Ruth 3:1 – 6. Huh? Why is Naomi saying this? It sounds a bit scandalous. This is where unpacking a story a little and understand customs and cultures of days of yore are helpful, right? Let’s zip open this suitcase.

1. First of all, let’s check out Naomi. We saw her in Chapter 1 and 2 speaking through a depressed and hopeless lens. The gallons of grain have provided an answer to a few prayers and given her hope. Sometimes, not always, when a person is very depressed, they start to implode, and may be incapable of thinking of other people/people’s needs. It’s all the depressed person can do to get through a day with just them self to care for. They may even want to be alone. Ruth didn’t allow Naomi the option of aloneness. Now that Naomi has some hope, the dark clouds are clearing and she sees an opportunity for Ruth (and herself) presenting itself.
2. Naomi realizes that Ruth has been cared for with abundance by Boaz. Boaz is also a “kinsman-redeemer,” a close relative of her late husband, Elimelech. (Ruth 2:20)
 - a. **Look up the definition** of Kinsman-Redeemer. You may have to Google.

b. **Read Deuteronomy 25: 5 -10.** SO INTERESTING! Sum it up.

Ruth must really trust Naomi. Naomi is asking Ruth to shed her work or mourning/ widow attire, wash up and smell pretty, like a girl going on an important first-date. She is asking Ruth to go to the threshing floor after work hours, after partying/celebrating has happened, and in the dark of night. And Ruth does! Plus, Ruth does not EVEN ask why with regard to uncovering Boaz’s feet and lying down by him. If she is discovered by the male crew there, the good and sound reputation of Ruth’s character (and Boaz) could be devastated.

⌘ Knowledge of God and trusting in God is the difference between half-heartedness and whole-heartedness, isn't it? We can believe God exists. But it's something else to step out in faith, like Ruth, that proves we are whole-hearted, yes? That we believe AND trust in Him. **Agree or disagree?** Why?

⌘ Is there an area in your life that you need to let go of just the belief that God can do it and instead go out in belief and faith and fully trust Him that He will? Is there an area in your life that you need to act upon something in order to show trust of Him, but humanly, it's a little scary? Stop and pray about it.

Lesson 3, Day 2

“Don't stub your toe, Ruth!”

Read Ruth 3:7 – 18.

According to Jewish law, God has set into place provisions for a Hebrew widow, like re-marriage. A kinsman-redeemer is the closest male relative to the deceased, like the dead husband's brother, which provides security for the widow and the opportunity to carry on the family name through the male offspring. No Jew wants to be blotted out of the Jewish lineage! So, kinsman = close relative, and redeemer = restore the honor or worth of.

I don't know about you, but if I were Ruth I would be just a tad bit of a nervous wreck trying to get onto the threshing floor unnoticed. Do you know how many times I have tried to sneak into *my very own bedroom* after my husband has gone to bed and I stub my toe into a shoe (ow!), knock over the tube of hand cream on my nightstand (crash!) or accidentally shut the drawer a little too hard because I cannot see depth in the dark (slam!)? Or, trying to sneak out quietly after laying a fussy, sleeping baby down? Forget about it.

Meanwhile Ruth is getting ready; Boaz is celebrating with his crew. Famine is over and grain is abundant! They've put in weeks and weeks of hard work cutting the stalks, threshing it, and now winnowing it down to the final product. It is cause for a celebration!

Why do you think Boaz lies down at the end of the grain pile?

___ He is drunk.

___ He is keeping guard over his inventory.

___ He is too lazy to walk home.

___ It's too dark to walk home.

Boaz is a good employer, but also wise. In times such as what we've discovered in Judges, he may not have a grain pile the next morning if he does not keep guard! Naomi was correct in understanding the current dark spiritual climate but also Boaz's excellent work ethic. My guess is, in order to earnestly keep careful guard, he probably did not get wasted. He also has his "watch dog radar" up because we see in verse 8 that he easily startles awake in the middle of the night.

Think back to **Deuteronomy 25: 5 – 10** from page 22. Who has the responsibility to approach the town elders if the closest male kin does not want to marry the widow?

