



REDEEMING LOVE
THE BOOK OF RUTH

LIFE GROUP MATERIAL

Bracken Ridge
BAPTIST CHURCH



THE BOOK OF
RUTH

BIANCA JUÁREZ OLTHOFF

God can seem distant when dreams fade, people die, or careers fail. It may feel like He slammed the door in your face and walked out for good. No one knows the feeling of abandonment more than Ruth and Naomi. Their story begins with the worst —death, famine, and poverty. And God remains silent.

But the book of Ruth doesn't end with despair. The story brims with hope because God works on behalf of the two widows in ways they least expect. In this 7-part series, Bianca Juárez Olthoff, speaker and author of *Play with Fire*, teaches through Ruth to show how God moves behind the scenes in our lives. On the surface, this book tells the story of two widows and a kind landowner. Even more, it teaches us about God's faithfulness, love, and providence.

Walk the journey of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz and discover the devoted love of God and His transformative power in our lives.

Accessing The Material

On the following pages you will find all of the information needed to go through the Ruth Life Group Material. There are corresponding videos that can be accessed through our "RightNow Media" account with the church. If you don't have an account, go to rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/BrackenRidgeBaptistChurch. After creating an account search "The Book Of Ruth" to access the 7 weeks.

rightnow MEDIA

If you are unable for some reason to access the material through these different means, please simply email office@brbc.org.au or call 07 3261 5045.

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Discuss

What is the initial problem set up in verse one of Ruth? How does Elimelek try to solve the problem?

How did Bianca describe Moab?

Deuteronomy 23:3–6. Why did God banish the Moabites from entering the Israelite community?

What happens to the men at the beginning of the story? How does Ruth 1:5 describe Naomi?

Who, according to the text, reverses the famine in verse 6?

Ruth 1: 8–9. What does Naomi pray for her daughters-in-law? Why do you think Naomi prayed those things for Ruth and Orpah?

Ruth 1:16–17. What strikes you about Ruth's promise to Naomi? What all does Ruth give up to follow her mother-in-law?

Who personifies faithfulness for you? How has their faithfulness impacted your life?

What would it look like for you to be like Ruth in your friendships, marriage, work relationships, and at church? What might you have to sacrifice to selflessly serve others as Ruth served Naomi?

What does Mara mean? Why does Naomi change her name to Mara? Who does Naomi blame for her circumstances? How is Ruth's response different than Naomi's?

In what ways do you relate to Naomi? Are you honest about how you feel in difficult situations? Why or why not?

When have you felt bitter against God? Why were you upset with Him?

Do you think it's healthy to live with bitterness? What might be the consequences of never dealing with the bitterness in your heart?

Ruth 1:22. How does the fact that the women arrive at the beginning of the barley harvest imply hope is on the horizon?

How might someone in a situation similar to Naomi's be encouraged by God's never changing character?

When have you been surprised by God's movement in your life? How has He used unexpected people or events in your walk with Him?

Bianca said, "If you are not dead, then God is not done." What does that quote mean to you, in light of all we've talked about in this session?

Live It Out

Pray: Begin each day thanking God for His love toward you. Ask Him to give you opportunities throughout the day to love others.

Confess: If you're feeling bitter towards God, pull a trusted friend aside—maybe someone from your small group—and be honest with them about how you feel. Try to figure out why you're upset with God and pray together for a softened heart.

Relationship: Ruth displayed incredible love for Naomi in this chapter. Pick one relationship this week to focus on and come up with ways you can sacrificially love that person.

Journal: Think back on your life and pinpoint moments where God moved in ways you didn't expect. Reflect on God's involvement in those events and praise Him for never abandoning you.

Evaluate: Consider how you've handled past (or current) pain. See how God has matured you over the years and pray He would continue to mature your faith in the midst of difficulty.

Discuss

From Bianca's description, and the description in verse one of chapter two, what impression do you have of Boaz? What kind of a man does he seem to be, based on the first verse?

How might someone display the same characteristics as Boaz—honor, might, valor, and loyalty—today?

Other than his character, what significant connection does verse one make about Boaz?

What does Ruth ask to do in verse two? How does Ruth's request show her concern for Naomi?

What did Bianca say about the phraseology in verse three ("it just so happened")? How is it ironic?

When has God "just so happened" to orchestrate events, relationships, or changes in your life? Did you realize He was moving at the time? How do you see His hand now that you're past the situation?

Are you currently in a situation that's hard to see God's movement?

