



**W O M A N
O F
S I G N I F I C A N C E**

BIBLE STUDY THROUGH

Ruth



WRITTEN BY

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...Welcome...

Welcome to this study through the wonderful book of Ruth. Ruth's story is beautiful and unique in the Bible:

- There are only two books in the Bible that are named after women and Ruth is one of them.
- There are only five books in the Bible which are read in their entirety on Jewish holy days and Ruth is one of them
- There are only five women named in the genealogy of Christ, and guess what... Ruth is one of them!

Ruth is a woman of significance in the Bible and worthy of our time to understand and appreciate. Her story directly connects to us as followers of Jesus. Ruth is a gentile (not a Jew) and not only that, but she was a Moabitess – a cursed and hated nation. She is known for her kindness, loyalty, and faith. Her story weaves together God's plan to continually "bless those who bless Him" and brings us moving reminders of where our hope lies.

The story of Ruth will remind you that your heavenly heritage trumps your earthly heritage. Her story will remind you of how deeply God values kindness and loyalty. You'll find joy and hope in recalling the power of redemption and sacrifice.

I believe that as you study you'll see the exciting story of love and hope woven through the genealogy of Jesus. Yes. The genealogy. You know, that part of the chapter we tend to skip? That list of hard-to-pronounce-names we stumble though? Those never-ending "begats" that we'd like to ignore? You will love them! At least I hope you will.

Our heart's deepest longings swirl with desire for connection, hope, and significance. We want to matter. We want life in general and our own specific stories to matter. So this study is a place for you to come to that place in your heart where you long for significance and to see that only in Christ – like Ruth – can that ultimately be found.

Are you ready? I am!

Let's dwell in God's word together!

Jennifer





How this Study Works

Schedule...

30 minutes daily to dwell in the Word

- ⤴ 20 minutes in the morning to begin your day centered on God.
- ⤴ 10 minutes in the evening before bedtime to close the day with God's Word on your mind
- ⤴ There are 15 days divided into 3 sessions in this study. Each day is designed on the 20/10 approach. Divide your time as best suits you.

Mindset...

- ⤴ Read the Word
- ⤴ Write the Word
- ⤴ Memorize the Word
- ⤴ Study the Word and
- ⤴ Meditate on the Word

You'll be equipped to...

- ⤴ Use the Word
- ⤴ Share the Word
- ⤴ Create with the Word and
- ⤴ Defend your Faith with the Word

We'll meet weekly on Monday nights at 8pm online
Login on your computer or phone through the Zoom link
<http://bit.do/woman-of-significance>

Let the Word of God
Dwell in You Richly





3. What is the general tone of the passage?

4. What are your general impressions of the book of Ruth?

5. What themes do you see popping up?

6. Where do you see God showing up in the midst of the details of one family's story?



Write & Memorize the Word -- Ecclesiastes 3:11

Read the Word

Ruth

...Dwell in the Word...

We'll re-read Ruth each day this week. Add to your notes new insights, questions, and comments each day.

WE'RE GOING TO KICK OFF RUTH'S STORY WITH THE END...

...AND THE END IS REALLY JUST ANOTHER BEGINNING...

1. Read Matthew 1:1-17 After reading verse seventeen, stand up and shout, "Tah-Dah!" Just kidding, but actually, I do feel like that after reading this! Now go back and read re-read the genealogy and underline in the names of the women listed then write their names here:

- a. _____ (v3)
- b. _____ (v5a)
- c. _____ (v5b)
- d. _____ (v6 not by name but by implication)
- e. _____ (v16)

The genealogy mentions five women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba ("her that had been the wife of Urias"), and Mary. Not only is this unusual in a Jewish genealogy, but all of these had a tarnished reputation in some way or another. How could women of such lowly reputation make it into the genealogy of the King of kings?

∴ **TAMAR** had her children by acting as a prostitute.

∴ **RAHAB** was a prostitute before she joined the Israelites.

∴ **RUTH** was of Moab, a hated people in scripture.

∴ **BATHSHEBA** had an adulterous affair with David.

∴ **MARY**, though pure, was with child out of wedlock.

Rahab and Ruth were also Gentiles; something a Jew would not expect in the line of the Messiah. Certainly, the grace of God is displayed in this record and is a reminder that His grace is for all.

DO YOU EVER STRUGGLE with doubting that God could use you, bless you, fix you after all you feel you have done wrong in your life? Do you know someone who struggles with this?

Satan is dedicated to keeping you in this mindset. But God wants us to renew our mind and have the mind of Christ. He wants us to be daughters of Truth and Light not children of lies and darkness.