_____ the mother-in-law _____ the widow _____ the town gossip

So, although it seems bold for Ruth to do what she is doing, especially because it's nighttime, it is also may be the best time possible to hope for a positive outcome. Maybe Naomi thought Boaz would remember how Ruth was humble, a grateful servant, and a hard worker if he was in his work environment versus in town caught off guard shopping for new T-shirts and toothpaste. Maybe Naomi advised this time-frame in case Boaz said no. While it is in Ruth's right to approach the kinsman-redeemer to marry her, doing it in private and in the dark would save her from potential embarrassment if he said no.

- Can you think of any other reasons for night time?

In Deuteronomy, if the Kinsman-Redeemer says no, the widow is allowed to go to the elders at the town gates where they can ask that relative again to marry her, and if he won't she can spit in his face and he will be forever disgraced in the Jewish lineage! Whew. My guess is Naomi was being very wise in having Ruth approach Boaz in a humble way by the cloak of night. I would so much rather have someone ask something important of me in a humble and private way than to demand it from me publicly.

So Ruth went to Boaz, folded up the tunic he was wearing to expose just his feet, and quietly lay down crosswise to him at his feet. What this odd-to-us-action reveals (ha - not just Boaz's feet!) is that she is humbling herself to be servant-like to Boaz. Servants would remove the sandals and wash off the dirt and sand that caked a guest's feet before entering the master's home. All of her actions would soon reveal to Boaz that she was asking to be his wife: humble, devoted and submissive.

I bet you can remember a couple of times in John where we see 2 people humbling themselves by washing other's feet. **Read John 12:1 – 8 and John 13: 4 -17.**

- Who is washing in John 12?
- Who is washing in John 13?

The actions of washing another one's feet show a humble hearted servant.

Lesson 3, Day 3

“Waiting, waiting...”

Boaz must have smelled the feminine perfume nearby him as he awoke with a start. After he asks Ruth who she is, she humbly (and quietly!) says she is his servant, Ruth, and offers the ring and the proposal:

“Boaz...will you marry me?”

Wait. What does she really say? **Read Ruth 3:9**

“I am your _____, Ruth. “Spread the corner of your _____ over me, since you are a _____ - _____.”

Again, with the customs of yore! So, the spreading of the corner of his garment over her is asking Boaz to be her kinsman-redeemer, or to marry her. She wants Boaz’s wings, so to speak, to be figuratively like God’s: protective, loving, providing, caring, and redemptive. God allows His people to take safe shelter or refuge from danger under His wings. **Psalm 36:7** says: “*How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.*”

Boaz would immediately have understood what she was asking. Ruth isn’t looking to a human as her only form of deliverance though. She has most importantly taken her shelter, first and foremost, under God’s wings when she accepted Him as her God. Think back to Ruth 2:12 when Boaz says to Ruth: “May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, *under whose wings you have come to take refuge.*”

- When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we also come under His wings of protection. We are protected/saved from death and given the gift of eternal life. That is what a redeemer does! What is so amazing is that in studying the Old Testament, we can see the concepts, ideas and even scripture zippering together with the New. It’s not an old, dusty outdated Old Testament versus the grace-filled exciting New Testament. It’s the entire Bible! Jesus covers us with His blood and redeems us from our sin. That is how much He loves us! Praise God!

Lesson 3, Day 4

“Still waiting, waiting...”

Boaz’s response is loving, gentle, kind, humble, grace-filled ... and affirmative! With a small, tiny, wee little catch...*he may not actually be first in line to marry Ruth!* If this were a movie, can you just hear the “da da daaaaaaa” organ music emphasizing this dramatic moment! Boaz is such a noble man and has shown Naomi and Ruth such kindness and generosity. What if the other kinsman-redeemer is not as noble? What if he’s more like those people we keep hearing about in Judges. You know, “every man doing what’s right in his own eyes?”

- What does it say to you that Boaz already knows there is another man closer in relation than himself as Kinsman-Redeemer?

- What all does Boaz offer Ruth in Ruth 3:10 – 16 (tangible and intangible)?

Ruth wisely leaves the threshing floor before anyone can recognize her. While she is known in the town as a woman of noble character, gossips are not super careful about relaying their facts precisely, are they?