What connection did Bianca make between Boaz's greeting and his character? How does his greeting further reflect that he's an honorable man?

How does his prayer in verse 12 reflect both *hesed* and Boaz's noble character?

Who does Boaz believe will meet Ruth's needs?

In the context of the harvester greeting in verse 4, how might Boaz expect God to display His *hesed* to Ruth?

How has God answered your prayers for provision in your life?

When is it difficult for you to trust that He will provide?

How do you feel when you see God answer your prayers—either for yourself, your family, or others?

Live It Out

Pray: Make a list of the people you're praying for. As you pray through your list, ask God how He would like you to be the one to meet someone's need and respond if He calls you to action.

Encourage: Look back on the characteristics of Boaz outlined in this session. Find someone you know who displays the same valor, loyalty, and honor. Tell them what you see in them and how their character inspires you.

Reflect: Think about a time in your life when God provided for your needs. Reflect on what God taught you and how He matured you through that situation. Thank Him for caring for you.

Draw: What does it mean to you to take refuge under God's wings? Create artwork that reflects how you feel about God's protection and provision.

Serve: Ruth sacrificially served Naomi by gleaning in the fields. Find a place to sacrificially serve this week. Ask around at church, volunteer at a local shelter, or contact a charity.

Discuss

How does the head of the reapers describe Ruth in Ruth 2:6–7? How do Ruth's actions point to her faithfulness to Naomi? What does Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi show us about Ruth's faith in God?

Who are the influential Christians in your life? How do their actions demonstrate their faithfulness to God?

What does Boaz do for Ruth in verses 8 and 9? How does he protect her and provide for her?

Deuteronomy 24:17–22. How does Boaz go above and beyond the requirements of the law? What is he commanded to do and what does he do in addition to ensure Ruth's safety in the fields?

What is Boaz's justification for treating her well in verse 11? What have her actions proven about her character?

Why do you think Ruth's actions stood out to Boaz? What is unique about her reaction to her situation?

When has someone's faithfulness—whether to God or others—inspired you to act with faithfulness?

What did Boaz put on the line in order to extend kindness to Ruth? What social norms do we often have to cross in order to serve others?

What do you think is the normal Christian response (or expected response) to the less fortunate? What might it look like to go above and beyond the norm to care for people who are less fortunate than you—as Boaz did for Ruth?

What other kindness does Boaz extend to Ruth, aside from physical provisions through the harvest, in verse 12? Knowing the story surrounding verse 12, how does Boaz's prayer line up with his actions toward Ruth?

What did Boaz ask God to repay Ruth for? How has Ruth found refuge in God?

How could have Boaz used (or abused) his authority?

How did Ruth respond to Boaz's kindness in Ruth 2:10 and 13?

When has someone in authority over you gone above and beyond to care for you? How did it make you feel?

What are ways you exercise faithfulness on a day-to-day basis? How does faithfulness to God influence your attitude and actions?

Live It Out

Pray: Write out three major prayer requests weighing on your heart this week. Commit yourself to praying for those requests each day.

Encourage: Write a note of encouragement to someone who faithfully serves God. Tell the person how their actions and attitudes inspire you to be faithful.

Serve: Find a way to serve others this week—maybe through volunteering in the children's department at the church, doing the laundry for your spouse, or helping your new neighbors move in. Pray that God would motivate you out of a desire to remain faithful to Him and the people in your life.

Remember: List out some of the major prayers God has answered in your life. Reflect on how you felt at the time, what you learned, and how God displayed His faithfulness to you.

Evaluate: Take an inventory of your actions (whether at work, home, church, or toward your spouse, kids, boss, etc.) and consider if the way you act reflects your faithfulness to God. If the Holy Spirit convicts you, repent and ask for His strength to walk in faithfulness each day.

Discuss

What additional kindnesses does Boaz extend to Ruth in Ruth 2:14–16? What does the amount of barley Ruth gathered say about Boaz’s generosity?

What are some of the gifts or blessings God has given you? How do you use your gifts to bless others? What does that look like, practically speaking?

How have people used their blessings to bless you? How did their generosity make you feel?

Ruth 2:20. How has Boaz demonstrated hesed to Ruth and Naomi? Why does Naomi pray for God to bless Boaz in verse 20?

What does it look like for you to pray blessing for others? What do you pray for, specifically?

Is it easy for you to see the purpose of the blessings in your life? When have you lost sight of God’s purpose for you possessions, position, or occupation?

What are some examples of people in the Bible who put their blessings before God? How did their actions affect their relationships with God and others?

