

THE BOOK OF
Ruth

BIBLE STUDY GUIDES FOR SMALL GROUPS

RELATIONAL BIBLE STUDY SERIES

CREATED BY STEVE CASE

Come and Go

OPENING QUESTION

What is the earliest memory you have of your family moving?

READ Ruth 1:1–22.

1. Was it a good idea for Elimelech and Naomi to move to Moab?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. It seemed like a good idea at the time.
- D. Why stay in a place where there's a famine?
- E. It proved to be deadly.
- F. One wonders why lots of others didn't leave Judah with them.
- G. They found loyal ladies to marry their sons.
- H. Moab had more rain and rich soil compared to the land of Judah.
- I. Other.

2. Why did Ruth and Orpah head back to Judah with Naomi?

- A. Naomi would be alone without them.
- B. They would be alone without Naomi.
- C. Misery loves company.
- D. Good crops were growing in Judah.
- E. They felt obligated.
- F. They loved their mother-in-law.
- G. They didn't want to return to their families of origin.
- H. In their culture, once you married, you stayed with your new family.
- I. Other.

3. Why was Naomi so bitter?

- A. She had lost her husband to death.
- B. She had lost both of her sons to death.
- C. Naomi lost everything in Moab.
- D. Ruth and Orpah weren't much to take back with her to Judah.
- E. She saw a lonely future, with no future family for herself.
- F. Naomi never wanted to move to Moab in the first place.
- G. God had punished her.
- H. Her name (*Naomi = pleasant*) was a constant misnomer.
- I. Other.

4. Why was marriage so important in Naomi's day?

- A. It's what everyone did.
- B. Perpetuating one's family had a high value.
- C. This formed the basic social institutions of the day.
- D. To legitimately give birth to the next generation.
- E. To provide financially for one's future.
- F. In order to possibly give birth to the promised Messiah.
- G. For the same reasons it's important today.
- H. Marriage wasn't that important.
- I. Other.

5. What commitment did Ruth make to Naomi?

- A. To live with her.
- B. To renounce her country and become an Israelite.
- C. To live a nomadic life.
- D. As strong as any marriage commitment between husband and wife.
- E. Take Yahweh as her only God in place of the gods of Moab.
- F. Marry an Israelite and care for Naomi.
- G. Ruth gave her 10 years; then it would be up for review.
- H. Other.

6. What kind of "welcome home" did Naomi/Mara experience?

- A. Open arms.
- B. Most were put off by her return.
- C. People kept their distance because of Ruth.
- D. Concern about the loss of her husband and sons.
- E. Naomi didn't want to be welcomed back.
- F. More than she expected.
- G. She still had relatives there.
- H. Other.

7. With Naomi leaving the Promised Land for Moab, should she have expected God to go with her? Why or why not?

8. Has your life been pleasant or bitter? What part has God played in that?

One Lucky Day

OPENING QUESTION

Which has paid off more for you: Your family of origin or your effort?

READ Ruth 2:1–23.

1. Why did Ruth initiate the idea of going out to glean?

- A. She was hungry.
- B. Being in the house with negative Naomi was no picnic.
- C. It was barley harvest time, so there was something she could do.
- D. She hoped she would find a husband in the process.
- E. Ruth had heard about Boaz and thought she'd try to contact him.
- F. She didn't have many options available to her.
- G. Naomi would have never thought of this.
- H. Ruth knew it was risky, but considered it worth the risk.
- I. Other.

2. How did it “happen” (vs. 3) that Ruth ended up in the field of Boaz?

- A. It just happened.
- B. That's called a coincidence.
- C. That's what you would call “the hand of God” or “providence.”
- D. Boaz owned quite a few grain fields in that area.
- E. Ruth was shrewd and knew where to glean.
- F. She had a faint hope that her wealthy “relative” would show up.
- G. You can't just make up this kind of stuff.
- H. She had overheard Naomi's comments and figured things out.
- I. Other.

3. Why was Boaz so kind to Ruth?

- A. That's the way Boaz treated everyone.
- B. Ruth was physically attractive, which caught his attention.
- C. God touched the heart of Boaz.
- D. Ruth's work ethic was positively noticeable.
- E. Boaz was a generous man.
- F. Ruth was the only Gentile, which made her outstanding in the field.
- G. Boaz didn't have the prejudice for Moabites that many Jews had.
- H. Ruth was related to Boaz.
- I. Other.

4. How did Boaz know so much about Ruth?

- A. He listened well to the grapevine.
- B. Bethlehem was a small town, so everyone knew about Ruth.
- C. When you work in the fields with someone, you hear their stories.
- D. Ruth outworked the gleaners and the harvesters.
- E. Naomi had “talked up” Ruth to everyone who would listen.
- F. Boaz pursued information about Ruth from fellow field workers.
- G. Ruth talked incessantly.
- H. God had revealed all of this to Boaz in a dream.
- I. Other.

5. What was Ruth’s response to the generosity of Boaz?

- A. She couldn’t stop thanking him.
- B. A sense of unworthiness.
- C. Graciousness.
- D. Ruth had come to expect this sort of treatment.
- E. An eagerness to tell Naomi the whole story.
- F. Relief that she had something to show for her day of labor.
- G. This planted the seed that she would one day marry Boaz.
- H. Other.

6. What was Mara’s reaction to Ruth’s first day of gleaning?

- A. I can’t believe it!
- B. It’s about time I catch a break.
- C. I might have to go back to being called “Naomi.”
- D. Blessing on the owner of the field.
- E. Blessing on Yahweh.
- F. Where’s Orpah now?
- G. Let me tell you a few things about Boaz.
- H. Other.