She carries a heavy load of grain back to her mother-in-law, who I am sure is DYING to know what transpired during the night. My guess is neither woman had a great night of sleep.

The grain would not only be a generous gift from Boaz, but almost like a dowry, solidifying his intention of finding out if he is first in line and can marry Ruth or if the other man wants to commit.

One thing that I really enjoyed is the intimacy of the scene we just read. While there is nothing inappropriate physically that took place, the entire conversation had to be whispered, which means they must have been cheek to cheek. He really likes her and is so pleased he has been asked to be her husband. He blesses her first thing, and twice calls her “my daughter” or in current language, perhaps sweetheart or my darling would fill in nicely. It’s a term of endearment. It’s actually the very first thing he said to her when they first met in Ruth 2:8 but I bet with different inflection this time.

I’m sure he caught the scent of her perfume when he first awoke, also while they were whispering, and when he ties her shawl around her shoulders and back. Ruth must be very beautiful because he is flattered by and flatters Ruth with the realization that she could’ve had younger, rich men. Twice he asks Ruth to stay there for the night, perhaps considering her safety going home in the dark, but I wonder if it’s really him longing for her to be his wife, and in his mind, this may be their only chance to enjoy a (chaste!) night together.

Naomi confirms what we as the reader can see about Boaz and his integrity: the man will not rest until the matter is settled that day. I think the sun had barely peeked over the horizon as he headed towards town.

LESSON 4

Lesson 4, Day 1

“A man on a mission”

Read Ruth 4:1 – 8.

Twice we see the rapidness of Boaz heading into town to settle the legal matter of if he is able to marry Ruth or not. (3:15b and 4:1). Remember the TV show *Little House on the Prairie*? The town of Walnut Grove was the place to be. People congregated there for church on Sunday, headed to Mr. Olsen’s store for anything they couldn’t grow themselves, and received their mail. Whenever you drive through small Texas towns, you can see the remnant of a town’s main street glory days. It’s the hub of important activity. Boaz needed to find the closer kinsman-redeemer, and town was the place to start looking. He sits at the town gates (think: city hall) and waits.

- How do we know that Boaz knows this man?
- Look up the following scripture and see what constitutes a quorum for a good amount of witnesses:

Deuteronomy 19:15 –

John 8:17 –

Matthew 18:16 -

- Why does Boaz ask 10 elders of the town to sit and watch the legal proceedings?
- Why do you think Boaz starts with the information about the land for sale before mentioning Ruth?

Boaz already knew there was another man who could be Ruth's husband. Clearly Boaz has already considered marrying Ruth and what he might need to do in order to be her husband. Since they live in the same town, and may even be related somehow, Boaz addresses him as "my friend." This may also have been to appeal to the man's good side since Boaz was requesting an impromptu meeting with him.

Boaz, like a savvy lawyer, begins his presentation to the friend and makes sure to include the legal jargon of, oh by the way, we're in the witness of these town elders. He mentions that Naomi is back and selling the land of her late husband, their mutual family relation of Elimelech. Would he like to redeem the land? Because if not, Boaz would like to.

The nearest kinsman-redeemer says yes. If I had stopped your reading right here to chew on the story a little, I think you may have felt really let down. What? No! Boaz and Ruth are supposed to be together. They love each other! He takes care of her! He's the good guy!

But then, pun intended, Boaz lets the other shoe fall. The friend will also have to acquire the young widow as his wife in order to fulfill the Levitical law. That changes everything. The friend now declines the offer to redeem it/her and tells Boaz to go for it.

- What reason does he use to back out of redeeming?

- How could marrying Ruth jeopardize his own estate?

I wonder if the first kinsman-redeemer would've taken Ruth as his wife if Boaz wasn't next in line? I wonder if the fear of jeopardizing his own estate would have ruled instead. Boaz was willing to leave his provision, the large grain pile, at the crack of dawn to hurry in to town and see if he was able to marry Ruth. What a difference we see between these two men.

Lesson 4, Day 2

"Leaving a Legacy"

Themes around feet have been quite repetitive in this book.

1. The people of Israel have not been walking with the LORD.
2. We see the Elimelech family walking into Moab, and Naomi and Ruth walking out.
3. Orpah walks away from Naomi and God.
4. Ruth begins to walk with the LORD.