What are some ways we can fight to keep our focus on God and not on the blessings He gives us?

Who are the “living” and the “dead” Naomi refers to in verse 20? How does Boaz’s generosity also honor Elimelek, Mahlon, and Chilion?

How does Naomi describe Boaz to Ruth in verse 20? Who in the story needs to be redeemed? Why? In what sense has Boaz already improved the situation of the two widows?

What characteristics of Christ has Boaz demonstrated so far in the narrative? Which of these characteristics stands out to you the most? Why? In what ways has that attribute of Christ impacted your walk with Him?

How have you experienced Christ's protection and provision in your life? How did you feel when God graciously provided for you and/or protected you?

What does it mean to you that Jesus has all of the qualities we talked about (and more)?

Which of the characteristics of Christ that we listed could you focus on this week? What would it look like to live out that attribute at work, home, school, church, or in your neighborhood?

Live It Out

Pray: Pray for someone who has been a true blessing to you. Ask them what their specific requests are for the week and pray for those requests each day.

Bless: Use your resources to bless someone else this week. Give rent money to a friend looking for a job, offer to babysit your pastor's kids, or take an afternoon to talk with someone in a nursing home.

Study: Spend time this week in one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John). List out the characteristics you observe about Jesus. Ask God to broaden your understanding of Jesus' character.

Worship: One of the themes in the book of Ruth is the idea of blessing. Creatively worship God for how He's blessed you this week. Whether through song, art, or another creative form, praise Him for all He's done for you.

Hope: The book of Ruth is seasoned with hope. Write down the things you hope for this week. Surrender those hopes to God. Pray He would empower you to put your hope in Him.

Discuss

Summarize the events of Ruth so far. What has changed for Ruth and Naomi since the beginning of the book? What problems remain unsolved?

Who first takes the initiative in this chapter? What is the reasoning behind Naomi's plan? According to Ruth 3:1, what does she want to ensure for Ruth? What does Naomi tell Ruth to do in Ruth 3:3–4?

How did Bianca apply each of Naomi's instructions to our lives? What do these principles mean to you? What does it look like to live them out daily?

What does it look like in your life to actively pursue God? When is it tempting to passively wait for Him to act?

What's the difference between being passive and actively waiting on God? How do Naomi's actions speak to how we could be active in our faith?

Ruth 2:12. How does Ruth's request in 3:9 parallel Boaz's prayer in Ruth 2:12?

Ruth 2:11. What is the "first kindness" Boaz mentions in 3:10? What is the second kindness?

What reason does Boaz give for doing what Ruth asked? How does he describe her character?

Why can't Boaz redeem Ruth? What stands in his way? As Bianca mentioned, how does Boaz's attention to the law speak to his character?

How does Boaz continue to protect Ruth's dignity at the end of the chapter? How does he continue to bless her?

After Ruth debriefs with Naomi, what are Naomi's instructions to Ruth in Ruth 3:18? Why do you think Naomi tells Ruth to wait, unlike at the beginning of the chapter? What's the difference between their situation before Ruth went to the threshing floor and after?

How have Ruth and Naomi seized opportunities so far in the story?

When have you seized the opportunities God placed before you?

When have you realized it was time for you to wait? How did you feel during that time? What did God teach you?

How do you discern if it's time for you to take step forward or if you should wait?

In what ways could you walk through open doors in your life? In what areas of your life are you waiting on God?

Live It Out

Pray: Pray for open doors this week. Ask God to show you how you can take a step of faith each day and pray for the strength to obey His guidance.

Study: Read through the story of the Exodus this week (Exod. 1–15). Look for the theme of God's redemption as you learn about how He rescued Israel from Egypt.

Reflect: Think back on the "waiting" times in your life. How did obedience play a role in that season? What did God teach you?

Encourage: Tell a woman in your life how she personifies the Proverbs 31 woman to you. Pull out specific verses that she excels at living out. Consider writing words of encouragement down so she can look back on what you've said.

Worship: Take a few minutes to praise God for being a redeemer. Find songs that hone in on God's redemption and sing them, write down your prayers of gratitude, or create a drawing to express your thanks.

Discuss

Why did Boaz follow the letter of the law to fulfill his promise to Ruth? What do his actions show about his attitude toward God and His laws?

What does Boaz propose to the redeemer? What is the redeemer's original answer? How does Boaz turn the tables in his favor? Why do you think he included Ruth in the bargain second?