7. Based on what you’ve read about Ruth in *chapter 2*, what are 3 words you’d use to describe Ruth?

8. When have you been surprised because you suddenly became blessed?

Coming or Going?

OPENING QUESTION

Name one of your relatives who is better off than you.

READ Ruth 3:1–18.

1. What makes someone your “daughter” (vs. 1)?

- A. Biological birth.
- B. Adoption.
- C. Investment.
- D. Marriage.
- E. It’s a term of endearment.
- F. Financial responsibility.
- G. Similar appearance.
- H. Spending lots of time with your family.
- I. Other.

2. What was Naomi’s strategy to change Ruth’s relationship with Boaz?

- A. Push the relationship to the next level.
- B. Drop the gleaner look (and smell).
- C. Get her married.
- D. Catch Boaz at a weak moment.
- E. Appeal to Boaz’s male drive.
- F. Appeal to Boaz’s goodness.
- G. Take advantage of Ruth’s good looks.
- H. Go around everyone else and give Ruth direct contact with Boaz.
- I. Other.

3. Why do you think Ruth followed Naomi’s advice?

- A. Blind obedience.
- B. It made sense to her.
- C. Ruth depended on Naomi to understand Bethlehem’s cultural norms.
- D. Ruth wanted to get re-married.
- E. To protect her own future.
- F. To provide for Naomi’s future.
- G. She was tired of gleaning.
- H. It matched what she was already thinking herself.
- I. Other.

4. What is the significance of uncovering Boaz's feet and lying next to him?

- A. Some strange local custom that doesn't make sense to us.
- B. This was a sexual advance.
- C. "Feet" means "legs" or male genitalia.
- D. This was just the "foot of the bed;" don't get so excited!
- E. It demonstrated a posture of submission.
- F. This was her only chance for a heart-to-heart talk.
- G. He would eventually wake up because of the cold.
- H. This happened in the dark so nobody else could see it.
- I. Other.

5. What is the meaning of Boaz taking Ruth under his wing (vs. 9)?

- A. He will provide for her.
- B. Union.
- C. Sexual intercourse.
- D. A reference back to *Ruth 2:12*.
- E. A reference to *Exodus 19:4*.
- F. This would be the same as announcing your engagement publicly.
- G. Boaz requesting Ruth to marry him.
- H. Other.

6. What is Naomi's take on what happened?

- A. What are you doing back here?
- B. It worked.
- C. You still have to wait a little longer.
- D. Tell me more.
- E. We don't need any more groceries this week.
- F. How long does it take to get you married?
- G. It's been a good harvest.
- H. Other.

7. Who has their garment/coat over you now? What does that provide?

8. Is this Naomi-Ruth-Boaz a love triangle, a love dance, a random thing, or something else?

What a Deal!

OPENING QUESTION

When you were a child, how were significant family decisions made?

READ 4:1–22.

1. Why would someone want to redeem land?

- A. Keep it in the family.
- B. Enlarge one's own estate.
- C. Buy back what was sold.
- D. It would be shameful not to do so in that culture.
- E. Lost land could never be redeemed again.
- F. No need to do so; just wait for the Year of Jubilee.
- G. To get a wife as part of the land deal.
- H. It feeds one's Messiah complex.
- I. Other.

2. How would marrying Ruth endanger the redeemer's own estate?

- A. That was just an excuse to bail out of the deal.
- B. Ruth was a Moabite, not an Israelite.
- C. Ruth had a shopping addiction.
- D. If Ruth gave birth to a son, the land would go to her son.
- E. The redeemer's first wife would divorce him.
- F. Too many mouths to feed.
- G. Ruth "gleaned" a lot, so restraint wasn't part of her character.
- H. The Year of Jubilee would return the land to Naomi anyway.
- I. Other.

3. What did it take to make the land deal?

- A. A "kinsman redeemer" was the only one who could redeem the land.
- B. The current owner had to be willing to sell the land.
- C. Naomi's okay.
- D. At least 10 elders of the town of Bethlehem meeting in session.
- E. First right of refusal to the next of kin male.
- F. Including marriage to Ruth as part of the deal.
- G. A fair amount of money.
- H. A sandal to seal the deal.
- I. Other.

4. Who turned out to be the kinsman-redeemer?

- A. The unnamed next of kin male.
- B. Boaz.
- C. Obed.
- D. Naomi.
- E. Ruth.
- F. Yahweh.
- G. The 10 town elders.
- H. David.
- I. Other.

5. What was the community blessing about (vs. 11-12)?

- A. Yahweh blessing what humans had decided—land transfer.
- B. Another nation for Yahweh.
- C. A continuation of Yahweh’s nation and Yahweh’s promises.
- D. Lots of children, like Leah and Rachel (and their substitutes).
- E. Notoriety in the city of Bethlehem.
- F. Descendants from Tamar brings up questionable sexual relations.
- G. This served as the precursor to a wedding registry.
- H. Other.

6. What was the women’s blessing about (vs. 14-15)?

- A. It’s all about giving birth.
- B. It could change Mara’s name (bitter) back to Naomi (joy).
- C. The family name wouldn’t be extinguished.
- D. Giving birth to a male counts more in a patriarchal society.
- E. It’s what they would say about any birth at that time.
- F. A tribute to the value of Ruth.
- G. Ruth had been barren for 10 years with Mahlon in Moab.
- H. Other.

7. What has given your family bragging rights (of what are you proud)?

8. What has given your family negative marks (of what are you embarrassed)?

