

Ruth – A Study of Love
Widows of the Old Testament
Student Study Guide
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Review of Naomi

- a. In the last lesson, a cord of “Hope” drew Naomi through a bitterly painful and grief filled time to a time of renewed relationship with her LORD and joyful reunion with Hebrew friends and relatives.
 - 1) What was the turning point for her?
 - 2) How was her dashed hope, of an heir for her son, Mahlon, revived and realized?

- b. We saw Naomi go from tragedy to triumph, from sorrow to joy, and from bitterness to sweet peace. When we give God our brokenness, He can make something beautiful out of our lives.
 - 1) Do you recall a time when you had such a turning point in your life?
 - 2) Would you be willing to share about it with our group?

Prayer: Give opportunity for participants to share prayer requests.

Ruth – A Study of Love

Read the Study of Ruth in *Widows of the Old Testament* and reread the book of Ruth in the Bible before answering the questions in this study.

Two Hebrew words translated LOVE apply to our study of Ruth.

- a. Ahavah (Greek agape) is presented in Scripture as the very nature of God – Who He is. God is love and in this supreme attribute all His other attributes are harmonized.

In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, we read a definition by a listing of virtues. “Ahavah/agape” is patient, kind, does not envy, is not proud, is not rude, is not self-seeking, is not easily angered, keeps no record of wrongs and does not delight in evil. It rejoices with the truth, always protects, always trusts, always hopes and always perseveres. Love does not fail.

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b. Hesedh is translated loving kindness or loyal love - the outflow of love. “Hesedh” combines the ideas of love, commitment, duty and care, and stresses the loyalty with which love acts. The Lord’s “hesedh” leads Him to redeem His people. In consequence, it is how the Lord’s people act toward others, and how they should respond to the Lord Himself. The Lord looks on us with hesedh - loving kindness rooted in His grace. “Hesedh’s” strong emphasis is placed on the practical more than the emotional.

Read Ruth 1

1. Ruth was a descendant of _____, _____, and _____. Why were the Moabite and Hebrew languages similar (pg. 47)? _____

2. Contrast Naomi’s and Ruth’s spiritual background (pg. 47). _____

Discuss: Having been immersed in the Hebrew culture of Mahlon’s family, Ruth learned spiritual values different from her heathen culture. Compare her experience with yours. How did you become aware of God’s love for you and your need for Him?

3. How many years of marriage did Ruth have with Mahlon before he died? _____.

Discuss: Naomi, Ruth and Orpah, all widows, faced an unclear future. Has there been a time in your life when you faced change and an unclear future? What did you do?

4. What did Orpah decide to do and was her love for Naomi “hesedh” - a loyal love?

Consider: Can you think of a time when your love was tested? Did it stand the test or fail?

5. What do the verses in Ruth 1:8-18 reveal about the relationship that developed between Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi? _____

Consider: What kind of relationship do you have with your mother-in-law or those closest to you? Does it exhibit the virtues of 1 Corinthians 13:4-7?

6. Ruth turned from her _____ to worship the One and Only True God.

Consider: Are there gods (objects of one's worship and love) in your life that you need to turn away from, today? Does anything keep you from committed worship of the Lord?

Read Ruth 2

7. What led Ruth to the field of Boaz? _____

The LORD provided out of His love to meet their needs, not only for their present needs, but also for their future needs.

Discuss: God is at work divinely orchestrating events in your life to bring about His will and purposes for you. Do you recognize His hand in your life? How did He lead you to study the *Widows of the Old Testament*?

8. What reputation preceded Ruth to Boaz's field (vv. 11-12)? _____

What reputation did Ruth establish while working there (v. 6)? _____

Consider: What reputation do you have where you live and work? How are you known by your neighbors and co-workers?

9. Describe what it must have been like for Ruth to do this work (vv. 7, 17-18).

There is conflicting data concerning an ephah measurement. The word ephah means basket. It may hold 22 liters or about 25 lbs. (1/2 English bushel) or about 50 lbs (1 English bushel) of grain depending on the size of the basket. It was not a uniform measure.

Consider: What labor of love are you accomplishing for your family or those you love? Are you fulfilled in the work you do?

10. As you read this passage of Ruth, contrast Boaz's kind care of Ruth to our Lord's loving kindness for us. Record your findings.

See Psalm 16:1, 8-9; Isaiah 55:1-2; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Psalm 34:9-10.

Read Ruth 3

11. Naomi shares with Ruth about the kinsman-redeemer (levirate marriage). Why did she instruct Ruth to approach Boaz concerning this? _____

Discuss: Was there anything immoral in Ruth's or Boaz's behavior at the threshing floor?

12. How did Boaz respond to Ruth's proposal? _____

Discuss: Look at how the Scripture describes Boaz and share what characteristics you would want to instill in young men in your family or want the young women in your family to look for in choosing a mate.

Read Ruth 4

13. When Boaz talked with the closer kinsman-redeemer at the city gate about Naomi and Ruth, in the presence of ten elders as witnesses, did he use his wealth or power to get his way? _____

Discuss: In today's culture, wealth and power are often used to get what one wants. God provides His very best to those who yield to and wait on Him (Isaiah 30:18-21). Can you give an example of that in your life?

14. Did the elders caution Boaz about marriage to a Moabitess or did they encourage this union? Why do you think they did this? _____

15. Whom do you believe was the most delighted about this marriage – Ruth, Boaz or Naomi? _____ Why? _____

16. Look at the genealogy – Ruth 4:18-22. Name the mothers of Perez, Boaz and Obed and give their places of origin. _____

Discuss: What does the LORD God’s inclusion of these women in the ancestry of His Son, Jesus Christ, demonstrates to us? See John 14:6; 17:1-3, 20; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.

Personal Application

Fill in the blanks

17. A beautiful picture of God’s character is the kinsman-redeemer. The Hebrew word for kinsman-redeemer is _____, “the one who has a right to redeem” (pg. 60). God provided a _____, His only Son, Jesus Christ, who paid _____ for our _____, setting us _____ from them. He bought us with _____, allowing us to become _____ of _____. Please copy Romans 3:23-25a and 1 John 1:7b, 9-10.

18. Before the Hebrew wedding ceremony (often a year earlier) there is a betrothal. It is a legal transaction where the dowry (bride price) is agreed on and paid. In Ruth’s case, the redemption price was paid by Boaz before witnesses. This pictures of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, paying the price for His bride, the Church (believers who have personally received Christ’s gift of redemption). Please copy 1 Peter 1:18-19. _____

19. Just prior to the wedding ceremony, the bride waits at her home for the groom to appear and take her to his home where there is a wedding feast prepared. Our groom _____ will return for us and take us to _____. The Bible speaks of the _____. He is _____ for us and the _____ we will share with Him there (John 14:1-4; Revelation 19:5-10).

20. Between the redemption and the wedding ceremony is the betrothal period in which we are Jesus Christ's purchased possession. Our Redeemer has set us free from _____ to serve Him. We are no longer _____ of the prince and power of this world, Satan (Galatians 5:1-5).

God's wondrous love reached down to Ruth and drew her out of a pagan culture into His family of true believers. His love has reached your heart and mine. He is drawing us to serve Him as true believers, who share His love and truth with others. "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then. But by faith we eagerly await through the Spirit, the righteousness for which we hope. You, my brothers [and sisters] were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:1a, 5, 13a). Do this while we await the return of Christ to bring us home to be with Him.

Exercise: Ask God to reveal to you the things in your life that do not honor Him. List them, confess them, and ask Him to empower you to remove or change them.

Prayer