We may never know the reasons for our hardship, our struggle, but we can be assured of this: the course of history is truly “His story.”

Our plans and our trials are small in comparison to His grand Plan.

2. Illustrate our memory verse - Ecclesiastes 3:11:



LET OUR TIME TOGETHER IN THIS STUDY AFFIRM IN YOUR HEART THIS TRUTH. LET THIS STUDY EQUIP YOU TO OFFER WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND WISDOM FROM GOD’S WORD TO THOSE HE BRINGS INTO YOUR LIFE.

3. Write Proverbs 25:11



4. We’ve all struggled with feeling like we’re not significant...we’re not making a difference...we’re not useful enough or skilled enough to be used by God. How will your understanding so far of the story of Ruth help you offer hope and encouragement to a friend going through a similar struggle?





Write & Memorize the Word - Ecclesiastes 3:11

Read the Word

Ruth

...Dwell in the Word...

THERE ARE ONLY two books in the Bible that are named for women: Ruth and Esther. The story of Ruth's life is one of the most touching reminders of God's grace in entire Bible.

IF I TOLD YOU that my relative kept her child in a closet and only let him see the light of day through a small opening in a locked window, that she fed him scraps of food, and never let him speak above a whisper, you would be horrified. But if I told you that my relative was a Jew living in 1934 during the reign of Hitler and she was hiding to save her child and herself from concentration camps, you'd shift your thoughts. You'd understand the context of their situation. Reading an entire book of the Bible, especially a narrative like Ruth, is so important to really grasping what is going on and understanding the times surrounding a person's story will give you a greater insight.

LET'S BEGIN with that kind of openness to understanding Ruth's story. We'll need to go back a bit to grasp what's going on...

READ RUTH 1:1-2 then read the helpful verses with each question to give you the big picture.

Use Bible map and find the locations mentioned as well.

1. Read Judges 3:7, 3:12, 4:1, 6:1, 10:6, 13:1 and 21:25 -- Who is ruling the land and what was life like during this time period?



2. From Ruth 1:1-2 what was happening in the land?





3. Where were the people mentioned living?



Later in Scripture, Bethlehem is also referred to as the “City of David.” We’ll see the reason for this at the very last chapter, verse and word in this book. (no peeking... just kidding, you should have already read the whole book...three times!)



...WORD STUDY...
Bethlehem is “beit+lechem” (בֵּית לֶחֶם) which means “house of bread.” Therefore this verse is a pun since it says there was a “famine” in the “house of bread.”

4. From Ruth 1:1-4, write the names...(The man’s, wife’s and sons’ names)



- Man: _____ means “my God is king”
- Wife: _____ means “pleasant”
- Son #1: _____ means “sickness/weakling”
- Son #2: _____ means “consumptive/destruction”

5. They traveled from where to where?



_____ to _____

Locate this journey on a map. About how many miles/kilometers is it? _____

How long do you think it would have taken? _____

You noted earlier that this was during a time when God’s people were ruled by Judges – not kings. A quick overview of Old Testament periods takes us from the time of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, plus Joshua through Moses) to the period of Judges when the Jews didn’t honor God then to the time of the Kings (Saul, David, Solomon) and divided kingdom (Rehoboam/Jeroboam through Zedekiah/Hoshea).

Ruth is set during the time of the Judges and again, to fully understand the power of this story – which we know ends not only happily, but triumphantly since from Ruth our own Savior, Jesus, is born – we need to understand the background. That’s going to take us even further back...



Write & Memorize the Word - Ecclesiastes 3:11

Read the Word

Ruth

...Dwell in the Word...

From the opening two verses of the book of Ruth the entire story is set, but you'll miss the drama if you miss the background. Famine...husband leaves to find food for his family...travels to another country. He's just looking out for his family, right?

1. READ GENESIS 19:30-38 (not a nice story) Summarize basically what happens in this account...

2. So, what is the ancestral origins of the Moabite people?

The Moabites come from the disgusting and incestuous relations of Lot and his daughters. There's just no other way around it. They are descendants of this evil union and ultimately, they become bitter enemies of Abraham. They are cursed by God.

3. READ DEUTERONOMY 23:3-6 The Ammonites and Moabites continued to be enemies of God and His people, so what does God declare against them in this passage?



4. THIS IS IMPORTANT...DON'T SKIP THIS ANSWER! Take note from Deuteronomy the length of time God says the Moabites will be forbidden. How many generations is the curse?