5. Ruth lies down at and uncovers Boaz's feet.
6. The sandal is thrown at the kinsman-redeemer who denies a widow.
7. A sandal is passed to legalize a transaction in Israel.
8. Can you think of any others?

Our main characters, who are walking with the LORD, are named throughout the book of Ruth and throughout history! (Naomi, Ruth, Boaz)

In fact, look up **Matthew 1:5 – 6** and **Luke 3:32**.

- Whose names appear in the genealogy of Jesus Christ?

Isn't it so awesome to see that the good guys really do win? Family for the man who was a bachelor. Boaz worked really hard, lived a life for God, and didn't lower himself to the immoral culture. He gets to be in the line of Jesus Christ! His sacrificial giving, through his business/livelihood and doing more than what was required by God, had earthly and ETERNAL value. Ruth gave up her former life and family and devoted herself to God and Naomi. She was a hard worker, humble servant and devoted daughter-in-law. Her life choices also had earthly and ETERNAL value. Isn't it awesome that our God, El Roi, sees all of this?

- Do you look at your minor daily decisions or major event decisions through the lens of eternity?

- If yes, how so?

- Sometimes, we can hold on to earthly things just a little too tight. We may not want to go above and beyond or be overly generous with our things or walk outside of our comfort zone, like Ruth and Boaz did. What I think Jesus tries to tell us is – living life as a Christian on Earth is going to mean we have to venture out in faith if we want eternal results! We are called to be a light in a dark, immoral world and live differently somehow than non-believers. Can you think of something in your life that you need to re-evaluate through the lens of eternity?

- **Matthew 6:20-21** - *But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
- What are some practical ways to store up treasures in heaven?

✎ Boaz and Ruth’s beautiful example of servant hearts and generous, hard-working natures are really impactful and inspiring. Let’s pray to God. *Jesus, I realize life on Earth is short even when it feels very long sometimes. Please help me to not lose sight of the fact that things on Earth are temporal. I need to be serving you God, and not just my selfish desires to have pretty things and keep up with the neighbors. Show me where I can give more – of a better attitude, a more generous wallet, the gift of time through serving. I want to please you, Jesus. One day I want to hear, “well done, my good and faithful servant” from Your lips. I want to store up good and useful treasures in heaven, and not JUST leave behind things my relatives may fight about after my death.*

Lesson 4, Day 3

“Bachelor Party”

Read Ruth 4:9 -12.

Have you ever been so excited or so happy that you literally wished you could shout from the rooftop your great news of joy?? I think I felt that way when we signed the contract to build our house and every day when I came to check on its progress. It’s probably best social media was not a thing back then because I would have been a “house over-poster”. I got excited about every nail, board and shingle.

- What is your happy-happy moment worthy of a shout out?

I think maybe Boaz felt the same way.

- Who did he start out talking to? (v1 - 2)
- To whom does he announce that the privilege of kinsman-redeemer is his? (v9)

Can you just see this older bachelor shouting beyond the 11 sitting there? Loud enough that the rest of the townsfolk could hear, too? Perhaps he also wanted to doubly make sure that this contract's I's got dotted and T's got crossed because he adores Ruth so. He's careful to spell out all the remaining legal details necessary to cover all the bases with regard to land transfer and marriage to Ruth.

This moment is not lost on the witnesses and elders. In fact, I almost see it as Boaz's impromptu bachelor party! They begin to bless Boaz and Ruth using examples of famous Israelites in history. I am sure no one could have fathomed how much bigger God would chose to bless Ruth and Boaz beyond what the guys thought was a generous blessing.

- **Verse 11** – *“May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel.”* Abraham had Isaac who had Jacob. Jacob had 2 wives, Leah (1st) and Rachel (2nd), who in turn had all the sons who became the namesakes for the Tribes of Israel (for example, Judah is a tribe of Israel and one of Leah's sons). Notice Rachel is listed first here, out of order of marriage. Rachel was unable to conceive initially, like Ruth. They are asking God to give Ruth fertility, like Rachel, and many children, like Leah.
- **Verse 11** – *May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.* Ephrathah to them is like Denton County or Dallas to us, and Bethlehem is like Flower Mound, more specifically located within Ephrathah. The men thought being famous where you live is a blessing, but God chose to bless on an even grander scale!! It reminds me of Ephesians 3:20: *Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine*
- **Verse 12** – Through your offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah. If you ever have a moment, read Genesis 38. It is about kinsman-redemption gone horribly wrong, but in the end the widow was redeemed and had twin boys. Per my bible's commentary, Perez became the head of the leading clan in Judah, and is an ancestor of King David, and ultimately Christ.