What does the redeemer say after he learns he must marry Ruth in verse 6? What do you think about Boaz's strategy to make sure he was the one to redeem Ruth?

Looking back on previous sessions, what should have the redeemer done for Ruth and Naomi? How are the redeemer's actions disgraceful? How does he compare to Boaz?

After Boaz seals the deal, what do the witnesses pray for him? What blessing do they ask for? Who are Rachel, Leah, and Tamar?

In verse 10, what reason does Boaz give for marrying Ruth? Whose name is he protecting? What was Boaz willing to sacrifice in order to marry Ruth? How does Boaz show humility through his actions?

In what ways does Boaz display *hesed* toward Ruth, Naomi, and God in this passage? What characteristics of Christ does Boaz exhibit through his actions?

Philippians 2:6–11. How did Jesus sacrifice in order to save humanity? What is the result of Jesus' obedience? What is the most meaningful part about Jesus' sacrifice to you? Why?

When you pause to think about Jesus' sacrifice, how does that reminder change your outlook on the day?

When has someone sacrificed for you? How did their sacrifice make you feel?

What conveniences, securities, or comforts do you have to put on the line in order to sacrifice for others? What challenges or joys come with sacrifice?

Who is one person who regularly shows you sacrificial love? How could you love them this week?

Live It Out

Pray: Ask God to give you fresh eyes to see the beauty of Jesus' sacrifice. Pray the same for those in your life who do not yet know Him.

Sacrifice: Choose something to sacrifice this week (maybe money, time, energy, convenience, etc.) for the sake of a relationship (spouse, friend, family member, coworker, boss, pastor, etc.). Go out of your way to love that person sacrificially.

Journal: Read Philippians 2:6–11 again this week. As you read, write down your thoughts and feelings about Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and exaltation. Write out a prayer of thanksgiving to Jesus for sacrificing everything for us.

Study: Read the stories of Rachel, Leah, and Tamar this week (Gen. 29–30, 38). Take note of how God provides for each of these women.

Reflect: Think about your attitude toward sacrifice this week. What do you consider a worthwhile sacrifice? What are you unwilling to give up for others? Consider Boaz's attitude toward his name and inheritance as you reflect.

Discuss

Who receives credit for the birth of Ruth and Boaz's son in Ruth 4:14–15? What is one thing God has done in your life that deserves to be glorified?

How has Ruth been more to Naomi than seven sons?

How has life changed for Naomi? How did Naomi want to be known in Ruth 1:20–21? How has her life been brought out of bitterness?

How does remembering the beginning of the story show God's hand in transforming Naomi's life? What is significant to you about the reversal of Naomi's life in Ruth? Why?

When have you been bitter? How did God bring you out of that bitterness? If you have bitterness in your heart, what might be some practical steps forward? How could the book of Ruth be an encouragement to you?

What does it mean to you that God works on the behalf of His people? How has God expressed His goodness to you?

Who is descended from Ruth and Boaz? Why was king David important to Israel? How did he bless Israel?

What does the fact that God used Ruth and Boaz's family to bless Israel tell you about God's character?

How does God’s ability to move on a large scale—larger than we could wrap our minds around—sit with you? How does it expand your view of God and His involvement in your life?

How has God worked throughout biblical history? What does that prove about His character?

How have you seen God move in your family over generations?

What stands out to you about Ruth being included in Jesus’ family line?

How has Ruth deepened your understanding of redemption? In what ways do you view salvation differently?

Looking back on the entire story of Ruth, what resonates with you the most? Why? What has God been teaching you through this series?

How could you put what He’s taught you into action? What practical steps could you take today?

Live It Out

Pray: Praise God for redeeming you before you start your day. Thank Him for sending Jesus, for having a relationship with you, and for teaching you to be like Christ.

Journal: Write down all the things Ruth teaches us about God’s character this week. Meditate on those truths each day and ask God to grow your understanding of who He is.

Share: Sit down with someone in your group, or a close friend, and talk about what you learned through this study. Share the most important points from the book of Ruth, what they mean to you, and how you can apply them to your life.

Draw: Create a timeline for your life. Highlight the most important moments, especially in your relationship with God. Notice how God has been moving in your life since day one.

Study: Read more about Jesus redeeming us from sin and death in these passages: Luke 1:68–75; Romans 3:22–24; Galatians 3:13–14, 4:4–5; Colossians 1:13–14; 1 Peter 1:18–21. Study a passage a day from Monday to Saturday this week. On Sunday, reflect on what you’ve learned about redemption.



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