

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Study the Text . . .

Remember the Story

Review the story of the book of Ruth in the group. If someone is willing, have him or her share all they remember from their reading of the book. You may prefer to reconstruct the story as a group. Try not to forget anything and help each other. It will be helpful to have the larger story fresh on your mind as you discuss the more focused parts.

Naomi and Ruth

When we see Naomi stripped of her husband and sons, she feels the bitterness of life and concludes that God has dealt with her this way because of her sin. She intends to send her daughters-in-law back to their families and hopes for a better life for them. In verse 15, we can see the depth of her frustration as she is sending them back to their people and their gods. Here we see the determination of Ruth to show kindness to Naomi.

Ruth 1:14-18

- Naomi tries to send Ruth back to her people and her gods.
- Ruth vows that she will go with Naomi wherever she goes, and she claims Naomi's people and God as her own.
- Even within this vow or oath she demonstrates her claim by taking the oath in the name of the LORD (Yahweh).

Discuss

- What are the ways Ruth demonstrates kindness toward Naomi?
- What do these tell us about the depth of her kindness?

Ruth and Boaz

Many times in the Old Testament characters embody the picture of Christ in the New Testament. The story of Ruth and Boaz is a beautiful picture of love and redemption all on its own. However, it is even more beautiful when it is considered as displaying the beauty of Christ's relationship to his Bride, the Church.

Ruth 2:1-16

- By God's providence Ruth "happened" to be gleaning in the field of Boaz.
- Boaz from his first words, "The LORD be with you!" is portrayed as a man of God.
- He shows Ruth favor in blessing her presence in his field.
- Boaz goes beyond the law's requirement to allow gleaning and intentionally blesses Ruth with special rights to glean among the sheaves and even offering her some from the bundles.
- Ruth is blessed by His kindness... v.13 she said, "You have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant."

Ruth 3:6-13, 4:1-12

- As the story continues Boaz becomes the hope of Ruth and Naomi for restoration from devastation.
- Boaz's kindness was a blessing, but because of his position in the family he has the further ability to choose to redeem and restore Ruth by marrying her.
- The language of this passage is purposefully chosen to remind the reader or hearer of the similarities between Boaz and the LORD as redeemers for Ruth. Ruth asks Boaz to spread his "wings" over her (3:9) as Boaz had already said the LORD had done for her (2:12).
- Also recognize that in blessing and redeeming Ruth there was a cost that had to be paid. Boaz was willing to pay the price that the other redeemer considered too great a sacrifice.

Discuss

- Review the early parts of Chapter 2. Why do you think there is so much emphasis placed on the fact that Ruth is a Moabite?
- What was necessary for Ruth and Naomi to be redeemed after the death of their husbands?
- What are the circumstances of our own lives that cause us to need a redeemer?
- How does Ruth model the way we should act towards Christ?

Looking to the Future

Ruth 4:17-21

The end of the book of Ruth obviously points forward in the genealogy that follows after Boaz and Ruth. It specifically reflects on King David. The writer's knowledge of David indicates that this story was most likely recorded after David had come to be king. The writer recognized the significance of God's provision for Ruth in the lineage of David. Now as we read the account we know that David was not the greatest King to come from this family line. Christ the King ultimately followed the same line, and not only is

this story a part of his family history, but a clear mirror and forerunner for the redemption He offers to all people.

Discuss

- How does it affect your reading of this story, and all of God's story, knowing that He knew the end of the story when all its parts were being written?
- How can you read the Bible with this perspective? What is the main message of God's Great Story (the whole Bible)?
- How does it affect your relationship with Christ to think of Him as your Kinsman Redeemer?
- How should you incorporate the understanding you gained from this story into your prayer life?
- Read Titus 3:1-8. How can you demonstrate Christ's loving kindness to those around you, not so you are praised, but to glorify the Great Redeemer?