Little did these men know how prophetic their words of blessing would be!

- What are some ways you could bless people with your words?

- Have you ever gone out of your way to give an intentional blessing to others with a text, phone call, social-media shout out or handwritten letter? What does it do for the giver and receiver?

Lesson 4, Day 4

“First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes Obed in a baby carriage”

Read Ruth 4:13 – 22.

Ruth and Boaz get married! My hunch is this marriage looked a lot different than most marriages. Not just because he was a bit older than Ruth, either. I bet Boaz was so thrilled to marry such a kind and humble-hearted woman after a long bachelorhood. I bet Ruth was thrilled to have such a generous and loving husband who adored her. Even in today’s society, we do not see many marriages where each spouse is sacrificially or generously giving to the other, consistently. Boaz and Ruth would have set an incredible example in their time as well as today.

This time we see another blessing given. Describe the circumstances and blessing:

- Who was being blessed? (v14)

- Who was saying the blessing? (v14)

- Do you find it strange that Ruth, the mother, isn’t the one being blessed here? Why do you think?

The reality is if Naomi had been younger and able to have more children, she would be the one at Boaz’s feet asking for the kinsman-redeemer status. She’s also the Hebrew who brought Moabitess Ruth to Israel. This is truly not a dishonoring slap in the face to Ruth at all. They are

LESSON FIVE

Lesson 5, Day 1

“Happily Ever After”

I am sure we can use our imagination and assume Ruth and Boaz had a happy life which included Naomi and more children. We can see that they kept up their faith and it impacted the next generation, culminating in Chapter 4 with us understanding Boaz was the great Grandpa to King David.

- Did you ever think that your own faith could affect generations to come?

- Is there anything you would consider doing differently now with regard to how you live out your faith realizing this?

I do not believe Ruth and Boaz could've even imagined while talking in bed at night that they would be in the line of family living up to Jesus, the anticipated Messiah. They are too humble to even fathom that headiness. Another thing I bet they could not fathom is that a book in the Bible would be written about her story/ their lives. They would not possibly have imagined the book of Ruth would be read cyclically by Jews each year, even today!

Ephesians 3:20: Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than

all we ask or imagine

- What do you think the book of Ruth means for us as Christians? Is it relevant to us today?

- What are some over-arching themes you saw in Ruth that impacted you?

Lesson 5, Day 2

“Cloudy Days”

Yes, what about us? Our study of the scripture in Ruth is complete now. What will we take away from it on our own journey going forward?

Life Lesson #1: The storms will come.

Ruth was an adult, engrained in her culture, worshipped her Moab gods, and was in her comfort zone, until...until tragedy threw her for a life-changing loop with her husband's death. Then Naomi uprooted Ruth's comfort zone further by forcing her from her marriage home in order to return to her mother's house or Israel. Ruth was in the midst of a terrible hurricane season!

Read Matthew 7:24-27

- Each man built what?

- Upon what 2 surfaces did each man build?

- Which man was saved? Which man was unsaved?

- The storm came to which man?

Right! The storm came to **both** men. Notice the storms of life have no preference for the saved (house on the Rock) or unsaved (house on the sinking sand). Deaths in the family occur for both the Christian and non-Christian. Jobs are won and lost for both. Marriages and divorces can happen for both. The big difference is the man who trusts in God will weather the storm with eternal hope. Because the Christian walks with God, he should hopefully come out standing on the other side with more wisdom, humility, faith and trust in God.

Naomi may look a little weather-beaten, a little aged due to the physical toll taken on her during her storms, but she still stood and could walk forward because she trusted in God. Not only did she weather it, but the storms caused her to re-evaluate her location and relationship with God. The storms (and most likely the Holy Spirit) revealed to her that it was time to go wholeheartedly back to the Promised Land. Be with her Rock, and other Rock-dwellers.