5. According to Deuteronomy 23:4, for what two reasons did God curse the Moabites? (Also, super duper important! Don't skip this one!)

1) _____

2) _____

6. Re-Read Ruth 1:1-3 (especially verse 3) Elimelech (“el-ee-meh-leck” or “ee-lim-el-eck”) takes his wife and sons out of the famine-stricken land – the Promised Land – and journeys to Moab. A cursed land of a cursed people. Why is this a cursed land? Read the following and note why God cursed Moab:

Numbers 22:1-12

Numbers 25:1-3

7. What did God admonish the Israelites not to do with the Ammonites or Moabites? (Back in Deuteronomy 3-6.)



AND YET, IF YOU DO YOUR STUDIES, SOMETHING EXCITING IS REVEALED.

We read a turn in the stories that reminds us not only of God's sovereignty,
but ultimately that true hope is found in Him!

Hang in there, we'll get to that part soon!



Write & Memorize the Word – Ecclesiastes 3:11

Read the Word

Ruth

...Dwell in the Word...

The evil of the Moabites was well-known. They worshiped the god Chemosh to whom they offered live child sacrifices. This was an evil disgusting people whose ways were condemned over and over again by God.

And yet, Elimelech leaves his homeland the “house of bread” and travels to this accursed land of the people who had refused his ancestors bread and water (Deut. 23:4-5).

1. Would a man who truly believes that His God is King abandon his people at the time of famine? Explain...



2. Do you think he was leading from faith or fear? Why or why not?



Remember Elimelech’s name meant “my God is King” and yet, was he acting as though he believed this? Not at all.

In the Jewish commentaries the rabbis translate his name to mean: “kingship is due to me.” He is leaving the blessed land and taking his family to the cursed land. Currently his homeland is under judgment through the famine, but why leave? Why not trust God to bless and deliver right there in the midst of the trial? There seems to be a disconnect between his name and his behavior, but perhaps he had a sense of entitlement instead of submission and humility before God. Which explains why he departs the blessed land and dies in the cursed.

When God called and set apart His people, He described exactly how He expected them to live. The essentials are outlined in the Ten Commandments and the details are recorded throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – The Torah or also called the Pentateuch.

3. Read Leviticus 26:3-4 Who causes famine?





4. If you're under judgment (famine) from God what should you do?

What does Elimelech do?

Instead of staying and repenting through God's judgment, Elimelech "sojourns" or "went to live for a while" in Moab.

This isn't a short visit, is it?

...WORD STUDY...

Interesting to note that the Hebrew phrase for where Elimelech goes is not "land of Moab" but "field of Moab." Implying that he was intending to set up for a while and grow crops.

5. From Ruth 1:4 What do Elimelech's sons do? And with whom?

Now, you and I have an advantage here. We know the end of the story. We can see the big picture. But for a moment let's just read without that knowledge and see the situation as these characters would have seen it. These sons marry women from a cursed land in direct violation against God's law....

"Don't marry those evil people. They'll keep your heart from Me."

While Solomon - a direct descendant of Ruth - lived well after this time period, his story is a vivid reminder of why God said "No" to marrying women from this idolatrous nation:

6. READ 1 KINGS 11:1-9 What does Solomon do and what was the consequence/punishment from God?

7. Re-Read Ruth 1:4-5

How long had they lived in Moab? _____

Then what happens?

FOODLESS... FATHERLESS... FAMILYLESS

Naomi has been through a famine, the death of her husband and father to her sons and now, without sons, she has no prospects for a family to continue. Hard enough in our culture today for a woman to suffer such losses, but in Naomi's day she was done. Completely emptied of all that could fill her life with promise and blessing, by man's standards it's over for her.

The consequences of Elimelech's unbelief are severe.

Naomi is left with three graves
two daughters-in-law
and no way to provide for herself or these Moabite women.
And yet...
we know that God indeed will provide,
and His provision will be a most tender and gracious kind.

Take a moment to write a prayer of faith, trusting that in spite of how hard your circumstances may be, you will trust the God who Provides...



LET'S PAUSE TO REFLECT ON TWO POINTS:

- 1) God has set restrictions on our behavior for our benefit and blessing.
- 2) When we break His laws He still provides a way for our redemption.

WHERE ARE YOU TODAY IN YOUR WALK WITH GOD? Is God calling you to repent? Take time today and do what Elimelech should have done: reflect on your situation and if you are under discipline from God, repent! Don't run from God's hand of discipline.

Take shelter in Him and ask Him to forgive your sins and to bless you as you are willing to live for Him.



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