Sometimes our storms occur to change us. Oh, they are never fun. We never wish or want for them. But we are always changed by them, and can usually look back in hindsight and say: God

used that storm to change my locale, or my behavior, or cut loose a toxic/bondage thing in my life. Even *during* the storm, when we don't understand what is happening or how or when it will conclude, we keep our eyes upon God asking for strength and wisdom in the moment.

Ruth could look back and say the storms changed everything for her. Her locale, marital and family status, and **her eternity** were changed because of her hurricanes.

After the storm calms, we are grateful it is over, that we had God with us, and what we learned from it. We are usually glad to be in our new, calmer place. Oh, how do the unsaved go through life without the knowledge, comfort and hope in our Lord Jesus?

- ✎ Are you going through a storm? Pray to Jesus about it. Be humble and ask other trusted Christians to pray for you. Philippians 4:4-7 is a great comfort during the hurricane season.

- ✎ Perhaps you know someone who does not know Jesus. Stop now, and pray for those in your life who need Jesus. Those prayers matter. (I bet Naomi prayed for Ruth and Orpah!)

Lesson 5, Day 3

“It's all about God”

Life Lesson #2: Redemption is available to everyone.

Read Hebrews 9:27-28. God is a God of love. He sent His son to die for us and to take away our sin. Even after He takes up His believers in Rapture one day, He will come again to take the believers to Heaven that will believe in Him after the Rapture. He is the Redeemer of souls.

Don't give up on praying for those friends and family of yours who do not know Jesus! Pray! Our gal, Ruth, became a believer later in life. Look at how God changed her heart and situation and redeemed her. He redeemed her soul. He redeemed her widowhood. He redeemed her barrenness. Don't give up on praying.

God is the God of redemption. Of souls. Of situations.

I have seen someone accept Jesus on their death bed ...redeemed at the *last...moment...possible*. Praise God, the soul Redeemer!

I have seen a marriage turn-around and change for the better because of prayer. Praise God, the marriage Redeemer!

I have seen people break free from the bondage of the past (guilt of multiple-abortions, alcoholism) and heal due to counseling, accountability, and prayers. Praise God, the situation Redeemer!

- ⌘ I am sure you may have your own stories of God's redemption you could share, where a situation was miraculously turned around? Do you remember a time like that?

Life Lesson #3: Being whole-hearted towards God is crucial.

We see Ruth making a life-altering choice to leave Moab, her culture, gods and previous ways to embrace God, eternity, and Naomi's people and homeland.

So must we stay focused on God, and remain whole-hearted. But what does that look like, practically speaking? How can we stay focused on God, and not wander off?

- We must consistently pray to Him, confess to Him, ask Him for help and wisdom.
- We must spend some time in His word, too. Go to church where we can worship with other believers and tangibly feel being a part of God's family.
- Stay in a Bible study, whether with others or alone.
- Have pointed, intentional relationships with other female Christians to hold us accountable, pray for us, encourage us, laugh with us, cry with us...and vice versa to them.
- Can you think of some other ways?

Life Lesson #4: Believing and trusting Him is called salvation/faith.

Hebrews 11:1: *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

Ruth believed Naomi's God was real. She saw for more than 10 years how Naomi handled things through a different spiritual lens than compared to her Moabite people. The Holy Spirit opened Ruth's eyes. When Ruth made her vow to Naomi and took the first steps on the road to towards

Israel, well, that's when her belief and trust in God collided. She had faith in God. Her salvation was secure. Her journey trusting in God had just begun...

Where are you on your spiritual journey?

Have you accepted Jesus as your savior?

Are you whole-heartedly "in"?

Friends,

Be the light of the Jesus on your journey. Encourage others. Help others. Pray, pray continually. Praise Him! It changes and transforms our minds when we read scripture, and praise and thank Him, and focus on the character and names of God. Love others by giving people, friends and strangers alike, practical help and service. Be humble: choose to think of others more than you think of yourself.

It's hard, but when we rely on God, it is possible.

And, friends,

"May the LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn His face toward you and give you peace." Numbers 6: 24 – 26.